RENOVATIO: Martin Luther's Augustinian Theology of Holiness (1515/16 and 1535-46)

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Recommended Citation
http://epublications.marquette.edu/dissertations_mu/604
RENOVATIO

MARTIN LUTHER’S AUGUSTINIAN THEOLOGY
OF HOLINESS
(1515/16 AND 1535—46)

by


A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,
Marquette University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Milwaukee, Wisc.

December 2015
ABSTRACT

RENOVATIO
MARTIN LUTHER’S AUGUSTINIAN THEOLOGY OF HOLINESS
(1515/16 AND 1535—46)

by


Marquette University, 2015

In this book I argue that much of mainstream Luther scholarship (and Lutheran theology) is quite wrong to think that Martin Luther downplayed, denied, derided, or just plain ignored “the holiness without which no one shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). In fact, from the first inklings of his “Augustinian turn” c. 1514 to his death in 1546, Luther held and taught a robust theology of progressive renewal in holiness, carefully calibrated to the sober reality of residual sin and the astonishing gospel of grace in Jesus Christ. As it is set forth in the works that embody his most considered judgments (c. 1535—46), this gospel-centered and irreducibly trinitarian dogmatics of real renewal in holiness is “Augustinian” and “evangelical” in equal parts. As such, it commands the regard of theologians who stand in the tradition of the Church’s doctor gratiae. The argument proceeds in three steps: first, an exposition of the mature Reformer’s dogmatics of sin, grace, and holiness; second, an investigation of the roots of this dogmatics in the theology of the “420s Augustine,” with whom a younger Luther was busily engaged c. 1514—16; third, an account of the continuities and discontinuities that characterize the development of Luther’s theology from its embryonic state in the mid 1510s through the breakthroughs of the 1518—21 period to the settled position of the old Doctor.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“What do you have that you did not receive?” The Augustinian Christian knows well the answer to that question. It is a great joy to acknowledge here the gifts I have received from God’s generous hand through the many cooperatores dei—teachers, friends, family—without whom this book would not exist.

To begin, my teachers. My first introduction to historical theology, including Luther’s, goes back to my courses with David Lauber, Mark Husbands, and Dan Treier at Wheaton College. I am very grateful for their wise teaching and warm encouragement. At Duke, Warren Smith led me (and so many others) with great skill and passion into the strange and beautiful world of patristic theology. He also taught me Latin! In his seminars on Thomas Aquinas, Reinhard Hütter taught me not just to read that great doctor well, but to love the truth. It is a curious irony that several years later I found myself defending an interpretation of Luther, and of Luther’s catholic and evangelical theology, which Prof. Hütter has now distanced himself from. If my own work manages to convince him to give Luther another look, I will be deeply gratified. In the long run, of all my fine teachers there the late Prof. David Steinmetz left the biggest impression on me. His lectures on Reformation theology, seminar on Calvin, and reading course on Richard Hooker (complete with long fortnightly meetings for coffee and conversation!) were great gifts indeed. On top of this, there are of course his superb books on Staupitz, Luther, Calvin, and so forth, and the impressive scholarly output of his students. I regard it a high honor to have had my Doktorgroßvater read this book. His death is a great loss to us all.
At Marquette, a handful of professors (and one remarkable secretary) especially stand out. In the first place, Robert Jamison, who taught me to read German and then (out of his own generosity) tutored me on a weekly basis for some two years. I could never have written this book without this great kindness on his part. Ralph Del Colle embodied “evangelical catholicity” in every aspect of his theological work. Somehow, he managed to keep the focus on our common faith in the gospel, left no room for doubt about how wrong my doctrine is in this or that controversial point, and put beyond question the depth of his regard for me as a brother in Jesus Christ—all at once. I think Dr. Del Colle would have enjoyed reading this book immensely, and I am quite certain he would have disagreed vigorously about a few of its conclusions. That is a debate I deeply regret I shall never enjoy in this life; and in the life to come, I suppose we will not need to dispute such things any longer, and will be rather busy with other, greater matters. I am very grateful to Dr. Wanda Zemler-Cizewski for generously agreeing to fill his place on my dissertation board, despite the fact that I never had the privilege of studying with her. At this point it is also fitting for me to mention Fr. Bill Kurz, who taught me much about St. John’s Gospel and has become a true friend in Christ to me and to my entire household during my time at Marquette; and Ms. Gale Prusinski, master of our University’s byzantine bureaucracy, patient guide to countless helpless graduate students, and (like Fr. Bill) an ardent fan of the Green Bay Packers.

Above all, I am grateful for the two professors who taught me to read the two great protagonists of this book. From my first semester at Marquette, Michel Barnes taught me how to read historical texts in large part by teaching me just how little I
know. His exacting method has chastened me, though perhaps not quite as perfectly as he might hope for. It was no small task to argue for an “Augustinian” interpretation of Luther’s theology knowing that a world-class Augustine scholar would scrutinize my work—so jealous is he, and rightly so, for the right use of that adjective! I came to Marquette to study Augustine with Dr. Barnes, and I hope that upon reading this book he will see just how great the debt I owe him really is.

Presumably Mickey Mattox didn’t realize that agreeing to supervise a reading course on Luther for a patristics student would lead to directing this dissertation. That course, much like the above-mentioned reading class with Prof. Steinmetz, was invaluable as much for the lively conversations which we shared together at Alterra as for the texts themselves. If the gun-powder and bullet for this book were furnished by reading Augustine with Dr. Barnes and Luther with Dr. Mattox simultaneously, the fuse was lit when the latter asked the simple question: “Who’s more fun to read—Augustine or Luther?” As an Anglican, I knew the pious answer to that question, and I believe I said it; but in the end the truth prevailed. Omnia facilia caritati. It was Dr. Mattox who first suggested holiness in Luther’s theology as a theme for my research. While it will come as no surprise to Luther scholars that he pointed me in the direction of the Genesisvorlesung, he also urged upon me the massive significance of the Romans lectures, and welcomed my interest in the Augustinian roots of Luther’s theology. Taken together, these are roughly the constituent elements of this book; and therefore, though I think we disagree about a point or two, there can be no doubt about the paternity of this project. I am deeply grateful to my Doktorvater for his learned teaching, wise counsel, constant help, and warm friendship, and I hope to
imitate his example of uniting together in a single life both theological conviction and ecumenical generosity, truth and love. Truly, an “evangelical Augustinian” in the Church of Rome, to match my *evangelische Anglikanismus*—with the pugnacious Martin Luther an improbable ecumenical theologian!

One of the best things about graduate school is the gift of theological friendship. I am thankful for Jonathan Morgan, now professor of theology at Toccoa Falls College but once my neighbor in the library at Marquette, who prayed with me on a daily basis as we prepared to teach our undergraduate classes and wrote our dissertations. Jason Gehrke, a sharp-witted soldier-scholar and committed gnesio-Lutheran, has helped me grasp what little I know of the confessional Lutheran tradition in America. Above all, I give thanks to God for the rich friendship I share with Chris Ganski, pastor of City Reformed Church in Milwaukee, and David Luy, professor of theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. Chris took me under his wing when he was just about to finish his Marquette dissertation and I was beginning coursework. Sometime thereafter, the three of us held the first of our now regular “Reformation Summits” for burgers, beer, rigorous theological discussion, and prayer. In a time of real theological and spiritual confusion, Chris and David taught me, first, to treasure the gospel, and next to regard Reformation theology with a critical but real affection within the greater breadth and depth of the Church catholic. In short, they led me upon the much talked about but relatively untrodden path of evangelical catholicity. For that, and for their true friendship, I am deeply grateful.
As I began to write this dissertation in summer 2014, I sunk into a depression darker than any I’d known before. I never could have finished the first chapter without the help, encouragement, love, counsel, and prayers of my closest friends and family: Chris and David, Ben Roberts, Steve Lake, Nick Kavelaris, Michael and Patsy Casey, John Ellison, Ben Sharpe, Nathan Dickerson, and Jan and Michelle Anderson. Out of all the beloved saints of God who are St. Michael’s Church, I do want to mention my friends who prayed for me each day as I wrote: Clark Bowerman, Thad and Lori Butcher, Charles Hayes, Phil and Judy Humphrey, and Jack Perry. My parents by happy marriage, Bruce and Ruthie Howard, and my grandfather Bud Knoedler encouraged me at every step and prayed for me each day. (Perhaps, from her more privileged location, Grandma Betty did too.) To my own father and mother, Dr. Per and Sherryl Anderas, I of course owe more than can possibly be said. My daughter, Mary Clare, wrote me countless love notes and painted the beautiful paintings that make up the “art gallery” in my study. But of all her masterpieces, the one that really stands out is the colored-pencil sketch of our family, smiles all around, finished dissertation in my hand, and the risen Jesus standing in our midst (complete with a dashing red sash) which has graced my writing desk since midway through chapter 2. My son, Elisha, knows less about dissertations and nothing at all of depression, but quite a lot about sheer joy. And as for little Betty—when, out of the deep darkness, I begged God to show me a sign of his favor (Ps. 86:17), I never could have imagined the answer to my prayer. Thank you, dear little ones.

Last in order but first in honor by far is my wife Lisa, who has shouldered more of the burden of this book than I can fully understand. She has been with me in
the weakest and darkest moments of my life, a faithful partner in gladness and in
sorrow, in sowing with tears and in reaping with joy. “An excellent wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels” (Prov. 31:10). Well, I’ve found one, and I have
learned through experience that King Solomon, who acquired many wives but never
seems to have found an excellent one, was in this judgment a very wise man indeed.

Phil Anderas
Rector, St Michael’s Anglican Church, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin
Advent 2015
THE SACRIFICE

With deep thankfulness, I offer this book to the God who saved me from death:

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

He sent from on high, he took me;
he drew me out of many waters.
He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me,
for they were too mighty for me.
They confronted me in the day of my calamity,
but the LORD was my support.
He brought me out into a broad place:
He rescued me,
because he delighted in me.

Psalm 18

When the situation is hopeless and all plans and efforts are in vain, then be courageous and beware of giving up! For God calls all things from the dead and from nothing. When no resource or hope at all is left, then at last God’s help begins.

Luther on Gen. 25:23, late 1539
THE GIST OF THIS BOOK

tὸ γὰρ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νόμου, ἐν ὧν ἡ σάρκα, ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ὑπὸ πέμψας ἐν ὡμοίωμα σαρκὸς ἀμαρτίας καὶ περὶ ἀμαρτίας κατέκρινεν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί, ἵνα τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου πληρωθῇ ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς μὴ κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ πνεῦμα.

St Paul, Rom. 8:3-4

... gratia saluatoris Christi crucifixi et dono spiritus eius...

... nec de verbis, cum res constet, controversia facienda.

St Augustine, nat. grat. 60.70 & retr. 1.15.4

Schwerwiegende Worte, die ganz nach Augustin hinüberklingen!

Man darf sich auch nicht von Luthers »augustinischer« Redeweise in die Irre führen lassen.

Rudolf Hermann and Leif Grane
# ABBREVIATIONS

1. **Luthers Werke**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Weimar Ausgabe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Br</td>
<td>Weimar Ausgabe. Briefwechsel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA DB</td>
<td>Weimar Ausgabe. Deutsche Bibel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Tr</td>
<td>Weimar Ausgabe. Tischreden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LW</td>
<td>Luther’s Works.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D [1.2]</td>
<td>[First] Disputation against the Antinomians, [Second Argument]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Small Catechism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Large Catechism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packer</td>
<td>The Bondage of the Will, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>The Smalcald Articles</td>
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2. **Opera Augustini**

<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bibliothèque Augustinienne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bett.</td>
<td>Henry Bettenson’s Penguin translation of City of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBA</td>
<td>Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSL</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEL</td>
<td>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSA</td>
<td>The Works of Saint Augustine</td>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>c. ep. Pel.</td>
<td>Against the Two Letters of the Pelagians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Iul.</td>
<td>Against Julian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Iul. op. imp.</td>
<td>The Unfinished Work Against Julian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civ. dei</td>
<td>City of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ench.</td>
<td>Enchiridion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>En. Ps.</td>
<td>Expositions of the Psalms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ex. prop. Rm.</td>
<td>Exposition of certain propositions from the Letter to the Romans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gr. et pecc. or.</td>
<td>On the Grace of Christ and Original Sin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Io. Tr.</td>
<td>Sermons on the Gospel of John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nat. grat.</td>
<td>On Nature and Grace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nupt. conc.</td>
<td>On Marriage and Desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pecc. mer.</td>
<td>On the Deserts and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of Infants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>praed. sanct.</td>
<td>On the Predestination of the Saints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retr.</td>
<td>Reconsiderations</td>
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<tr>
<td>s.</td>
<td>Sermons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sp. litt.</td>
<td>On the Spirit and the Letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trin.</td>
<td>On the Trinity</td>
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### 3. Other Frequently Cited Series, Works, or Journals

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARG</td>
<td>Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTA</td>
<td>Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AugS</td>
<td>Augustinian Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>The Book of Concord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSELK</td>
<td>Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCM</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Mediaevalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coll.</td>
<td>Gabriel Biel’s Collectorium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Corpus Reformatorum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, 2 vols.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECRC</td>
<td>Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ep.</td>
<td>Epitome of The Formula of Concord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>The Formula of Concord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTR</td>
<td>Harvard Theological Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JEH</td>
<td>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LQ</td>
<td>Lutheran Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHMLT</td>
<td>The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REA</td>
<td>Revue d’études augustiniennes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schaff</td>
<td>The Creeds of Christendom, 3 vols.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Solid Declaration of The Formula of Concord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sent.</td>
<td>Peter Lombard’s Four Books of Sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Thomas Aquinas’ Summa theologiae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRE</td>
<td>Theologische Realencyklopädie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vg.</td>
<td>The Vulgate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WJO</td>
<td>The Works of John Owen</td>
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“LUTHER ON HOLINESS? THAT WILL BE A SHORT BOOK”

Deep into his trenchant 1525 reply to Erasmus of Rotterdam on the great themes of
Reformation theology—sin and grace, bondage and freedom, human choice and
divine election, law and gospel, justification by faith, claritas scripturae, etc.—Martin
Luther took up a challenge which many would assume did not quite strike at the heart
of the matter. For Erasmus had asked Luther this:

If the whole man, even when born again through faith, is nothing but ‘flesh,’
where is the ‘spirit’ that is born of the Spirit? Where is the child of God? Where
is the new creature?—and is not the very asking of this question all the evidence a convinced Lutheran
needs to prove just how little this moralizing humanist grasped the radical nature of
the gospel? For in the form of this question, Europe’s leading man merely renews the
familiar charge that Luther’s theology militates against real renewal of life, reformatio
morum, piety, virtue, good works, sanctification, holiness. But this misses the whole
point of the Reformation, cheapens grace by making discipleship costly, and cuts the
nerve of evangelical freedom. For the Reformation gospel of free justification leaves
the forgiven sinner just that—a sinner, “flesh” in St. Paul’s terms, in the Reformer’s
peccator totaliter et totus simul iustus. And this principled disregard for the
cultivation of morals and the eradication of vice is the gospel’s special virtue, the
paradoxical proprium that sets it apart from every scheme of moral betterment,

1 “My good Erasmus! ... You, and you alone, have seen the hinge on which all turns, and aimed for
down without having realized that evangelical theology stands or falls with the doctrine of the
bondage of the will has read it in vain.” In Bruno Jordahn, ed., Vom unfreien Willem (Munich, 1954),
cited and translated by Packer, p. 58.
2 WA 18,744.30-1, cf. Packer, 254.
ascetic ascent, and metaphysical advance which the fallen filii Adae have ever devised, from Babel to Rome, Plato to Pelagius, Eckhart to Oprah. The law only makes matters worse! But where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more. Once justified, the righteous sinner has nowhere to go—for there is nowhere he needs to go. The way of the pilgrim is over; Christ is the end of the law for everyone who believes. The ladder to heaven need no longer be scaled to the heights, for the Son of God climbed down it himself to meet us here in the depths. By faith in this Christ, the believer has already reached his destination, already tasted the powers of the age to come, already passed out of death and judgment into eschatological righteousness and life.

In short: Erasmus’ question is flawed, as modern theologians like to say, by a “category mistake,” for the gospel of Jesus is sui generis and so is Luther’s evangelical theology.³

If, then, there is no real space in Lutheran theology for the doctrines of new creation, regeneration, renovation, sanctification—that is, for holiness—that is only because there is no longer any need for them. To be sure, a locus de operibus bonis might smuggle its way back into the Lutheran Confessions, Orthodoxy, and Pietism; and misplaced regard for holiness will always afflict Roman Catholics and the Reformed. But for his part, Luther did not trouble himself with trying to fit together something as pedestrian as progressive sanctification with the volcanic

Rechtfertigungslehre of genuine Reformation theology. Besides, at the end of the day his heart just wasn’t in it, overflowing as it was with the liberating truth of the gospel.

“Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ more boldly still!” That’s the real Luther, uncut, unapologetic, bold. No offhand remark, the pecca fortiter possesses the force of an axiom in evangelical ethics, for it embodies the pith of the Reformer’s insights into the boisterous freedom of the Christian sine lege et supra legem.\(^4\)

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\(^4\) Luther to Melanchthon, 1 August 1521, #424, WA Br 2.372.82-93: *Si gratiae praedicator es, gratiam non fictam, sed veram praedica; si vera gratia est, verum, non fictum peccatum ferto. Deus non facit salvos fitce peccatores. Esto peccator et pecca fortiter, sed fortius fide et gaude in Christo, qui victor est peccati, mortis et mundi. Peccandum est, quamdiu hic sumus; vita haec non est habitatio iustitiae, sed exspectamus, ait Petrus, coelos novos et terram novam, in quibus iustitia habitat. Sufficit, quod agnovimus per divitias gloriae Dei agnum, qui tollit peccatum mundi; ab hoc non avellat nos peccatum, etiamsi millies, millies uno die fornecemur aut occidamus. Putas, tam parvum esse pretium redemptionis pro peccatis nostris factum in tanto ac tali agno? Ora fortiter, etiam fortissimus peccator.*

\(^5\) In my mind, Pfarrer Martin’s counsel to scrupulous Master Philipp is an obvious case of a skilled pastor using exaggeration to drive home a point, not unlike the rabbinic hyperbole we hear in the Lord Jesus’ command to pluck out the lustful eye. Luther is not telling Melanchthon to go ahead and begin fornicating and murdering with impunity in the name of the gospel any more than Jesus intends his lustful disciples to actually gouge out their eyes. Rather, his ramped-up rhetoric is intended to magnify the glory of the Lamb, who died precisely to take away the most grievous sins imaginable. This is wise and indeed sober counsel for the kind of soul Melanchthon suffered from, inclined as he was to think too much of his sin and too little of Christ’s redeeming blood. Certainly, what was medicine for Melanchton would become poison for a different kind of soul. The best interpretation of the *pecca fortiter* remains Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s in his 1937 *Nachfolge*: “If we are to understand this saying of Luther’s, everything depends on applying the distinction between the data and the answer to a sum. If we make Luther’s formula a premise for our doctrine of grace, we are conjuring up the specter of cheap grace. But Luther’s formula is meant to be taken, not as the premise, but as the conclusion, the answer to the sum, the coping-stone, his very last word on the subject. Taken as a premise, pecca fortiter acquires the character of an ethical principle, a principle of grace to which the principle of *pecca fortiter* must correspond. That means the justification of sin, and it turns Luther’s formula into its very opposite. For Luther ‘sin boldly’ could only be his very last refuge, the consolation for one whose attempts to follow Christ had taught him that he can never become sinless, who in his fear of sin despairs of the grace of God.” *The Cost of Discipleship*, trans. R. H. Fuller (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 52.

\(^5\) WA Tr 1.204.30-205.3, LW 54.78 (#469, spring 1533): “Almost every night when I wake up, the Devil is there and wants to dispute with me. I have come to this conclusion: when the argument that the Christian is without the law and above the law doesn’t help, I instantly chase him away with a fart. The rogue wants to dispute de iustitia although he is himself a knave, for he kicked God out of heaven and crucified his Son.”
This “Lutheran”—and at the same time oddly “Erasmian”—interpretation of Luther as theologian of justification sans holiness makes for real ecumenical convergence. *Simul iustus et peccator*, after all: this is the Luther known in the churches, and this is the Luther assumed in much historical and most dogmatic theology. To be sure, Catholics, Calvinists, Pietists, Anglicans, and Wesleyans side with Erasmus’ criticisms and censure the lawless Luther for abandoning the pursuit of holiness. Others, mainly though not exclusively Lutheran, hail the evangelical Luther as God’s chosen instrument for the abolition of legalism *hapax*, indeed, as the angelic bearer of the eternal gospel. But regardless of whether the great Reformer plays the villain or the hero, the heretic or the saint, in one’s ecclesiastical history, most all tend to agree with Alister McGrath’s high-profile judgments in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation* about Luther’s “aversion to the language of renewal and spiritual growth,” his “suspicion of the concern for personal holiness,” and his “reluctance to

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7 See, e.g., John Wesley (*Sermon 107.1.5.*), whose heart, once strangely warmed upon reading Luther on Romans, had since turned cold to Luther on holiness: “Many who have spoken and written admirably well concerning justification, had no clear conception, nay, were totally ignorant, of the doctrine of sanctification. Who has wrote more ably than Martin Luther on justification by faith alone? And who was more ignorant of the doctrine of sanctification, or more confused in his conceptions of it?” In the same vein, alas, is the 1947 report to the Archbishop of Canterbury, written by the likes of Gregory Dix, T.S. Eliot, Austin Farrer, Michael Ramsey, and Lionel Thornton, entitled *Catholicity: A Study in the Conflict of Christian Traditions in the West* (London: Dacre Press, 1947).


9 St. John’s vision of “an angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth” (Rev. 14:6) figured in hagiographic representations of Luther as early as 1522. See Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher, and Hero: Images of the Reformer, 1520—1620* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 10, 29-30, 124-5
employ any form of terminology that suggested a ‘growth in holiness’ or ‘being made righteous.’”

To his great credit or his everlasting shame, holiness wasn’t Luther’s strong point. On this point at least, Erasmus’ polemics hit the target.

The trouble with this “Lutheran” and “Erasmian” interpretation of Luther’s theology as a theology indifferent to or even inimical towards holiness is that Martin Luther himself was revolted by it. Here is his reply to Erasmus in *de servo arbitrio*:

I myself would be glad of information as to when I ever taught what you thus freely and publicly lay to my charge. Who would be so crazy as to say that he that is born of the Spirit is nothing but flesh? Manifestly, I myself separate “flesh” and “spirit” as things opposed to each other, and I say, with the divine oracle, that the man that is not born again through faith is flesh. But one that is born again I no longer call flesh, except in respect of the relics of the flesh which oppose the firstfruits of the Spirit that he has received. I do not think that you meant to fabricate this charge with a view to raising prejudice against me; otherwise, what could you accuse me of that would be more wicked? Either you understand nothing of my position, or else you find yourself unequal to matters of such magnitude.

In this book, I have set myself to argue that much of twentieth-century Luther research has misunderstood the Reformer’s position along just these “Erasmian” lines. Luther was not, in fact, so “crazy”—or so wicked—as to say that those reborn of the Spirit were nothing but flesh. *Ego carnalis sum, totus caro, totaliter peccator,* the “simul,” and the like are vital but rhetorically-charged phrases that stand in need of careful interpretation. Whatever exactly these phrases may mean—and determining their real significance lies at the heart of my argument in this book—by Luther’s own testimony in *de servo arbitrio* (!) they do not mean that the regenerate Christian *nihil nisi carnem esse.* Indeed: to take his paradoxes to mean that the baptized saint is a

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11 WA 18.745.4-12, cf. Packer, 254-5.
total and categorical sinner and the spiritual man nothing but flesh is to take Luther not just for an erroneous but for an evil teacher in the Church. “What could you accuse me of that would be more wicked?” In that case, Luther would be one of the “ungodly people” in Jude’s prophecy, “who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (v. 4); or, as in St. Peter’s admonition, one of the false teachers who “twist” Paul’s hard-to-understand writings to their own destruction by the false doctrine of lawlessness cloaked as free grace (2 Pet. 3:15-17; cf. Rom. 3:5-8, 6:1-2). This is, of course, how Erasmus, John Tetzel, John Eck, John Cochlaeus, and other Roman Catholic theologians interpreted Luther as a man and as a theologian in the sixteenth century, and how Heinrich Denifle read him in the early twentieth. But Luther will have nothing of it. He asserts that not he but Erasmus is the anemic theologian of holiness: “What rebirth, renewal, regeneration, and the whole business of the Spirit are, he does not see at all.” And to be bleary-eyed in regards to matters as great as these is nothing to joke about. In 1539, engaged in protracted controversy with John Agricola—arguably the first “radical Lutheran,” and as such a theologian whose misadventures tended in just the opposite direction of Erasmus’ moralism—the Christian “should either have the Holy Spirit and lead a new life, or know that he has no Christ.”

No Holy Spirit, no renewal of life, no Christ. What happened to pecca fortiter? Is this a flash in the pan? Or a failure of nerve? No, in fact it is neither. In his sermons

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12 WA 18.693.8-9, cf. Packer, 180. Mutatis mutandis, the same holds for scholastic theologies which affirm the integrity of fallen humanity’s natural faculties and eo ipso reduce nature-renovating grace to an alien gift superadded on top of one’s intact capacities: Item, regenerationem et innovationem spiritus premunt, ac velut externe auxilium illud alienum illi affingunt. WA 18.666.10-11, Packer, 143. Farther on this point below in chapter 1.

13 WA 50.600.11-12, LW 41.115.
of the 1530s and 40s, Luther increasingly urged upon the largely impenitent flock at Wittenberg the utter inseparability of redemption by the blood of Christ and renewal through the work of the Holy Spirit, the latter manifested in lively faith, deep repentance, and concrete acts of obedience and love. For example, taking up 1 Thess. 4:1-7 in March 1539, Luther proclaimed: “Know what Christ ought to mean for you, who has set you free from death. He is called the Savior, who has set his people free from sins for righteousness. Therefore, Christians should not remain in sins but be intent on living in chastity and holiness (heiligkeit), with kindness toward the neighbor.”¹⁴ He continued: “Christ did not come to set you free so that you could cheat and steal. If you do, this preaching that Christ died for sinners, etc. does not help you. People who do such things are like the heathen who do not know God.”¹⁵ Likewise: “Christ died for those who let their sins be forgiven, cease committing them, and then become daily more perfect. Otherwise this sweet preaching is a vain, lost word, since those who hear it say, 'Indeed! He is a comforting preacher,' just so he doesn’t add: 'If you are in sins, you will be damned,' etc.”¹⁶ Yes, you read that right. Redeemed Christians must repent of their sins and become intent on holiness. Failing this, the gospel is of no use to them. In the end they will be damned, for Christ only died for the sins of those who seek daily increases in perfection. It would seem the old Prediger is full of surprises! He certainly wasn’t pulling any punches.

In 1544, preaching Matt. 3:13-17 on Epiphany I, Luther reiterated essentially the same doctrine in relation to holy baptism:

¹⁴ WA 47.671.16-9 [A], cf. LW 58.21.
¹⁵ WA 47.671.25-672.2 [A], cf. LW 58.22.
¹⁶ WA 47.672.19-23, cf. LW 58.22.
When we preach, baptize, pray, the Son is there among us, the Father speaks, the Holy Spirit hovers. There we learn to fear our Lord God. Why do you want to lie? Do you not believe that Christ is with you, that the Holy Spirit, the Father is present? "No, but because of him who so richly graces me and always forgives sins." If you believed this, you wouldn’t commit so many sins as otherwise. But where does this license for sin come from? It’s because we don’t believe that these things happen every day, that the Trinity is present. These people who do not acknowledge their baptism are not Christians. They forget baptism and wallow in sin like pigs. There are few who rightly value their baptism and keep in mind that God is present. Therefore learn your holy baptism and your glorious name [i.e., den Christlichen namen] in your own person! We have been clothed with sheer grace and mercy, with freedom from sins and an evil conscience—precious garments indeed. Do not lie down in filth wearing such a garment! If you can protect your fine silk and velvet garments, can you not do the same for your heavenly garment? If you do otherwise, know that you have lost all grace and mercy.¹⁷

Die Antinomer have become die Sawtheologen! This, as students of Luther’s 1515 scholia on Rom. 4:7 are well aware, is a deep irony indeed.

Consider one last sermon: the 7 June 1545 exposition of 1 John 4:16-21. About six weeks before he left town, decided he’d had enough of Wittenberg’s avaricious burghers and promiscuous youth, and wrote Katie to pack up their things and prepare to move¹⁸—“Just away, out of this Sodom! ... I would rather eat the bread of a beggar than torture and upset my poor old age and final days with the filth at Wittenberg”¹⁹—Luther did his unambiguous best to admonish his sinful sheep about the great danger they were in if they kept on sinning boldly while claiming to believe more boldly still:

Not all are Christians who boast faith. Christ has shed his blood. Sola fide, without works, we are justified. “I believe this.” Ja, that’s hellfire! You’ve learned the words you’ve heard the way mockingbirds learn to repeat things. Where are the fruits showing that you believe? You remain in sins; you’re a usurer and more. Surely Christ did not die and shed his blood for the sins that

¹⁷ WA 49.315.8-21 [A], cf. LW 58.77-8.
¹⁹ WA Br 11.149.1—150.34 (#4139).
you are intent on committing continually, but so that he might destroy the
works of the devil (1 John 3:8). If you were a usurer, say like Zacchaeus: “I will
give half of my goods, and if I have defrauded anyone, I will restore it fourfold”
(Luke 19:8). The blood of Christ kills sin; it does not make it alive, which is the
work of the devil, who inflames the desire that makes human beings murderers
and adulterers. Christ did not die so that you might remain such a sinner, but
so that sin, having been slain, might be blotted out, and you might henceforth
love God and your neighbor. Faith takes away sins and puts them to death, so
that you might not live in them but in righteousness. Therefore, show by your
works and your fruits that there is faith in you. If not, the blood of Christ
doesn’t help. If you are a usurer, disobedient, negligent in your station, you’ll
see whether you believe. For faith is victorious, triumphant, conquering the
world (1 John 5:4). If you truly believed, you would not commit usury or
adultery; you would not be disobedient. Let each one think: “I became a
believer, washed in baptism with the blood of God’s Son, so that my sins might
be dead. I will not be disobedient and I will declare this with my deeds.”
Otherwise, give up the boast of being a believer. You know that you are a
disobedient son, an adulterer; do not boast about faith and the blood of Christ.
You’re the devil’s, the way you are going, etc. Ja, you’re putting your own self to
shame and Christ himself, you who say you believe, and you’re bringing the
name of the LORD into shame and yourself to eternal damnation. Love follows
true faith … If you will reform yourself, good; if not, then in truth I cannot
tolerate it, for you are acting contrary to the Word. Thus there must always be
rebuking, ja, not one daily sin is to be endured.20

Not one daily sin! Christ’s blood avails nothing for usurers, adulterers, and unruly
children, whose hard-hearted continuance in concrete, plain, visible sins shows that
they belong to the Devil not Christ and forebodes their eternal perdition in hell. This,
 despite the fact that they are well-catechized, gnesio-Lutherans in their “faith”: solus
Christus, sola fide, etc.—hellfire! What are we to make of this? What has become of
the joyful freedom of a Christian man? Has the senescent Luther degenerated into a
curmudgeon—a kind of pious Walter Matthau, an old man grumpy about “the way the
girls were wearing their blouses cut so low and twirling their skirts at the dances”?21

Has he lost confidence in the power of the gospel? Pressured under mounting waves of

20 WA 49.783.21-784.16 [A], 786.13-15 [A], cf. LW 58.237-8, 240.
21 Haile, Luther, 317.
popular lawlessness, nascent capitalism, greedy noblemen, and theological antinomianism, has the *miles emeritus* effectively admitted that the exuberant evangelical faith of his youth was unrealistic, changed the course of his Reformation, and altered his theology? Kierkegaard, enraged by the complacency of his age, once claimed that if Luther had lived to see the decadence of nineteenth-century Denmark he would have preached just the reverse of the doctrines he fought for in sixteenth-century Saxony. Did the exasperated Reformer beat him to the punch in the 1540s?

Exhausted and disillusioned as he may well have been, in this book I argue that the sort of practical admonitions and dire threats issued in these late sermons cohere tightly with the mature Luther's deepest theological convictions about the gospel (not just the law!) and about the nature, necessity, source, means, course, and ends of evangelical holiness. The argument proceeds in three steps. In the first Part of the book, I expost what I refer to as Luther's "dogmatics of holiness" as he sets it forth in the works of his maturity c. 1535—44. Chapter 1 sets the stage for my main object by studying the doctrines of creation, fall, and promised redemption as the old Doctor unfolds them in his 1535 lectures on Gen. 1-3. This is essential for understanding Luther's theology of holiness, for the Spirit's gift of holiness in Jesus Christ consists principally in the restoration of fallen and vitiated human creatures to the original or "natural" perfections which the unfallen Adam and Eve once enjoyed in the gladdening presence of God. This foundation laid, I proceed in chapter 2 to expost Luther's creedal dogmatics of residual sin, grace in Jesus Christ, and the gift of renewal by the Holy Spirit on the basis of four signal works from this period: the *Smalcald Articles* (1536/7-8), the first, second, and third *Disputations against the Antinomians*
(1537-8), On the Councils and the Church (1539), and the lectures on Genesis 24:1-4 (1540) and 42:7 (1544). This I take to be the first major contribution of this book: a careful exposition of Luther’s enduringly “Augustinian” theology of holiness, set in intimate relation to his doctrines of “sin” in the saints and of free grace and justification through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ.

In Part II, I justify the adjective “Augustinian” through close readings of passages from the 1515/16 Lectures on Romans that feature Luther’s appropriation of extracts from the old Augustine’s works against Julian of Eclanum. I refer to the definitively orthodox theologian whom Luther discovered in these late anti-“Pelagian” works by the device, “the 420s Augustine,” in subtle but significant contrast to the earlier and in comparison relatively underdeveloped “410s Augustine” who wrote against Pelagius and Caelestius. (I will explain this distinction farther in its place below.) In chapter 3, I study the emergence of the young Luther’s “Augustinian simul” in the scholia on Rom. 7. Then in chapter 4, I examine the interrelation of residual affective sin, renewal through healing grace, and the mercy of non-imputation as it stands in the scholia on Rom. 4:7. The reversed order is important. To grasp Luther on Rom. 4:7, one has first to understand the Augustinian doctrines of affective “sin” and healing grace which he sets out in full in the course of exegeting Rom. 7. In practice, Luther scholars who start out in Rom. 4 never quite make it to Rom. 7: the Totalaspekt that imbues the former overwhelms the Partialaspekt of the latter; and then the latter, together with the theology of embattled renewal it comprises, is dismissed as a remnant of Luther’s Catholic past that doesn’t really fit with his radical new insights into total sinfulness and relational justification. On the other hand, if we start with the
Catholic/“Augustinian simul” in Rom. 7, the Protestant paradoxes of Rom. 4:7 (and Ps. 32!) fall nicely into place as well, without being swallowed up. This increased explanatory power is enough, I think, to justify the reversal in order; but if you prefer, read chapter 4 first and then come back to chapter 3—I take no offense. Regardless, my aim in Part II is this: against the scholarly mainstream, which tends to assume the “410s Augustine” as the standard by which to assess the adequacy of Luther’s interpretation of the Church’s doctor of grace and love, I argue that the young Augustinian read the old Augustine’s works contra Iulianum quite well, and appropriated them fairly in the formation of his own dogmatics. This, I hope, will prove to be the second major contribution of this book.

In Part III, the “big picture” comes into view as I put the pieces together and assess how the mature, Augustinian, and evangelische dogmatics of sin, grace, and holiness essayed in Part I relates to the embryonic, Augustinian, but not-yet-fully-evangelical dogmatics set forth in Part II.

I am thus undertaking a twofold venture: in one respect more “systematic” (in the German sense current within Lutherforschung) vis-à-vis Luther’s mature dogmatics of holiness, in another more “historical” and aiming to specify the nature, extent, and depth of his dependence upon Augustine. Neither side of the argument can stand apart from the other; but then, the soundness of this intuition is itself part of what I need to demonstrate in the argument. I will unpack this twofold claim in greater detail briefly here, but I’m afraid it will take a bit longer to prove in the rest of this book.
My twofold, systematic-and-historical argument about the nature of Luther’s mature theology of sin, grace, and holiness comes to this:

(1.a) First, I argue that the mature Luther taught a robust doctrine of progressive renewal into real holiness of life through the “gift” of the Holy Spirit. He alternately names this spiritual reality sanctification, “justification” (*Gerechtmachung*), the healing, renewal, or restoration of nature, new creation, the firstfruits of the Spirit, deification, and so forth. But since the words (*verba*) Luther uses to describe the reality of this gift vary freely, it is more useful to attend to its dogmatic substance (*res*). This centers on the restoration of vitiated human nature in the saints to its original perfections through Jesus Christ, the Last Adam, by the renewing operations of his Spirit. Hence the title of this book: *renovatio*. For Luther, this Spirit-given renewal of life in Christ is real, inchoate, progressive, and unfinished, i.e., it begins in baptism/regeneration and advances in fits and starts over the course of the Christian life. Perfection in holiness, or the complete restoration of Adam’s fallen children to radiant and eternal life with God in Christ by the Spirit, is increasingly approximated but never attained this side of eschatological glory.

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22 In his lecture on Gen. 4:7, Luther suggests that his ubiquitous juxtaposition of “words” and “things” is rooted in a maxim of Hilary’s (*trin.* 2.5) cited frequently in Peter Lombard’s *Sent.*, and he asserts that this insight fits well with a similar one by the philosopher, an allusion to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* 3.1-2 that should not be peremptorily dismissed as a “Melanchthonian” redaction. WA 42.195.3-9, LW 1.263: *Porro natura sic ordinatum est, ut verba testante etiam Philosopho debant servire rebus, non res verbis. Et nota est Hilarii sententia, quam etiam Magister in sententiis citat, quod verba intelligi debeant secundum materiam subjectam. Igitur in omni expositione primo subiectum considerari debet, hoc est, videndum est, de qua re agatur. Hoc postquam factum est, deinde verba, si ita fert grammatices ratio, ad rem ducenta sunt, et non res ad verba.* On the distinction in Hilary, with different *verba* (!), cf. WA 18.728.15-16, Packer, 23: *Ex causis enim dicendi intelligentia petenda est, ait Hilarius, non ex vocabulis solis. The verba/res distinction will recur frequently in this book. Cf. WA Tr 3.491.14-17, #3654b, 25 Dec. 1537 (cf. LW 54.249): both Andreas Osiander, who is the main personality under discussion, and the sophists “sweat over the grammar and the words (*in grammatica et verbis*), not over the realities (*in rebus*), while they ought to make the words subject to realities and not the realities to words. When I set out from the realities (*Wan ich auß den rebus kom*), the words (*verba*) are various.” And they are!
(1.b) But if I were to argue this thesis alone, the presentation of Luther’s teaching about renewal and holiness of life would be incomplete to the point of obscuring it entirely. For his doctrine of renewal by the Spirit’s “gift” (donum) cannot be rightly grasped apart from its intimate correlation to the doctrine of the “grace” (gratia) which is in Jesus Christ, on the one hand, and on the other to his teaching about the nature of residual affective “sin” in the saints of God (the “simul”). When it comes to calibrating these three doctrines, historical Luther-interpretations and dogmatic theologies of all stripes both tend to err in opposite directions. Some so emphasize the necessity of renewal in holiness that the humbling reality of enduring sinfulness in the Christian is obscured, and with it the infinitely greater reality of grace and forgiveness in Christ. Others so exaggerate the sinfulness of the Christian, and so separate the grace of free justification from the gift of that repentance which leads to life (Acts 11:18, 2 Tim. 2:25), that one would think St. Paul expected an affirmative reply to his leading question, “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” (Rom. 6:1). St. Paul and the fishermen, in concert with the prophets of old, steer a middle course between these imbalances, which seem to afflict the theologians of the Church in every generation. For, on the one hand, in point of the evangelical facts God’s grace in Christ is so infinitely perfect and strong that where our sin increases, his grace does indeed abound all the more (Rom. 5:20). The saints of the Church are the first to confess that real growth in holiness is ever attended by an increasing sense of utter dependence upon the miracle of this free and strong grace:

In the evening of this life, I shall appear before You with empty hands, for I do not ask you, Lord, to count my works. All our justice is blemished in your eyes.
I wish, then, to be clothed in your own justice and to receive from your love the eternal possession of yourself.\textsuperscript{23}

But to confess this, as all true saints do, is not to deny the reality of the newness of life which the Holy Spirit works within them. Buried with Christ in baptism into death, and buried ever more till the final day they die,\textsuperscript{24} the saints are united with Christ in his resurrection life (Rom. 6:3-11). Therefore, what remains of the first Adam’s sin in their flesh need not reign over them as it once did: and, having been set free from sin’s enslaving power, the saints of God present their members as slaves of righteousness leading to sanctification. This is the good fruit they get, and its end is the free gift of God in Christ Jesus our Lord—eternal life (Rom. 6:12-23). So far the Apostle: and I will argue in this book that upon close inspection, Luther’s mature teaching appears to be every bit as rich, multi-dimensional, nuanced, sober-minded, hopeful, and glad as St. Paul’s, Peter’s, John’s, David’s, Isaiah’s, etc., and as such a faithful rendering of apostolic doctrine. Taken together, the “systematic” exposition of these dogmatic themes in Luther’s mature theology is the grand object of the first Part of this book.

(2) In the second place, I contend that the mature Reformer’s theology of sin, grace, and holiness is rooted in the young Luther’s sound interpretation of the late Augustine’s writings against Julian of Eclanum. In a real way, this is the heart of this book’s historical-theological argument: if it fails, all the blood and vigor that might otherwise pulsate through the rest of the book will be drained. In my judgment, the mature Luther’s theology of holiness is unintelligible apart from a solid grasp of its


\textsuperscript{24} Switchfoot, “Where I Belong,” #12 in the album \textit{Vice Verses} (lower case people records/Atlantic, 2011).
roots in the theology of the old Augustine. But in the works of Luther’s maturity, those roots are for the most part hidden beneath the surface, as are all good and strong roots *in ordine naturae*. By contrast, in the 1510s the Augustinian roots of Luther’s theology lie open to view in the form of explicit (and often quite long) quotations from the newly produced 1506 Amerbach edition of Augustine’s works. In fact, if I may extend the image of a tree and its roots it will, I think, prove fruitful here for explaining what is going on in Luther’s dogmatics, exegesis, and spiritual teaching c. 1514—16.

Imagine an uprooted tree transplanted from a nursery and in process of being replanted in new soil. The tree is Augustine’s mature theology of sin and grace; the material nursery is the new edition of his works; the rather rich soil is composed of Luther’s own spiritual life as a struggling monastic disciple of Jesus and as a fledgling pastor and teacher in the Church. Brother Martin’s bitter *Anfechtungen* dug a deep whole in his soul (cf. Ps. 40:6). The Psalter, John Staupitz, and the Bible—I suspect in that order, but how would one prove this? or disprove it?—provided life-giving streams of water for the sapling. But the theology of the “420s Augustine” that Luther read out of the eighth volume of the Amerbach edition is itself the tree that will be planted in the young Luther’s mind and heart and then nourished by these other streams of influence for the rest of his life. Since the fragile plant is still being set in the soil in the 1510s, the roots are exposed: and for this reason, the Romans lectures especially are an indispensable resource for understanding not just the young, but the mature Luther’s theology. For later on, when the young sapling has grown up into a sturdy old “Lutheran” oak (cf. Isa. 61:3), its Augustinian roots are for the most part

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hidden from the eye. A surprisingly great number of readers, who apparently don’t
know much about trees, have inferred from their inability to see any roots that
Luther’s Reformation theology stands all on its own. Not so, I will argue, not so! For
much, much of the strength and vigor of the old oak lies in the depth and extent of its
subterranean roots.

This spade-work is the task of Part II. Then, having confirmed the permanent
impact of Luther’s readings in Augustine upon his mature “Augustinian” theology of
holiness at the start of Part III, I attend to a handful of major points of development in
Luther’s teaching from 1518 on. In this panoramic account of the discontinuities-in-
continuity that characterize Luther’s theology over time, I aim to show how he carries
forward the old Augustine’s central insights about sin, grace, and renewal in holiness
in a fresh, creative, and “evangelical” way. This, too, is a primarily “historical”
endeavor, which assumes the argument about the mature Luther’s dogmatics in Part I
with an eye to making sound judgments about how the old Doctor’s theology draws
on, departs from, and advances the positions he arrived at in the mid 1510s under the
tutelage of the “420s Augustine.”

In sum: I shall argue that much of mainstream Luther scholarship (and
Lutheran theology) is quite wrong to think that the Church’s great doctor

\textit{iustificationis} downplayed, denied, derided, or just plain ignored “the holiness without
which no one shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). In fact, from the first inklings of his
“Augustinian turn” c. 1514 to his death in 1546, Luther held and taught a robust
theology of progressive renewal in holiness, which he carefully calibrated to the sober
reality of residual sin and the astonishing gospel of free grace in Jesus Christ. As it is
set forth in the works that embody the Reformer’s most considered judgments, this
gospel-centered and deeply creedal theology of holiness is Augustinian and
evangelisch in equal parts. As such, it commands the admiration and regard—if not
the total assent; I for one disagree with Luther in a few major points—of those catholic
and evangelical Christians, pastors, and theologians who read the Bible, pray, think,
teach, preach, write, and confess in the tradition of the doctor gratiae.

Theology is, of course, a great and ongoing conversation; and it behooves those
of us who join in later on in the evening to listen quietly before we speak, and then,
when we dare open our own mouths, to give some indication that we have been
paying attention rather than boorishly suffering our friends’ company and impatiently
waiting our turn. In historical-theological scholarship, this means careful interaction
with the work of my teachers and peers, and good footnotes; and in what follows I will
try not to disappoint the reader on this score. I have found it more suitable to my aims
to engage the work of other scholars en route, rather than supplying a long and
tedious review of the massive body of research on the major themes of this book, e.g.:
Luther’s dogmatics of creation, sin, grace, justification, and holiness; the nature of his
debt to Augustine and, therefore, the nature of Augustine’s own theology; the nature
of his spirituality; the relative weight of patristic, monastic, scholastic,
Frömmigkeitstheologische, philosophical, and humanistic influences on his thought;
the development of the Reformer’s theology over the course of his career; the “young”
and the “old” Luther; und so weiter. That being said, I think it fitting to say a brief
word here about my major opponents in this contest, and also about a few my closest
friends.
As for my opponents: at first, not having read too deeply in twentieth-century Luther scholarship, I was aware of the “problem” of holiness in Luther’s theology mainly by hearsay, through the ignorant prejudices of Anglican theologians and church historians, and then the popular work of Gerhard Forde. (I first learned of the pecca fortiter as a freshman at Wheaton College, when the rebellious coxswain of my rowing shell used it to justify his plans for that Friday evening.) But a quick glance at the footnotes shows the extent of his dependence on the 1951 book by Wilfried Joest, *Gesetz und Freiheit.* Forde even copies out Joest’s little diagrams of the Christian oscillating, tennis-ball-like, between total sinfulness, total righteousness, and back again. Through a few pointers from Michael Root and David Yeago, I read Joest, and much about modern Lutheran theology began to make sense. Any given paragraph in Joest’s book may shift effortlessly from WA 56 to WA 39/1 and back again—a flaw by no means limited to the Finns—but I attend mainly to his interpretation of a few passages in the *Disputations against the Antinomians* which have set the tone for the “total simul” and its ascendancy in the interpretation of Luther’s theology of holiness, or lack thereof. In the presentation of Luther’s mature dogmatics, Joest is my main opponent: but the reader is advised that in challenging Joest, I am challenging Forde too.

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26 Wilfried Joest, *Gesetz und Freiheit. Das Problem des tertius usus legis bei Luther und die neutestamentliche Parainese.*
In regards to the Luther—Augustine problem, my main nemeses are Rudolf Hermann and Leif Grane, and behind them both, Heinrich Denifle. In the introduction to Part II, I argue that the very Lutheran Hermann’s Lutherdeutung is really a mirror image of the ferociously anti-Lutheran interpretation produced by Denifle in his applecart-upsetting Luther und Luthertum (1904-6). Denifle argued that Luther misunderstood Augustine and wrongly appropriated the Catholic father to his own devious ends, vainly claiming heilige Augustinus as patron for the self-serving theology of invincible concupiscence and forensic justification which he built around the “simul” in order to excuse his uncontrollable need for sex. Hermann agreed about Luther’s mistaken reading of Augustine, but championed the new evangelical theology which the Reformer’s auspicious misunderstanding of Augustine gave rise to. Grane’s 1975 Modus loquendi, a very good book in many respects, effectively picks up where Hermann left off in 1930. In chapters 3 and 4, I cross swords with these formidable scholars and argue just the reverse: Luther read Augustine—that is, the “420s Augustine”—well, and appropriated him with real insight and skill. In arguing against them and in favor of the “Augustinian” character of Luther’s theology, I see that I am also arguing for the catholicity of the Reformation. This was not an explicit intention of mine at the outset, but in the process of writing I have come to the conclusion that it is inevitably bound up with the subject matter. Against Hermann and Grane’s inflated assertions of evangelical novelty, and against Denifle’s mean-spirited

aspersions of uncatholic heresy, I argue for a deeply Augustinian and in this sense “catholic” Luther, newly evangelical in some major respects to be sure, but substantially and permanently traditional as well. In this vein, and as a segue toward my comrades-in-arms, it is fitting at this point to mention the dean of German Luther research, Oswald Bayer. *Promissio* has stood the test of time; forty-plus years after its publication, it remains a brilliant and richly rewarding work. But I shall have to argue here that its argument is flawed in some key respects. Perhaps it can be said that in general Bayer is right in what he affirms and wrong in what he denies. The *promissio—fides—fiducia* nexus was hugely important for the genesis of Reformation theology; but it did not signal as clean a break from the Catholic past, especially in its Augustinian and “mystical” streams, as Bayer has contended for. To say the same thing a little cryptically: the evangelical Luther was a reformed Augustinian, a Finnish *Worttheologe*.

As for my friends: I have already noted the significance of Root and Yeago for my argument. In particular, Yeago’s 2004 essay on renewal and the “simul” helped awaken me from my dogmatic slumbers, and brought Joest to my attention. Similarly, Root’s 2008 lecture at Concordia Seminary on “The Deconstruction of Twentieth-Century Lutheranism” led me to Hermann. I gladly acknowledge their work, and I hope they will find to their satisfaction the way this book advances insights gleaned from them. In terms of actually digging into the substance of Luther’s

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teaching about sin, grace, justification, and holiness, for my money Julius Köstlin has yet to be surpassed. In the nature of the case, my own insight into Luther’s exposition of these great matters has been shaped especially by the work of my teachers: Dr. David Steinmetz, in his books but perhaps especially in lectures and seminars at Duke; Reinhard Hütter, mainly through a book written while he was still a Lutheran, but also in seminars engaging Augustine, Luther, and Thomas Aquinas; and Prof. Mickey Mattox, who kindly agreed to supervise a reading course on the Reformer in spring 2011, suggested the theme of holiness as a focus for my research, and has taught me much about Luther in the process of directing my Marquette dissertation. Amongst the proliferating articles and books in Luther scholarship on dogmatic, spiritual, and philosophical themes pertinent to my argument, in addition to the above-mentioned theologians I have found the work of Regin Prenter, Erwin Iserloh, Jarod Wicks, Simo Peura, Theodor Dieter, Volker Leppin, and Risto

34 The Theology of Luther in its Historical Development and Inner Harmony, esp. II/4.
35 Reinhard Hütter, Bound to Be Free: Evangelical Catholic Engagements in Ecclesiology, Ethics, and Ecumenism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 111-67.
37 Regin Prenter, “Luthers Lehre von der Heiligung,” in Vilmos Vajta, ed. Lutherforschung heute: Referate und Berichte des 1. Internationalen Lutherforschungskongresses, Aarhus, 18.-23. August 1956 (Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1958), 64-74. Note well that Prenter’s argument in this paper marks a fundamental shift away from positions held in his earlier work (as a student of Hermann), Spiritus Creator.
Saarinen especially useful. In regards to Luther’s engagement with Augustine, though he is influenced somewhat by Hermann, Adolf Hamel is more a friend than a foe. Despite a few significant differences in method and interpretation, my argument for the depth of Luther’s “Augustinianism” in the doctrines of sin, grace, and justification finds a real (and more recent) ally in Dr. Jairzinho Lopes Pereira, a Portuguese Roman Catholic theologian who followed up his master’s thesis on Augustine at Coimbra with a thorough dissertation on Augustine and Luther written under Saarinen at Helsinki. As for the theology, and moral psychology, of the great African himself, I am especially indebted to my teacher at Marquette, Prof. Michel René Barnes. If the argument of this book against my eminently worthy opponents proves to be compelling, it is in large part because of such wise and learned friends as these.

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45 Jairzinho Lopes Pereira, Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther on Original Sin and Justification of the Sinner (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).
And now: to business.

PART I

LUTHER’S MATURE DOGMATICS OF HOLINESS (1535—44)
1. FIRST THINGS: CREATION, FALL, AND PROMISSIO IN THE 1535 LECTURES ON GENESIS 1-3

Werner Elert begins his widely influential 1931 *Morphologie des Luthertums* with a chapter on the wrath of God under which sinful humanity stands condemned; he then proceeds to an exposition of the Gospel relentlessly focused on forensic justification.\(^4^6\)

In the same vein, Oswald Bayer’s recent *Vergegenwärtigung* of Luther’s theology builds on the definition of theology’s *proprium subiectum* given by the Reformer in his 1532 lecture on Psalm 51, to wit: “The proper subject of theology is man guilty of sin and condemned, and God the Justifier and Savior of man the sinner.” Luther adds, with typical aplomb: “Whatever is asked or discussed in theology outside this subject, is error and poison.”\(^4^7\) I will return to Luther and Ps. 51 in a moment. But must we not admit at the outset that with claims as stark as these, Elert and Bayer are right to regard the restoration of the lost human creature to real holiness of life as either an absent or anemic theme in Luther’s evangelical theology?


\(^{4^7}\) WA 40/2.328.17-20, LW 12.311. Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther’s Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation.* Trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), chapter 2: “The Topic of Theology: The Sinning Human Being and the Justifying God.” In the new *Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology*, two of the chapters begin with this same line from the lecture on Ps. 51: Steven Paulson’s on “Luther’s Doctrine of God” and L’ubomír Batka’s on “Luther’s Teaching on Sin and Evil.” See Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L’ubomír Batka, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 187 (Paulson) and 233 (Batka).
My argument in this book is, in effect, a sustained “No” in response to this question, and it is no accident that I begin my argument with Luther’s 1535-45 Lectures on Genesis. For unlike much of modern Lutheranism, the mature Luther, the reader and teacher of the biblical story, knew that he could not begin with the wrath of God against the sinner for the simple reason that the Bible begins with the creation of Man in the image of God, with God’s glad blessing upon Adam and Eve, and with his pronouncement of their real goodness in his sight.48 As a theology that takes its point of departure from das Unerlebnis of God’s wrath can only really terminate in the removal of that wrath through judicial pardon and acquittal, so a theology that begins with God’s joy in his creation of creatures able to share his divine life cannot arrive at any real completion without passing through the proximate end of acquittal to the final goal of restoration to life in communion with God.49 Elert cannot have a theology of holiness, because he does not have a theology of creation. Luther has such a theology, because he is basically a biblical theologian whose vision is shaped definitively by the canonical and trinitarian drama of God’s generous creation ex nihilo, of Adam’s fall into death through sin, of redemption in Jesus Christ, and of restoration to newness of life—by the Spirit’s power—in sanctification and in the final

48 The great nineteenth-century Luther scholar, Julius Köstlin, saw this point very clearly. See his The Theology of Luther in its Historical Development and Inner Harmony, trans. Charles E. Hay (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1897), II/4, 217: It might be thought that a systematic presentation of Luther’s thought should begin with sin and grace, law and Gospel. “But Luther’s discussions of Law and Gospel rest upon the doctrines of God, of the nature and destiny of man, of the general and original relation between the Creator and the creature, especially man, as objective premises.” Recently David Yeago has urged essentially the same point; see esp. “Gnosticism, Antinomianism, and Reformation Theology: Reflections on the Costs of a Construal,” Pro Ecclesia 2/1 (1993), 37-49.

49 For a concise dogmatic exposition of this claim, see John Webster, “Rector et iudex super omnia genera doctrinarum? The Place of the Doctrine of Justification,” in Michael Weinrich and John P. Burgess, eds., What is Justification About? Reformed Contributions to an Ecumenical Theme (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 35-56.
glory of the resurrection.\textsuperscript{50} This is why, in his 1535 lecture on Gen. 1:26, Luther declares that through the Gospel of Christ the \textit{imago dei} lost through Adam's sin is restored (\textit{reparetur}).\textsuperscript{51} It is also why, in the first of his \textit{Disputations} against the antinomian theology of John Agricola in December 1537, Luther teaches that the Old Testament saints looked expectantly to the promised Messiah who would “restore everything (\textit{omnia restiturum}) that had been lost in Adam.”\textsuperscript{52} For in the New Testament, the promised Christ is given in order that he might “restore (\textit{restituat}) the corrupt nature to its integrity,” that the “disease” (\textit{morbus}) infecting Adam's nature may be “healed” (\textit{medeatur}).\textsuperscript{53}

Does this mean that Luther, the theologian of creation’s restoration and healing in Christ, indulges in subject matters outside the bounds of genuine theology, indeed, in error and poison? One might at this point seek to ameliorate Luther’s famous remarks on the subject of theology in the Ps. 51 lecture by appealing to his penchant for exaggeration, but I prefer to leave its full force intact through a twofold explanation. My interpretation has to do first with the Psalm lecture itself, but it also touches more generally on the character of Luther’s theology.

In the first place, the sentence that immediately follows Luther’s rejection of anything outside the theology of sin and justification as error and poison reads as follows: “All Scripture points to this, that God commends His kindness to us and in his Son restores (\textit{restituat}) to righteousness and life the nature (\textit{naturam}) that has fallen

\textsuperscript{50} His insistence on this point is a real strength of Ulrich Asendorf's book, \textit{Lectura in Biblia. Luthers Genesisvorlesung (1535-1545)} (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), e.g., 11, 13, 19, 69-73.  
\textsuperscript{51} WA 42.48.11, LW 1.64.  
\textsuperscript{52} WA 39/1.403.28-404.2, \textit{ATD}, 66.  
\textsuperscript{53} WA 39/1.386.8-11, \textit{ATD}, 53.
into sin and condemnation.”¹⁴ He then explains that the “life” in question in not the mere biological existence of man as animal; rather, “the issue here is the future and eternal life; the God who justifies, repairs (reparante), and makes alive; and man, who fell from righteousness and life into sin and eternal death.”¹⁵ The great kindness of God does not stop at pardoning man’s guilt through the atonement that is in Christ crucified; God restores, repairs, and gives life to the nature that fell in Adam through his incarnate and risen Son. Luther adds: “Whoever follows this aim in reading the Holy Scriptures will read holy things fruitfully.”¹⁶ So it is only through violence to Luther’s own lecture text that a theology of restoration would be excluded from what he means by the God who justifies the sinner. And in fact, shortly later in his comments on Ps. 51:2, Luther explains that the “grace” (gratia) that brings peace with God through trust in his mercy in Christ, on the one hand, and the “conferring (donatio) of the Holy Spirit with his gifts (donis)” on the other, are “the two parts of justification (duae partes iustificationis).”¹⁷ Here we have Luther’s robust theology of grace and gift, reconciliation with God in Christ and renewal by the Spirit’s operation—to which I will return often in this study; but for now, as we prepare to enter into his lectures on Genesis, I note simply that Luther sees this basically creedal theology as vital to reading the “holy things” of Holy Scripture fruitfully.

In the second place, I would like to strengthen Bayer’s own hand by incorporating his emphasis on the sinful man and the justifying God—or Elert’s, or Robert Kolb’s, theology of law and Gospel—within this overarching theology of grace

¹⁴ WA 40/2.328.20-2, LW 12.311.
¹⁵ WA 40/2.328.26-8, LW 12.311.
¹⁶ WA 40/2.328.28-9, LW 12.311.
and gift, of creation redeemed and restored. We must keep in mind that Luther is lecturing on Ps. 51, whose *Sitz im Leben* is David’s plea for mercy after his fall into grievous sin (cf. 2 Sam. 11-12). This is a basically pastoral setting, and Luther the pastor is concerned above all to bring comfort and consolation to the grieving penitent, the bruised reed and faintly burning wick of Isa. 42:3. In this specific situation, where the pastor (or the brother with the Word) discerns in wisdom that the sinner’s heart is broken and contrite and then speaks the Gospel of free mercy, grace, and forgiveness through Jesus Christ—that is, when the pastor rightly handles the Word of truth by rightly dividing law and Gospel (2 Tim. 2:15)—then the only proper subject of true and evangelical theology really is the depth-reality of sin and the infinitely greater reality of gracious justification in Christ. But as I have shown from this very lecture, this is by no means the only moment in which the pastor/theologian is called to speak, nor are the twin truths of God’s judgment against sin and his free justification of the sinner the only truths he is called to understand and to teach in the Church of Jesus Christ.

The *Lectures on Genesis* are uniquely suited to demonstrate this claim, because the biblical text itself summons Luther to present the whole scope of the Holy Trinity’s creative, redemptive, and restorative work in grace and in glory. The bulk of the present study explores how the living God brings about the restoration of his lost and vitiated human creatures through the Gospel, that is, the renewal of the sinner

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58 On Luther as pastor, see Timothy J. Wengert, ed., *The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther’s Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 1: “Martin Luther was, more than anything else, pastor and preacher for his Wittenberg flock.” This, Wengert rightly insists, applies far beyond specifically “pastoral” acts like preaching in the parish or Seelsorge, 13: “No matter what else Luther was doing, he was always at the same time Wittenberg’s pastor.” Cf. Franz Posset, *The Real Luther: A Friar at Erfurt and Wittenberg* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2011), 9: “The historical Luther is the pastoral Luther.” Asendorf, *Lectura in Biblia*, 79, speaks of “the thoroughly seelsorglichen character” of the *Lectures on Genesis* in particular.
into real holiness of life. To grasp this evangelical restoration in the fullness with which Luther presents it, we must first attend to what was lost, how it was lost, and what ensued for mankind after this loss. Hence the four subsections of this chapter examine, primarily on the basis of Luther’s 1535 lectures on Gen. 1-3, the Reformer’s teaching regarding: 1. the original, unfallen state of human nature as God’s creature fashioned in his image for his glory; 2. the nature of the trial established by God’s good command at Gen. 2:16-7, and of the temptation suffered by Eve and Adam at the Serpent’s malicious instigation in Gen. 3—to which, alas, they succumbed; 3. the consequent undoing of human nature by sin and death; 4. and finally, the first proclamation of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Serpent-Crusher, who restores what was lost in Eden through his grace and gift.

1. What are people for?

We begin with the nature of the “image of God.” In what did it consist? Simo Peura, David Yeago, and Antti Raunio have drawn attention to the presence of theosis-related themes in Luther’s lectures on Gen. 1-2. Lecturing on Gen. 1:26, for example, Luther proposes in thesis-like fashion: “My understanding of the image of God is this: that Adam had it in his being and that he not only knew God and believed that he was good, but that he also lived a life that was wholly divine (vitam vixerit plane divinam).” Thus Luther imagines God addressing Adam: “This is my Image, by which

60 WA 42.47.8-10, LW 1.62f.
you are living just as God lives \((qua \ vivitis, \ sicut \ Deus \ vivit)\)." Still handling Gen. 1:26, the Reformer states that Adam and Eve were "completely engulfed \((absorpti \ essent \ toti)\) by the goodness and righteousness of God." This mystical-sounding claim finds an echo in a more theoretical comment at Gen. 2:18, to the effect that "man is a singular creature and pertains to participation in divinity and immortality \((participationem \ divinitatis \ et \ immortalitatis)\)." Though Luther does not draw the causal connection explicitly, the inference is clear enough: because of his creaturely participation in (or absorption by) God’s divinity, goodness, righteousness, and life, Adam leads a divine life. This participatory sharing in the divine life is what it means for Adam to exist in the image of God. In a moment, I will explain how the “divine life” of the \textit{imago} very much comprises goodness and righteousness. But in the few cases where Luther speaks overtly in the terminology of deification, the concrete shape of Adam and Eve’s divine life is more typically characterized by utter fearlessness and astonishing joy: image-bearing Eve is not intimidated by the Serpent, and deified Adam is “drunk with joy toward God” \((ebrius \ esset \ leticia \ erga \ Deum)\).

Yet Luther’s bold declarations regarding Adam’s deifying participation in the divine life are as striking as they are sparse. More often, he explains the meaning of the “image” in terms of Adam’s psychological (and physiological) faculties in their original perfections. I will argue this point as a friendly corrective of an overemphasis on theosis in Luther’s protological anthropology, but the claim also cuts against the

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61 WA 42.47.15-6, LW 1.63.
62 WA 42.50.29, LW 1.67. Cf. WA 42.71.27: \textit{absorptus totus in bonitate creatoris}.
63 WA 42.87.16-8, LW 1.115.
64 WA 42.47.11-12, LW 1.63 (Eve) & WA 42.71.31-2, LW 1.94 (Adam). For further references to Adam’s fearless joy, cf. WA 42.47.10-1, LW 1.63; WA 42.47.22-3, LW 1.63; WA 42.49.29-30, LW 1.66; WA 42.97.37-8, LW 1.130; WA 42.42.31, LW 1.56.
grain of much inherited wisdom in (mainly German) Luther scholarship. Bernhard Lohse, drawing on the work of Bengt Hägglund, Wilfried Joest, and Gerhard Ebeling, asserts that Luther’s non-psychological, “personal” interpretation of the image constitutes a real point of contrast between the Reformer and scholastic tradition. In a similar way, Bayer’s presentation of Luther on the image—which leans heavily on Ebeling’s work on the 1536 *Disputatio de homine*—denies that it refers to “a quality that resides within the human being in and of himself,” and is rather a “relational term.” In point of fact, the university lecturer on Genesis 1-2 is keenly interested in Adam’s psychological faculties. Their perfections engage Luther’s admiration and fascination, and stand at the center of his teaching regarding the character of the divine image.

This holds true with respect to the vital, “thesis-like” proposition I quoted above: “Therefore my understanding of the image of God is this: that Adam had it in his being (*in sua substantia*) and that he not only knew God and believed that he was...

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66 Bayer, *Luther’s Theology*, 157.

67 Because of Ebeling’s dominance, research into Luther’s philosophical psychology is still in its infancy. Thus, e.g., Notger Slenczka’s recent essay on Luther’s anthropology treats it only when discussing Luther’s scholastic background, then effectively leaves it behind for the *novum* found in the 1536 *disputatio de homine* and the new relational/existential self-understanding bestowed in justification—which Slenczka, with rare honesty of intention, links directly to Schleiermacher. See his “Luther’s Anthropology,” in *OHMLT*, 212-32, p. 217 for the reference to Schleiermacher, as well as pp. 230-1. For a glimpse of better prospects in this area of research, see Pekka Kärkkäinen’s report from the 2012 Luther Congress, “Philosophical Psychology in Luther’s Theology,” *Lutherjahrbuch 80* (2013), 268-70. In its discussion of the image, the seminar concluded that for Luther “the image of God is to be found in the powers of the soul,” but “only after the light of grace illuminates them,” 269. This tantalizing but necessarily brief comment is very near the position I am arguing for in this chapter. Cf. idem, “Psychology and the Soul in Late Medieval Erfurt,” *Vivarium 47* (2009), 421-443.
good, but that he also lived a wholly divine life.” Pace Bayer and other non-ontological interpretations, Luther expressly states that Adam had the image “in his being.” But at the same time, the substantial reality of Adam’s “divine life” should not be set against his knowing God and believing his goodness. Rather, this knowing and believing God provides the spiritual means sine qua non of Adam’s deifying communion—his intimate relationship—with God. He leads a divine life because he knows and trusts the divine goodness that absorbs and intoxicates him. He is able to know and trust God thus, because he possesses, as the unique and originally perfect kind of creature God made him to be, the faculties requisite to this form of spiritual action.

Consider the context of Luther’s “thesis.” The eye-catching theosis-proposition is embedded within two virtually identical discussions of the perfections of Adam’s natural faculties (potentiae). In the preceding paragraphs, Luther explains: “His intellect (intellectus) was the clearest, his memory (memoria) was the best, and his will (voluntas) the most straightforward—all in the most beautiful tranquility of mind, without any fear of death and without any anxiety.” (Note that Adam’s “divine” fearlessness is here attributed to the perfections of his psychological faculties.) In addition, the image includes Adam’s physical perfections: his eyes sharper than an eagle’s, his strength greater than a lion’s, his ability to eat enhanced beyond our imagination, and his sex-life unembarrassed, ordered, and pure. Luther concludes, marveling: “No one can picture how much better nature (natura) was then than it is

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68 WA 42.47.8-10, LW 1.62f.
now." Luthers *ergo imaginem Dei sic intelligo* and “theosis”-proposition follow on the heels of this conclusion. In other words, the comprehensive perfection of Adam’s nature as originally created is summarized in the claim that he led a wholly divine life.

The succeeding paragraphs confirm this interpretation and take it one step further. There was in Adam, Luther states, “an enlightened reason, a true knowledge of God, and a most sincere desire to love God and his neighbor.” In other words, he both possessed rightly functioning mental and volitional faculties and actually exercised these faculties as they were created to be used, knowing and loving both God and his neighbor. Here lies the real solution to Luther’s qualified rejection of a simple identification of the image with psychological faculties *per se.* Raunio takes this to involve a shift away from scholasticism toward “theosis” in much the same way Lohse, Bayer, and others envision a shift to existential personalism. In fact what Luther is saying is that the image consists not merely in man’s (or an angel’s or demon’s) possession of psychological faculties, but in the complete vivification of such faculties as they engage in their proper actions toward their appointed end, namely, knowing, trusting, and loving union with God. But to return to the text under discussion: Luther continues to add “other lesser but exceedingly important gifts” that pertain to Adam and Eve’s dominion over the other creatures which parallel the physical perfections treated above. “If all these qualities are combined, do they not

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69 WA 42.46.11-47.7, LW 1.62.
70 WA 42.47.33-4, LW 1.63.
71 WA 42.45.1-23, LW 1.60.
make up and produce the sort of man in whom you would think that the image of God shines (relucere)?”

In a later comment on Gen. 5:1 (“On the day which God created man, He made him according to the similitude of God”), Luther again stresses that Adam’s likeness to God consisted not in the mere possession of psychological faculties, but in their right use ordered to intimate fellowship with God. He had “such” (talem) a will and intellect, as by them to understand God and to will what God wills. Thus created “in this perfect image and similitude of God,” had Adam not fallen “he would have lived forever, happy and full of joy, and he would have had a will that was glad (hilarem) and ready to obey God.” These are the very qualities that mark Adam’s “divine life.”

Adam is full of joy and leads a divine life because his psychological faculties are fully engaged in the actions for which God created them: at Gen. 1:26, knowing God and believing that he is good; here at Gen. 5:1, understanding God and willing what he wills with a readiness prompted by gladness and joy.

The “image,” then, does consist in the divine life that was Adam’s by nature, given him to enjoy through participation in God. But Luther’s predominant interest vis-à-vis the image seems to lie elsewhere, namely, in the perfection of Adam’s faculties that made him naturally capax of the gift of participation in God’s goodness, divinity, righteousness and life. Knowing God, believing his goodness, loving him with pure affection: these are descriptions of the fully vivified psychological faculties that explain—from Adam’s side—the original, “natural” reality of his deifying and

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72 WA 42.47.33-48.5, LW 1.63-4.
73 WA 42.248.9-14, LW 1.337.
74 WA 42.248.14-6, LW 1.338.
gladdening communion with God. By them Adam and Eve “acknowledged God’s goodness, rejoiced in God, and felt safe in God’s goodness,”\textsuperscript{75} knowing, believing, and receiving the gift of God’s own “rejoicing and exulting” over them.\textsuperscript{76} Nor should Luther’s interest in Adam’s physical perfections be entirely ignored, for in them the fullness of Adam’s divine life as bearer of God’s image “shines” forth through his body into the rest of the material cosmos. Though on the whole, with the tradition at large, Luther is most concerned with the spiritual character of the image. It is precisely and only because Adam and Eve are endowed by their Maker with these specific natural perfections that they are able to engage in those spiritual actions by which they relate to God in deifying union with God. Thus my proposed interpretation of Luther on the image harvests the strengths of the German and the Finnish positions while correcting their weaknesses.

Luther’s discussions of Adam’s “original righteousness” parallel his explanations of the image closely. From what I can gather, he never quite equates the two concepts outright, but he defines them in the same way. Lecturing on Gen. 2:17, for example, Luther states that Adam’s \textit{originalem iusticiam} meant that he “was righteous, truthful, and upright, not only in body but especially in soul, that he knew God, that he obeyed God with utmost joy (\textit{summa voluptate}), and that he understood the works of God even without prompting.”\textsuperscript{77} He adds: “Adam loved God and his works with an excellent and pure affection,” lived amongst the other creatures in

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{75} WA 42.107.16-7, LW 1.142-3.
\item \textsuperscript{76} WA 42.51.17, LW 1.68.
\item \textsuperscript{77} WA 42.86.4-6, LW 1.113.
\end{footnotes}
fearless peace, and had an obedient body untroubled by evil affections or lust.\textsuperscript{78} In his comments on Gen. 3:7 the same themes arise, though now with a polemically-charged emphasis on original righteousness as Adam’s “nature.”\textsuperscript{79} Luther states that it was “Adam’s nature to love God, to believe God, to know God, etc.”\textsuperscript{80} As it is the eye’s nature to see, “so it was the nature of reason and will in Adam to know God, to trust God, and to fear God.”\textsuperscript{81} These claims about the nature of original righteousness again reflect the Reformer’s predominant interest in the perfection of Adam’s psychological faculties, fully alive and naturally realized in those actions which united him to God. Reason and will unreservedly engaged in the actions of knowing, trusting, and loving God was “truly natural”\textsuperscript{82} for unfallen Adam, \textit{connaturalis},\textsuperscript{83} \textit{de essentia hominis},\textsuperscript{84} \textit{de natura hominis}.\textsuperscript{85} And this knowing, trusting, and loving God was at once Adam’s original righteousness and the wellspring of his divine life of fearless, God-drunken joy.

Thus if I have tried to reduce an emphasis on theosis to its proper proportions, I fully agree with Yeago’s claim that when Luther defines man’s originally righteous

\textsuperscript{78} WA 42.86.11-5, LW 1.113.
\textsuperscript{79} Polemically charged, because directed against the late scholastic concept of grace as a superadded gift (\textit{donum superadditum}) either (a) integrating natural faculties otherwise prone to inner conflict or (b) elevating natural faculties that are already integrally intact to the supernatural order. For an example of the first sort, see Gabriel Biel’s \textit{Collectorium} II d. 30 q. 1 (W & H, II/555-61), e.g., art. 2 conc. 1 (W & H, II/557): \textit{Ad salvandum in primo parente tranquillitatem potentiarum, necesse est ponere aliquam qualitatem vel donum voluntati superadditum}. Thus there follows in art. 2 conc. 3 (W & H II/558): \textit{Iustitia originalis est supernaturale donum Dei infusum voluntati parentis primi}. For a survey of traditional Roman Catholic criticisms of Luther on this point, see August Hasler, \textit{Luther in der Katholischen Dogmatik} (München: Max Hueber Verlag, 1968), 58ff.
\textsuperscript{80} WA 42.124.5-6, LW 1.165.
\textsuperscript{81} WA 42.124.11-2, LW 1.165.
\textsuperscript{82} WA 42.124.5, cf. LW 1.165.
\textsuperscript{83} WA 42.123.38, cf. LW 1.164.
\textsuperscript{84} WA 42.124.34, cf. LW 1.166.
\textsuperscript{85} WA 42.125.31, cf. LW 1.167.
natura, he does so “in terms of the acts that are its telos, its fulfillment.”86 As I have repeatedly noted, Luther is not disinterested in the nature of the human person formally considered. To the contrary, he extensively discusses the natural perfections of Adam’s psychological and physiological faculties and includes them within his definition of the divine image. But the Reformer is not ultimately concerned with philosophical questions about the nature of the will or the intellect. Indeed, in his lecture on Gen. 1:2 he admits candidly that “we lack knowledge about our very selves” and despite endless investigations remain “incapable of giving a definition of the soul.”87 The real object of Luther’s concern is man’s nature considered in terms of its finality, viz., not the quid sint of his faculties but the purpose for which those faculties were created by God. Putting aside consideration of Adam’s physical perfections and their penultimate ends, it is clear that his mind and heart are by nature ordered to—and engaged in—the unitive acts of knowing, trusting, and loving God. By these actions, Adam received and maintained the originally-given gift of deifying communion with God: the gift that constituted his being in the divine image.88 Knowing, loving, and trusting God, he is “completely absorbed” by his goodness,89 radiant with his divine life, perfect in righteousness, drunk with joy toward God,

86 Yeago, “Martin Luther on Grace, Law and Moral Life,” 170.
87 WA 42.11.12-15, LW 1.13; cf. the 1545 lecture on Gen. 45:3, WA 44.589.33-590.14, LW 8.14-15: Quid autem anima sit speculative, vel ut Philosophi loquuntur, Metaphysice, non possimus scire, sed est affectibus et fructibus colligimus esse nobilissimum et mirabilissimum quoddam ens... Es ist ein wunderlich creaturichen... anima mirabile quiddam est et nobis incognitum.
88 Thus I agree with Robert Kolb’s claim that Adam and Eve “received their humanity as a free gift of the Creator” and that their original righteousness is “passive, God’s gift.” But Kolb does not properly attend to the way in which God’s free gift of Adam’s being in righteous communion with Himself is ordered to Adam’s action in response to and in the power of this passively-received gift. See Kolb’s Martin Luther: Confessor of the Faith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 104.
89 WA 42.71.27, cf. LW 1.93.
and—vitaly—“content with God’s grace” (*contentus gratia Dei*). This is Adam’s nature considered with respect to the end for which he was created, to wit: experiencing by trust and love the gladdening and deifying gift of communion, as a creature, with God.

*As a creature*—and therefore, as a worshipper. For Adam to know, trust, and love his Maker is for Adam to offer him the “inner and spiritual worship” that is his Maker’s due. To this point, we have seen Luther describe man’s end in terms of psychological faculties fully alive and engaged in those actions that unite him in glad communion with God. Luther also teaches that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. In his lecture on Gen. 2:3, he twice states this explicitly: the institution of the Sabbath day proves “that man was especially created for the knowledge and worship of God” and that his nature “was chiefly created for acknowledging and glorifying God (*ad agnitionem et glorificationem Dei*).” In Luther’s teleological anthropology these two definitions of man’s nature, the psychological and the doxological, coincide. Adam was made to worship his Maker will all his heart, soul, mind and strength, and in worshipping him to be glad. That is what people are ultimately for, to be worshippers who live and flourish in adoration of the true God whose gracious goodness absorbs and intoxicates them with thankful delight.

The coincidence of the psychological and the doxological accounts of man’s nature surfaces tellingly in Luther’s comments on Gen. 2:21-22. He states that Plato,

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90 WA 42.47.11, cf. LW 1.63.
91 WA 42.72.3, LW 1.94.
92 WA 42.60.35-6, 61.1-2, LW 1.80.
Cicero, and other philosophers of “the better sort” are able to grasp something of the formal and material causes of human nature. That is, they have some genuine insight into human psychology, biology, etc. But they are in the dark as to the efficient and final causes of mankind, “about who did the creating and for what purpose he created.” And “without the knowledge of these two causes, our wisdom does not differ much from that of the beasts.”

Plato might know something useful about the intellect as such, but he does not know what the intellect is ultimately for. Thus he will use it the way beasts use their eyes and ears, namely, to achieve a modicum of self-preservation in this world only to perish in the end, having failed to attain his true end or even to understand what it is. It is perhaps not an accident that Luther singles out Platonism as an example of an earth-bound philosophy; the irony merely sharpens the point he is making as a Worttheologe. For the Word alone reveals that the true God—the Holy Trinity—is both “the efficient and the final cause” of all things, including his “beautiful creature,” Man. The Word reveals that God made Adam as his creature ex nihilo, out of the sheer goodness and generosity of his heart. He then appointed Adam to the end of manifesting his Maker’s glory, and to do so in that intimate fellowship with himself which—from Adam’s side—took the form of adoring, thankful, praising knowledge, trust, and love. This was Adam’s “purpose” (finem), the chief end for which he was made. He “was created to worship God and to live eternally...

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93 WA 42.94.3-6, LW 1.124-5. Bayer, Luther’s Theology, 159, discusses a similar (and chronologically proximate) treatment of the four Aristotelian causes in Luther’s 1536 Disputatio de homine (WA 39/1.175, LW 34.138).
94 WA 42.95.25-6, LW 1.127.
95 WA 42.98.11, LW 1.131.
with God.” And according to Luther, as we should by now expect, Adam’s principalis finis—to worship and live with God—is what it means that Adam was created according to God’s likeness. His natural existence as righteous bearer of the divine image (the psychological account of man’s end) consisted in his being a worshipper of the true God (the doxological), who lived to glorify God and to enjoy him forever, “drunk with joy toward God.”

Thanksgiving stands at the center of the glorificatio Dei that is Adam’s chief end: he existed to give God thanks. In his exposition of the first article of the Creed in the 1529 Small Catechism, Luther first celebrates the munificence of God’s gifts in creation, all lavished upon us “out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy,” then culminates by insisting on our responsibility to respond to such a generous God with thanksgiving and praise. In his meditation on this text, Bayer declares categorically: “This describes everything about the human being that needs to be stated.”

I believe my argument thus far has shown both the way in which Bayer exaggerates and the deeper sense in which he is absolutely correct. Luther’s lectures on Gen. 1-2 demonstrate that for the Reformer—much to the surprise, I suppose, of Dom Gregory Dix—Adam is, originally as well as ultimately and finally, homo eucharisticus. Having received everything from God as the sheer gift of his generosity, goodness, and love, including his life in communion with such a God, Adam was to rejoice and give God thanks from the bottom of his heart. Thus when Luther imagines

96 WA 42.98.12-3, LW 1.131.
97 WA 42.98.20-2, LW 1.131.
98 WA 42.71.31-2, LW 1.94.
99 Book of Concord, 354-5.
100 Bayer, Luther’s Theology, 173.
Eden’s “church” in his comments on Gen. 2:16-17, this great and glad thanksgiving holds the central place in the liturgy. Adam would have “praised God and lauded him” for the gift of dominion over the creatures, using something like Ps. 148 or 149 as “a kind of liturgy for such thanksgiving (quandam formam talis gratiarum actionis).” And in his preaching, Adam would have extolled “the greatest gift,” viz., that he was created according to God’s likeness.\(^{101}\) The only thing God wanted from Adam, the telos to which he appointed him, was that he praise, thank, rejoice in, and obey his Maker.\(^{102}\) But this form of eucharistic existence is the very gift that God himself had lavished upon Adam freely by virtue of his creation in the divine image. To be fully human meant that Adam was an adoring, thankful worshipper and lover of the God who made him by grace, who knew this generous God in the intimate communion of faith and love, and gave him glory. This, in Luther’s reckoning, is what people are defined in terms of what people are for.

2.1. Gen. 2:16-17—Adam and Eve’s Trial

To grasp what happened in the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve in Gen. 3, I need first to explain the trial of their obedience established by God’s command at Gen. 2:16-17 to refrain, on pain of death, from eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

The trial is inextricably bound up with Luther’s contention that “Adam had a twofold life: animal and immortal ( duplicem vitam: animalem et immortalem ).”\(^{103}\) What does this mean? At one level, it reflects what I explicated above regarding the

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\(^{101}\) WA 42.80.19-28, LW 1.105-6.
\(^{102}\) WA 42.81.3-4, LW 1.106.
\(^{103}\) WA 42.43.7, cf. LW 1.57.
perfections of Adam’s physiological and psychological faculties. Like the beasts in “physical life and bodily activity,” comments Luther at Gen. 2:17, Adam also possessed the “intellectual power (potentiam intellectivam)” which is in the angels, such that “man is an animal compounded from the nature of beasts and of angels (sit homo mixtum animal ex brutali et angelica natura).”104 This idea of the human as an “amphibious” creature, situated between beasts and angels in the order of being and partaking of each of their natures, has a long pedigree in the theological and philosophical tradition and is certainly not new to Luther.105 But it is not the primary meaning Luther normally intends when he speaks of Adam’s duplex vita.

The second, and more predominant, meaning Luther attaches to the higher kind of “life” possessed by Adam refers not so much to his capacity for certain types of actions but to his eschatological destiny. His life is twofold, because unlike the beasts and like the angels he is destined for immortality. “We were created for a more excellent life (ad excellentiorem vitam) in the future than this physical life would have been, even if our nature had remained unimpaired,”106 not merely an animal but a “spiritual life (spiritualem vitam)”107 and “an immortal one.”108 That the two meanings converge is plain from what I have argued above regarding the nature of the divine image, to wit: that Adam’s psychological constitution, his ability to think, to know, to love, rendered him not only a rational but a “spiritual” animal, indeed an “angelical

104 WA 42.85.11-13, cf. LW 1.112.
105 Peter Lombard, e.g., taught that ex duplici natura compactus est homo. Sent. II d. 20 cp. 6.1 (Grott. I/432). Cf. Augustine, civ. dei 9.13 (CCSL 47.261, Bett. 359): “Man is an intermediate being (medium quidam est), but intermediate between beasts and angels”; 12.22 (CCSL 48.380, Bett. 502): “God created man’s nature as a kind of mean (naturam quodam modo medium) between angels and beasts.”
106 WA 42.42.31-2, cf. LW 1.56.
107 WA 42.42.24, LW 1.56.
108 WA 42.43.7, cf. LW 1.57.
animal" (animal ex... angelica natura) naturally capable of, and engaged in, living a life of radiant joy in communion with God.

Nevertheless, Luther envisions a very definite eschatological reserve in Eden. Adam did have a twofold life, animal and immortal, but the latter “was not yet clearly (plane) revealed, but only in hope (in spe).”¹⁰⁹ In some sense, deified and God-drunken Adam already enjoyed the spiritual, immortal, angelic, and eternal life that complemented and surpassed his animal nature. But in another sense, he had yet to arrive at this fullness of the life his nature was created to enjoy, save only in hope.¹¹⁰ God so constituted his nature that even in Paradise he had not yet arrived at his eschatological goal. Here, Luther stands on firm traditional ground—and tells his students so:

Therefore the Doctores have put it well: Even if Adam had not fallen through his sin, still, after the appointed number of saints had been attained, God would have translated them from this animal life to the spiritual life. Adam was not to live without food, drink, and procreation. But at a predetermined time, after the number of saints had become full, these activities would have come to an end; and Adam, together with his descendants, would have been translated to the eternal and spiritual life.¹¹¹

“Doctores” indicates Luther’s awareness that in speaking of Adam’s hypothetical translatio he is passing on a common Augustinian inheritance.¹¹² He alludes to it

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¹⁰⁹ WA 42.43.7-8, LW 1.57.
¹¹⁰ On this point, see Peura, 132-8.
¹¹¹ WA 42.42.22-4, LW 1.56, slightly altered.
¹¹² See Peter Lombard, Sent. II d. 19.6, d. 20.2, and esp. d. 20.6, de hominis translatione in meliorem statum. For Augustine, see e.g. Enchiridion 8.25, WSA I/8, 280: "God had threatened [Adam] with the punishment of death if he sinned, bestowing free will on him while still ruling him by his authority and terrifying him with the thought of death, and placing him in the bliss of paradise as if in the shadow of life, from which he was to rise to better things if he preserved his state of justice.” Cf. civ. dei 12.22 and 13.1 (CCSL 48.385, Bett. 510): “The condition of human beings was such that if they continued in perfect obedience they would be granted the immortality of the angels and an eternity of bliss, without the interposition of death, whereas if disobedient they would be justly condemned to the punishment of death.”
repeatedly in his lectures on Genesis 1-3.\(^{113}\) Adam was not created for an exclusively earthly destiny. Rather, by nature the bearer of the divine image—who in some real sense partook of divinity and immortality—was ordained by God to share in a higher, more glorious, more “spiritual” kind of life than the one he already enjoyed. If we press further for clarification of what Luther has in mind here, the most helpful insight comes in a comment on Gen. 2:7, which St. Paul quotes at 1 Cor. 15:45. Reading Paul's First and Last Adam theology back into Eden in a very traditional way, Luther speculates that the *translatio* would have transformed Adam as first created—the “living soul” (*animam viventem*), still partly animal in nature and needing to eat, drink, beget, etc.—into a “quickening spirit” (*spiritum vivificantem*) who would have lived without any animal qualities “from within,” in direct dependence on God alone. But, Luther is careful to add, this hypothetically translated Adam “would still have flesh and bones and would not be a mere spirit (non *sit* mere *spiritus*) like the angels” (cf. Luke 24:39). In other words, he would have experienced “resurrection,” as the Last Adam did, but without the preceding death.\(^{114}\)

But the translation into resurrection-like spiritual life depended upon the condition of Adam and Eve’s obedience to God’s command at Gen. 2:16-17: “The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you shall not eat, for in the day that

\(^{113}\) LW 1.46, 56-7, 65, 80, 86, 92, 100, 104, 110, 115-6, 121, 130, 153.

\(^{114}\) WA 42.65.25-36, LW 1.86. At *Sent.* II d. 20.6, Peter quotes 1 Cor. 15:46 (*primum est quod est animale, deinde quod spirituale est*) but does not seem to envision such a vividly resurrection-like translation. In *civ. dei* 13, on the creation and fall of Man, Augustine closely relates Adam’s hypothetical “gift of immortality” with the resurrection of Jesus and the future bodily resurrection of the saints. In a real sense, the entire book is a sustained interpretation of 1 Cor. 15:20-22 and 42-9, e.g., 13.23 (CCSL 48.405, Bett. 536-7): “The first man, however, was ‘of the earth, earthy,’ and he was made as a ‘living soul,’ not a ‘life-giving spirit’; that condition was reserved for him after he had merited it by obedience.”
you eat of it you shall surely die.” Why did God establish this command? In his comment on Gen. 2:13-14, Luther explains that this “Law was given to Adam that he might have an outward form of worship by which to show his obedience and gratitude toward God.”¹¹⁵ There are, I think, two points to tease out here for the purpose of my argument.

First, drawing insights from Cargill Thompson, Raunio, and Yeago and building upon my own exposition of Adam’s nature, it is vital to grasp that the *verbum externum* issued in Gen. 2:16-17 depends upon a deeper and more basic “law,” to which the command not to eat from the Tree gives expression. This is the law of Adam’s nature: the *lex naturae* originally identical with his creation in the perfection of the divine image.¹¹⁶ This point becomes clearer when Luther’s stance on the relation between revealed and natural law *post lapsum* is correlated with the protological anthropology examined thus far in this chapter. In the second *Disputation against the Antinomians* (12 Jan. 1538), for example, Luther explains that fallen, vitiated humans need the help of the revealed law “so that we might be reminded of what we were before Adam’s fall (*quid ante lapsum Adae fuerimus*).”¹¹⁷ In the Decalogue, the Lord of

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¹¹⁵ WA 42.77.19-20, LW 1.101.
¹¹⁶ On natural law in Luther, see Antti Raunio, “Natural Law and Faith: The Forgotten Foundations of Ethics in Luther’s Theology,” in Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 96-124; idem, *Summe des Christlichen Lebens: Die ‘Goldene Regel’ als Gesetz der Liebe in der Theologie Martin Luthers von 1510-1527* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2001), 294-319. I am not here so interested in Raunio’s insights regarding the Golden Rule, as with his contention that in Luther’s thought natural law is grounded ontologically in human nature as God’s creature. Despite his differences with Cargill Thompson, this aligns Raunio with the former’s argument for the persistence of a broadly Thomistic natural law tradition within sixteenth-century Reformation theology, flowering in Richard Hooker but already there in Luther and other magisterial reformers. See W. D. J. Cargill Thompson, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1984), 79.
¹¹⁷ WA 39/1.454.13-14, *ATD*, 105. Cf. WA 39/1.539.7-15, *ATD*, 172: God’s laws, summed in the Decalogue, “are written on the hearts of all men, unless they are utterly unnatural, ever since the birth or creation of man, together with Adam.” But because man is so deeply fallen, “God was
redemption does not issue arbitrary commands unrelated to his work in creation. Rather, he reminds sinful, wounded, forgetful, and thus less than entirely “natural” humans of what being fully alive as his creaturely image-bearers actually entails. But innocent Adam needed no such reminder, because he knew, trusted, loved, obeyed, and worshipped God by nature. This is what he was made for, and this is what he did from the first moment of his creation, because this is who he was as the protological Man. God did not “demand” this knowing, trusting, obeying, etc. from Adam as if from an unwilling subject. He gave it to Adam when he gave him his being as this sort of creature, for whom to exist is to exist as one who knows and trusts the divine goodness that absorbs and intoxicates him, freely obeys such a trustworthy God, and responds to God’s bounty with glad shouts of thanksgiving from the deepness of his heart. 118

Thus, as Luther states in the first Disputation against the Antinomians (18 Dec. 1537), “When Adam was first created, the law was for him not only something possible, but even something enjoyable. He rendered the obedience the law required with all this will and with gladness of heart, and did so perfectly.” 119 For Adam is and does—by the “grace” of his creation in God’s image—what the law of his nature requires him to forced again to give us a limit, lest we forgot totally his law, so that we would at least remember who we were before (qui iam antea fuerimus).”

118 Here I lean heavily on Yeago’s comments on Gen. 2:16-7, e.g., “Martin Luther on Grace, Law and Moral Life,” 176: “The commandment is not given to Adam so that he might become a lover of God by keeping it; Adam already is a lover of God… The commandment was given, rather, in order to allow Adam’s love for God to take form in an historically concrete way of life.” Yeago’s analysis is profoundly insightful, but he does not connect the “positive” lex regarding the Tree to the lex naturae (which he nonetheless describes in concrete terms).

be and do. Adam worships, obeys, and thanks God from the bottom of his glad heart, because God has given this to him as the gift of his being. This is the real keeping of the law, the law of his nature. That is why, for Luther, the subsequent command not to eat from the Tree revealed not (as we might think) the severity, but “the goodness of God,” who had created Adam’s nature with all its perfections.\textsuperscript{120} It is also why Adam’s own preaching on the “text” of the command would have “extolled the greatest gift” of his creation in the divine image.\textsuperscript{121} In short: “For Adam, this Word was Gospel and Law,”\textsuperscript{122} for the purpose of Gen. 2:16-17 was to give external expression to the inner spiritual reality of total obedience, complete faith and love, and thankful joy that Adam simply was—prior to Gen. 2:16-17—by virtue of the free gift of his creation in God’s image. The command gave occasion to reveal the glory of God’s beautiful gift, as the spiritual reality of the divine image took shape—as Yeago puts it—in the historical concreteness of Adam’s life.\textsuperscript{123}

This brings me to my second point. When God tests Adam by establishing the command about the Tree, his real object runs much deeper than testing external obedience to a positive law. What is ultimately at stake is whether or not Adam will continue willingly in his uniquely human form of creatureliness, gladly conforming to

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\item WA 42.80.21-10, LW 1.105.
\item WA 42.80.27-8, LW 1.106.
\item WA 42.111.18-9, LW 1.146.
\item This account of \textit{lex naturae} vis-à-vis Gen. 2:16-17 has some affinity with Paul Althaus’ distinction between a post-fall “law” and an original “command” that is essentially God’s loving summons to “participation in his life in the partnership of love.” See his short book, \textit{The Divine Command: A New Perspective on Law and Gospel}. Trans. Franklin Sherman (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 8-11, here 8. Cf. Ernst Sartorius, \textit{The Doctrine of Divine Love: Or, Outlines of the Moral Theology of the Evangelical Church}. Trans. Sophia Taylor (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1884), 68: Gen. 2:16-7 “keeps man in an orderly fellowship of love with God and His fellow-men, it admonishes him to abide in love. The hearts of the first human beings were filled with their first love, and need therefore no impelling and prescribing law, though they did require a regulative and restrictive one.”
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the law of his nature. Will he be “content” with the grace of his creation in the image of God? Will it be enough for him to be and remain a creature, however glorious? That is, will he continue to worship God—to humbly receive his entire being as a gift, and thus to give God glory by giving him thanks? To obey the command and to wait patiently for the translatio that such obedience would “merit”—this would mean for Adam to abide in the “grace” of the trust, love, and thankfulness that made him originally righteous and/or fully human and united him, as this kind of creature, in communion with the God who rejoiced over him. To break God’s command would, by contrast, mean for Adam to refuse and renounce the gift of his being as a creature in God’s image; to be dissatisfied with this grace and gift; to hold back thanksgiving; to turn his trust, love, and obedience in upon himself; to break off communion with God; to attempt to cease existing as a creature, and to become his own god. In sum: would Adam remain in the submission and thankfulness proper to his existence as a dependent creature, refraining from the Tree and thus manifesting his “obedience and gratitude to God”? Or would he destroy himself by entering upon a path of autonomy, rebellion, and ingratitude, that is, of idolatry?

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124 At civ. dei 12.22 (CCSL 48.380, Bett. 502), Augustine directly ties the “amphibious” nature of humanity to the test of obedience established at Gen. 2:16-17 and thus to Adam’s original eschatological vocation: “God created man’s nature as a kind of mean between angels and beasts, so that if he submitted to his Creator, as to his true sovereign Lord, and observed his instructions with dutiful obedience, he should pass over into the fellowship of the angels, attaining an immortality of endless felicity, without an intervening death; but if he used his free will in arrogance and disobedience, and thus offended God, his Lord, he should live like beasts, under sentence of death, should be the slave of his desires, and destined after death for eternal punishment.”

125 WA 42.47.11, cf. LW 1.63.

126 Cf. civ. dei 13.20 (CCSL 48.403, Bett. 534): God forbade them to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, “not because it was evil in itself, but in order to emphasize the good of pure and simple obedience which is the great virtue of a rational creature (magna uirtus est rationalis creaturae) set under the authority of the Lord his creator.”

127 On this entire theme, cf. Augustine’s exegesis of Gen. 17:1-21 at civ. dei 16.26-7 (Bett., 686-9). He first explains in cp. 26 that the covenant God entered into with Abraham is the new covenant of
2.2. Temptation and Fall

When the Devil tempts Adam and Eve in Gen. 3, he sets to work obfuscating and eventually snatching away the concrete commandment of Gen. 2:16-17. But his real grace, albeit hidden within the old: *hic apertiora promissa sunt de vocacione gentium in Isaac, id est in filio promissionis, quo significatur gratia, non natura; thus omnia resonant nouitatem, et in testamento uetere odumbratur nouum* (CCSL 48.530-1). Augustine then argues in cp. 27 that the reason an infant left uncircumcised past the eighth day will be “cut off from his people” for having broken the “covenant” (Gen. 17:14) is that the child broke the original covenant that God established with Adam at Gen. 2:17, when he was in Adam originally: *etiam paruuli, non secundum suae uitae proprietatem sed secundum communem genera hu met generis originem, omnes in illo uno testamentum Dei dissipauerunt, in quo omnes peccauerunt* (CCSL 48.531). Again: *Testamentum autem primum, quod factum est ad hominem primum, profecto illud est: Qua die ederitis, morte moriemini* (CCSL 48.532). Key texts for Augustine in cp. 27 are Rom. 5:12, Hos. 6:7, and Ecclus. 14:17. From what I can gather, Luther does not pick up on this Augustinian insight into the scriptural theology of the covenant in so many words; later on, Reformed theologians will develop it thoroughly in their contrast between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace (a representative and lucid example of which can be found in Thomas Watson’s *A Body of Divinity* § 3.1 and 4.1). That said, Luther’s teachings regarding the command at Gen. 2:16-17 as an expression of the natural law of Adam’s being, the contingent nature of Adam’s *translatio* on the condition that he keep this law, and the material identity of the *lex naturae* with the *lex Moysi*, all have a deep dogmatic affinity with both Augustine’s insights and with the subsequent developments in the Reformed tradition. The same holds true in regard to the new covenant of grace in Christ; indeed, the very notion of God’s “promise” of grace in the gospel is perhaps indistinguishable from the biblical concept of the covenant. And the mature Luther everywhere aims to divide rightly between the conditional promises of the law and the free promise of grace in the gospel. See, e.g., the 1542 lecture on Gen. 32:3-5, WA 44.71.26-31, 72.5-12, LW 6.96-7: *vera est distinctio, duplices esse promissiones, conditionales et simplices sine conditione: ut legis promissio est conditionalis: Gratia e promissio est simplex. Quando merces promittitur laboranti, conditio est, quae requirit operam et officium pactum, quod si non sequitur, merces non solvitur. Sed tales promissiones missas faciamus, quando est cum Deo agendum in conscientia. Mox enim confundemur: Si quidem ne uno quidem momento in officio sumus... Promissio autem gratiae haec est, quando dicit Deus: Tu nihil fecisti, nihil es meritus. Sed hoc tibi faciam, et donabo ex sola misericordia. Tales promissiones sunt gratuitae, et his similes fuerunt Patriarcharum Abrahae, Isaac, Iacob promissiones. Sicut supra recitatae sunt. ‘Adorabunt te filii matris tuae’, item ‘vino et oleo stabilivi te’, ibi nulla conditio accedit: Si feceris hoc, eris benedictus. Sed habes hanc promissionem et benedictionem gratuito. Moses quidem plenus est promissionum legalium: sed Patriarcha simplices et gratuitas habent. I confess, it is hard for me to see how this differs in substance from the later Reformed distinction between the *foedus operum* and the *foedus gratiae*. Cf. Robert Letham, “The *Foedus Operum*: Some Factors Accounting for Its Development,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 14/4 (Winter 1983): 457-67. Letham’s learned article pinpoints the roots of later Reformed covenant theology in Zwingli and Bullinger; it is, I think, especially intriguing that he locates a crucial developmental step in Zacharias Ursinus’ union of Bullinger’s covenant theology with Melanchthon’s teaching on natural law (p. 463). As I have merely suggested here, I think these roots run much deeper in the Augustinian tradition, passing from Augustine himself through the late medieval Ockhamist *pactum*-theology to Luther and thence to various sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Swiss, German, Scottish, English, and Dutch theologians.

128 The classic old study on the Devil in Luther’s thought is by Hans-Martin Barth, *Der Teufel und Jesus in der Theologie Martin Luthers* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967). But Barth’s
aim is to attack and destroy Adam himself, whose inner life of trust, love, obedience, and adoration found expression in this external form of obedience and worship. The two are deeply interwoven, the former being the Devil’s tactical means of achieving the latter end. To unpack this farther, Luther’s remarks near the start of his lecture on Gen. 3:1 merit quoting at length:

This was the greatest (summam) and severest of all temptations; for the serpent directs his attack at God’s good will and makes it its business to prove from the prohibition of the tree that God’s will toward man is not good (Dei voluntatem erga hominem non esse bonam). Therefore it launches its attack against the very image of God and the most excellent powers in the uncorrupted nature. The highest form of worship itself, which God has ordained, it tries to destroy. It is therefore vain for us to discuss this or that sin. Eve is simply urged on to all sins, since she is being urged on against the Word and the good will of God (voluntatem Dei bonam).

God’s sheer goodness established Adam and Eve in his image, and they rejoiced in God and led a “divine life” of fearless joy because they knew and trusted the goodness of his will toward them. If God is for us, who can be against? They walked about in Eden “resplendent with innocence and original righteousness, and abounding in peace
of mind because of their trust in God, who was so kind” to them.⁴⁰ Now in this highest
temptation, the Devil seeks to destroy the divine image—and the “highest form of
worship” that it represented—by calling into question the legitimacy of Adam and
Eve’s trust in God’s goodness. But this is the very divine goodness that absorbed and
intoxicated them and, in so doing, made them the fully living, fearless, glad, God-
adoring creatures they originally were. Thus the deceptive attack on the concrete
command of Gen. 2:16-17 is an all-out assault on Adam’s \textit{natura}, because it is nothing
less than an invidious slandering of the character of God.

So the Devil asks: “How can such ill will (\textit{tanta invidia}) come upon Him that
He does not want you to be wise?”⁴¹ “How can He, who favored you with all these
things, be so envious (\textit{invidere}) as to withhold from you the fruits of this one single
tree, which are so delightful and lovely?”⁴² God is not good after all. His purpose for
his human creatures cannot be trusted. Rather than an occasion to worship God and
give him thanks for his goodness, the Devil’s rhetoric makes the command to refrain
from the Tree proof of the restrictedness of God’s kindness toward Adam and Eve.
God must be holding back from them, hoarding some good that a more generous
Maker would have lavished upon them. In this way, Satan “stirs up resentment
\textit{(invidiam)})” against God, and Eve first doubts and then begins to hate this God “as
though He bore them too little good will.”⁴³ In short: by the Devil’s false logic, the
command proves that God’s will toward man is not good, but invidious, resentful,
grasping, tight-fisted; Adam and Eve’s trust in God’s goodness is broken, as they take

\begin{footnotes}
\item WA 42.108.28-9, LW 1.144.
\item WA 42.112.38-9, LW 1.149.
\item WA 42.115.3-4, LW 1.152.
\item WA 42.119.12-4, LW 1.158.
\end{footnotes}
the Devil at his word but reject the Word of God; and thus their hearts, filled with the
devil’s “poison,” begin to reflect the image of the “new god” that is “invented by
Satan for men without their even being aware of it.” They become as truly invidious
as the Devil’s aspersions have falsely made their Maker out to be. The divine image,
constituted at its core by trust in the divine goodness, is thus shattered by unbelief.
Eve and Adam obey the Devil instead of God and fall from the true worship they were
made for into the lie of idolatry.

It is worth exploring Luther’s claim, in his lecture on Gen. 1:26, that through
the fall “the image of the devil (imago Diaboli)” was stamped upon us. Later in the
lectures the Reformer twice refers back to Gen. 3:5 and the Devil’s promise of self-
deification contained within it. At Gen. 3:22, Luther states: when Adam “wanted to
become like God (similis Deo), he became like the devil (similis Diabolo).” Likewise
at Gen. 4:9: “In Paradise we wanted to become like God, and through our sin we
became like the Devil.” What does it mean that Adam and Eve—who already bore
the divine image—strived to become like God only to be stamped with the likeness of
the Devil? Luther’s position becomes clearer when we focus on invidia in the context
of the story of the Devil’s own fall. When discussing this scripturally-reticent point of

134 WA 42.117.5, LW 1.155.
135 WA 42.112.3, LW 1.148.
136 WA 42.113.30-2, LW 1.149.
137 WA 42.47.22, LW 1.63.
138 Cf. WA 5.128.34-129.1 (Operationes in Psalmos, 1519, on Ps. 5:3): because God’s true Son became
man, nos sibi conformes facit et crucifigit, faciens ex infoelicibus et superbis diis homines veros, idest
miseros et peccatores. Quia enim ascendimus in Adam ad similitudinem dei, ideo descendit ille in
similitudinem nostram, ut reduceret nos ad nostri cognitionem. Atque hoc agitur sacramento
incarnationis. Hoc est regnum fidei, in quo Crux Christi dominatur, divinitatem perversae petitam
deiciens et humanitatem carnisque contemptam infirmitatem perversa desertam revocans.
139 WA 42.166.22-3, LW 1.222.
140 WA 42.208.8-9, LW 1.281.
doctrine, Luther often refers coyly to Bernard of Clairvaux’s theory as a good possibility. His comment on Gen. 1:6 is a good example. Referring to Isa. 14:13—a key text for Bernard—and to Bernard himself, Luther explains that Lucifer was given a glimpse of God’s plan to raise mankind higher than the angels through the Incarnation of the Son, and that “this proud spirit envied (invidisse) mankind this happiness and fell.” Thus the devil and his angels “despised the Word or Son of God and wanted to place themselves above him (se ei voluerunt anteferre),” and fell as a result of this pride (ex superbia). Lecturing on Gen. 2:17, Luther again refers to Isa. 14 and restates the elements of Bernard’s theory: “Some proud angels, displeased by the humility (humilitate) of the Son of God, wanted to place themselves above Him (voluerunt se ei praeferre).” Notably in this connection, Luther introduces the idea that the Devil exalted himself over all “on account of certain gifts (ob certa dona).”

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141 Franz Posset points to Bernard’s Sermo in adventu domini 1, Homelium super ‘Missus est’ in laudibus virginis matris 3, and Sermo super Cantica canticorum 17 as possible sources for Luther. His study examines Luther-texts appealing to Bernard that range from 1526 to 1542, including two further places in the Genesis Lectures: WA 43.319, LW 4.256 (on Gen. 24:5-7); WA 43.580-1, LW 5.220-1 (on Gen. 28:12-14). See Posset’s Pater Bernhardus: Martin Luther and Bernard of Clairvaux (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1999), 285-89. On Bernard’s general influence upon Luther’s thought, see also Theo Bell, Divus Bernhardus: Bernhard von Clairvaux in Martin Luthers Schriften (Mainz: Philip von Zabern, 1993).

142 He cites it, e.g., at SC 17.3.5: “… it could have happened that because of his lofty endowments of wisdom and grace, he could have foreseen that members of the human race would one day be raised to be his equals in glory... Then, stung by a wild impulse of envy, he plotted to maintain as subjects those whom he scorned as companions... Was this impious scheming of his the consequence of his presumptuous self-exaltation, of his pretensions to a seat of power? For he said: I will climb up to the heavens; I will sit in the recesses of the north (Isa. 14:13). He would assume the very likeness of the Most High God; for just as God, from his throne above the cherubim, governs the whole angelic host, so Lucifer, from his usurped position, would control the race of men.” The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux II: On the Song of Songs I, trans. Kilian Walsh OCSO (Spencer, MA: Cistercian Publications, 1971), 129.

143 WA 42.18.16-21, LW 1.23.
144 WA 42.18.33-5, LW 1.23.
145 WA 42.85.30-1, cf. LW 1.112.
146 WA 42.85.23, cf. LW 1.112.
The basically Augustinian picture that emerges is bleak and centers around the overlapping concepts of envy, pride, vainglory, and idolatry. The Devil prided himself on account of his superior dona, envied the future glory of the inferior human nature, and vaunted himself against the humility of God’s Son in a vain and futile attempt to take God’s place as the true and sole possessor of glory. When he enticed Eve and Adam into rebellion with the promise that they would become “like God” (Gen. 3:5), he was luring them to imitate the path he had already chosen. And they took the bait, preferring to be “like God” in the Devil’s proud, invidious, and idolatrous fashion rather than thankfully abide in the divine image they had received as creatures deified by grace. “They put themselves in the place of God the Creator and forget that they are creatures,” laments Luther in a later lecture on Gen. 17:10-11; “Oh the wretched divinity (miseram divinitatem) with which Satan surrounded us through sin.” Thus despite the low profile of superbia in Luther’s lectures on Gen. 3, his repeated references to invidia and his claim that Adam and Eve forfeited the divine image in order to gain the Devil’s likeness argue strongly that the Reformer’s faith/unbelief

147 On the Devil’s fall, see civ. dei 11.13-15, where Augustine makes appeal to Isa. 14 and Ezek. 28:13f; and 14.2-3, where in the course of arguing that embodiment does not cause vice and sin, Augustine exegetes Gal. 5:19-21 and argues that the Devil’s envy and pride make him an especially fleshly being on St. Paul’s account (CCSL 48.417, Bett. 551): Etsi enim diabolus fornicator uel ebriosus uel si quid huius modi mali est, quod ad carnis pertinet voluptates, non potest dici, cum sit etiam talium peccatorum suasor et instigator occultus: est tamen maxime superbus atque invidus. On Adam’s fall, see esp. 14.13 (CCSL 48.434-5, Bett. 571-2): Adam became proud, “and what is pride except a longing for a perverse kind of exaltation?” (Quid est autem superbia nisi peruersae celsitudinis appetitus?) Thus when he performed the first and decisive turn to the self in human history, this turning “to abandon God and to exist in himself (esse in semet ipso)” was nothing but “the lifting up of one’s heart in worship to one’s self, which is the essence of pride (sursum cor habere... ad se ipsum, quod est superbiae).”

148 WA 42.647.20-25, LW 3.139.

149 cf. WA 42.110.39-40, LW 1.147: after faith in the Word is lost, quid mirum est postea fieri superbum?
centered-account—favored by Bayer, e.g.—incorporates an underlying Augustinian/Bernardine focus on pride and vainglory as the root causes of Adam and Eve’s devilish, self-deifying treachery. I shall return to this theme in the next section.

First, I need to outline the aesthetics of temptation (tentatio/Anfechtung) that Luther first lays down in his lecture on Gen. 3 and then returns to throughout the duration of the Lectures. Though there is nothing beautiful about temptation, Luther does believe that a deep and instructive correspondence obtains between the paradigmatic temptation in Eden and all subsequent varieties of the experience. One way or another, all temptation leads man away from faith in the Word and true worship of God into unbelief, self-reliance, and idolatry. “The source of all sin truly is unbelief and doubt and abandonment of the Word,” on account of which the world remains in idolatry, denies God’s truth, and invents new gods instead. “The root and source of sin is unbelief and turning away from God (aversio a Deo).” “The pattern (formam) of all temptations of Satan is the same, namely, that he first puts faith to trial and draws away from the Word.” Thus Eve’s and Adam’s temptation is the

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150 Bayer, Luther’s Theology, 177-80.
151 Cf. Horst Beintker, Die Überwindung der Anfechtung bei Luther. Eine Studie zu seiner Theologie nach den Operationes in Psalmos 1519-21 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1954). Beintker’s study is dated and betrays the marks of its era especially in its prejudice against the heritage of mysticism; but his focus on God’s sovereignty over and amidst temptation, and the victory of Jesus Christ over it by faith, remains helpful. See also H.-M. Barth, Der Teufel, 123-83. Volker Leppin, Martin Luther, 41-2, links Luther’s experience and theology of Anfechtung to John Tauler and Jean Gerson, and rightly argues for its enduring role in the Reformer’s mature theology. Bayer (e.g., Luther’s Theology, 20, 29-43) has drawn attention to the critical role of Anfechtung in the formation of the theologian, drawing on Luther’s 1539 Preface to the collection of his German works (WA 50.657-61, LW 34.283-8).
152 WA 42.112.20-3, LW 1.149. Cf. WA 42.111.23-4: In summa, omnia mala sequuntur incredulitatem seu dubitationem de verbo et Deo.
153 WA 42.122.12, LW 1.162.
154 WA 42.122.22-3, LW 1.163.
caput omnium tentationum. For the purposes of my argument, this must be further specified in two respects:

(1) In temptation, one grows dissatisfied with the Word: non contenti verbo. Whether in the form of law or Gospel, command or gift, in temptation the Word no longer seems to be enough. In the primal temptation, as the Deceiver gyrates rhetorically to gain every point he can against Adam and Eve, they actually experience both types of discontentment. The “Word” of God’s grace and good will toward them, which established them in his image, no longer felt trustworthy once demonic invidia suggested itself to their imaginations. On the other hand, the Devil convinced Eve that the threatened punishment of death was not really credible either.

(2) There is in Luther’s theology such a thing as a “high” temptation more arduous than those of lower degree. It is “stupid to think” that Eve was inflamed with sensual desire for the fruit. Such a temptation might suit a lesser person, but not this awe-inspiring, holy, unfallen Eve. No, she had to grapple with the tentatio summa, “the greatest (summa) and the most bitter of all temptations.” It was “far more serious and more dangerous” than mere enticement to fornication, adultery, and other sins of the flesh; indeed, it was a temptation “proper to the Church and to the Saints (propria Ecclesiae et Sanctorum).” As we saw earlier, this is the temptation to

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155 WA 42.110.41-111.1, LW 1.147.
156 WA 42.113.36, LW 1.148.
157 WA 42.117.2-4, LW 1.155.
158 Sometimes, Luther refers similarly to the “black devil,” who tempts to external sins like adultery or murder, and the “white devil” who incites to spiritual pride, heresy, etc.—the latter being the far more sinister. Cf. Mickey Mattox, “Martin Luther’s Reception of Paul,” in R. Ward Holder, ed., A Companion to Paul in the Reformation (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 93-128, here 126-7.
159 WA 42.111.5-10, LW 1.147.
160 WA 42.110.8, LW 1.146.
161 WA 42.110.34-7, LW 1.147.
believe that God had turned against her, to believe that his will toward her was no longer good or had never truly been so at all.\textsuperscript{164} This is the \textit{summa tentatio} that, in Luther’s theology, is uniquely \textit{propria} to the “Saints” of God in his Church.

In Luther’s mature and “mystical” theology of sanctification through the holy cross, these two factors converge: amidst the \textit{summa tentatio}, when Satan (or in Jacob’s case at the Jabbok: God himself appearing in “hostile form”) beats and pummels the tempted saint with the terrifyingly compelling lie that God has turned against him, the saint responds by defiantly refusing to let go of the truth of the Promise, the Gospel. Even in the highest and most bitter temptation, he resolves to remain \textit{contentus verbo} and triumphs by in fact clinging to this Word alone. In light of Luther’s lectures on Gen. 3, it is clear that to endure this temptation and to triumph by faith in the Word is to reverse the tragedy of Eden. There is a definite fittingness to this state of things: the very temptation by which Adam fell becomes the graced means of his wounded nature’s restoration in the saints. For the saint is precisely the one who has learned, through faith’s struggle in temptation, “to take hold of the Word and let sink and fall what falls (lassen sincken und fallen, \textit{was da felt}).”\textsuperscript{163} He does what Adam out to have done: crush the serpent with his foot and say, “Shut up! The Lord’s command was different.”\textsuperscript{164} In such an heroic and holy person, vitiated nature is in process of being restored to the original righteousness that had characterized unfallen humanity deified by grace, that is to say, to wholehearted trust in the merciful goodness of God.

\textsuperscript{162} WA 42.110.10, LW 1.146.
\textsuperscript{163} WA 44.110.41-2, LW 6.148.
\textsuperscript{164} WA 42.114.8-9, LW 1.151.
3. Human nature vitiated by original sin

Adam and Eve’s rebellion at the Devil’s bidding brings about their own ruination: the corruption of their nature and the just sentence of condemnation to death and hell. I will return to the problem of God’s wrath in the final section of this chapter. Now our concern is the corruptio naturae that comes about through original sin. In Luther’s teaching, original sin does not entail the complete obliteration of nature. Rather, it means an undoing of the perfections of mankind’s unfallen nature as described above: “For the name ‘original sin’ is correctly given to whatever was lost of those conditions which Adam enjoyed while his nature was still unimpaired.”\(^{165}\) It should therefore come as no surprise that Luther describes original sin in terms of the vitiation of our psychological faculties and their permanent teleological frustration.\(^{166}\) Because of this fatal wounding of their nature, humans are now cut off from the possibility of attaining their true end in knowing, trusting, loving, and adoring communion with God. The “darkened” intellect no longer knows God and his beneficent will. Lacking true knowledge of God, the human will is “extraordinarily depraved” such that we no longer trust God’s mercy or fear his severity, but simply disregard his will and Word entirely and give way to the desires and impulses of the flesh. Fearless joy has given way to a troubled, unquiet conscience prone either to despair before God’s judgment or else to concoct foolish defenses.\(^{167}\) Importantly, because of these “vices of the soul” (animi vicia)—which Luther sums as unbelief, ignorance of God, despair, hate, and blasphemy—sin-wounded humans “do not everywhere and always give thanks to

\(^{165}\) WA 42.87.2-3, LW 1.114.

\(^{166}\) So Yeago, “Martin Luther on Grace, Law and Moral Life,” 171.

\(^{167}\) WA 42.86.19-25, LW 1.114.
The "madness of lust" (furor libidinis), that is concupiscence regarded in a primarily sexual sense, is indeed some part of original sin; but these "spiritual disasters" (calamitates spirituales) are of greater importance by far. Because of them, fallen Adam has lost his original righteousness, lost the divine image, and forfeited his divine life of fearless joy in communion with God. Having made himself his own end, his own god, he is now doomed to the futility of failing to achieve his true purpose in eucharistic adoration and glorification of God. His fists closed tightly, he no longer gives God thanks.

For the purposes of my argument, I will pass over a more comprehensive study of original sin’s global effects and focus more narrowly on its manifestation as the abuse of “gifts” (dona). At times Luther simply identifies the misuse of gifts as

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168 WA 42.86.34-5, LW 1.114. For animi uitia in Augustine, see e.g. civ. dei 14.2 (CCSL 48.416, Bett. 549).
169 WA 42.86.39-41, LW 1.114.
170 In de genesi ad litteram 6.26.37-28.39 (c. 401/16), Augustine states three times that by sinning, Adam lost the divine image: 1. after quoting Eph. 4.21-4, Augustine writes: ecce quod perditit Adam per peccatum. In hoc ergo renovamur, secundum id quod amisit Adam, i.e. secundum spiritum mentis nostrae. 2. Then, after quoting Col. 3:9-10: hanc imaginem in spiritu mentis impressam perdidit Adam per peccatum; quam recipimus per gratiam iustitiae. 3. Lastly: in interiore homine fuerit spiritualis, secundum imaginem eius qui creavit eum; quod amisit peccando, meruitque etiam corporis mortem. See WSA I/13.322-3. It is vital to take note of the fact that Eph. 4:21-4 and Col. 3:9-10 deeply inform Augustine’s interpretation at this point. At Retr. 2.24, Augustine clarifies: ‘What I said in the sixth book, that ‘Adam lost by sin the image of God according to which he was made,’ is not to be taken as meaning that no image at all remained in him, but that it was so misshapen (tam deformis) as to stand in need of reshaping (reformatione).’” See WSA I/13.167. On my reading, Luther makes both kinds of claims because he agrees with both: with respect to the Eph./Col.-oriented and thus righteousness/holiness-focused understanding of the image, it was simply lost through Adam’s sin; but with respect to human nature understood in terms of its faculties, it was gravely vitiated but not obliterated. And therefore, what Luther sometimes calls the aptitudo passiva remains in fallen humans as the material for their potential renovation by grace and the Spirit. See, e.g., the 1525 de servo arbitrio, WA 18.636.16-22: At si vim liberi arbitrii eam diceremus, qua homo aptus est rapi spiritu et imbui gratia Dei, ut qui sit creatus ad vitam vel mortem aeternam, recte dicetur; hanc enim vim, hoc est, aptitudinem, seu ut Sophistae loquentur dispositivam qualitatem et passivam aptitudinem et nos confitemur, quam non arboribus neque bestiis inditam esse, quis est qui nesciat? neque enim pro anseribus (ut dicitur) coelum creavit.
171 On original sin in Luther’s thought, see Hamel, II/13-37; Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 157-60; Lohse, Luther’s Theology,
original sin, as in his lecture on Gen. 6:1: “This is the original sin, that we have neither
the knowledge nor the capability to use God’s great and excellent gifts properly.”\(^\text{172}\) At
Gen. 6:4, he states similarly that “we in the corrupt state of our nature cannot make
use of even the slightest gift without haughtiness.”\(^\text{173}\) This is the real core of the subtle
spiritual idolatry that arises precisely in the saints, and is thus the focal point of their
progressive sanctification by the cross.

What did the proper use of gifts look like before the fall? In his lecture on Gen.
3:1, Luther states that Adam’s good and righteous will pleased, obeyed, and trusted in
God, “making use” (utens) of the creatures “with an expression of thanks.”\(^\text{174}\) This
passing remark fits snuggly with Luther’s entire teleological/doxological anthropology.
Adam too is a creature, and he must “use” himself rightly by offering the gift of his
being back to God—rejoicing—in the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise. He exists to
glorify God and enjoy him forever. This right eucharistic use, and its corollary in the
true enjoyment of God, has been lost with the fall. Or better, the fall happened when
Adam stopped offering this sacrifice, and turned away from God toward himself as his
own chief end: fieri igitur deum est peccatum originale.\(^\text{175}\) In imitation of the Devil,
Adam and Eve did so in the act of the first sin itself; and the most gifted of the filii
Adae are shaped to the core of their being by the same propensity to self-adoration
and the refusal of thanksgiving to God that this vain-glorying entails. Thus fallen
mankind, like the Devil, boasts in “gifts” (whether this-worldly or spiritual) as if they

\(^{172}\) WA 42.264.38-40, LW 2.4.
\(^{173}\) WA 42.287.21-2, LW 2.36.
\(^{174}\) WA 42.106.32-4, LW 1.142. Cf. LW 1.73.
were self-generated possessions and forgets or mocks God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift (Jas. 1:17).

Luther is quite explicit about this point. Lecturing, for example, on Gen. 4:2 and the story of Cain and Abel, he first reiterates Bernard’s theory of Satan’s fall sketched above, then applies the same principle to the human race: “This is the universal bane of our nature, that we are not satisfied with God’s gifts (non contenti sumus donis Dei) but abuse them and thus mock their Donor and Creator.” This mocking of God takes its most subtle form in the vainglory inherent within the autonomous pursuit of virtue: when one arrogates to himself the glory of his goodness, it is “rank idolatry” and a “despoiling of the Godhead (spolium divinitatis).”

But alas, this insidious vanity, idolatry, and robbery of God’s glory creeps into the hearts of the graced. For all false boasting is false worship, a “glorying” (gloriari) in the creature instead of the Creator—even and indeed especially the false boasting in spiritual dona that by definition can only take place in the heart of a saint.

There are deep Augustinian roots here, which surface in Luther’s plaintive ruminations on this theme in his 1515/16 scholion on Romans 5:4. The young professor

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176 WA 42.181.36-8: Sic cum optimis et pulcherrimis donis prae aliis instructi Angeli in coelo inciperent superbire contemnentes humilitatem filii Dei, praecipitati sunt in infernum et facti foedissimi Diaboli.
177 WA 42.182.1-3, LW 1.244.
178 WA 42.350.32, LW 2.125.
179 For the roots of the uti/frui distinction and the exile theme, see Augustine’s De doctrina christiana 1.4.4: “Enjoyment, after all, consists in clinging to something lovingly for its own sake, while use consists in referring what has come your way to what your love aims at obtaining... if we wish to return to our home country, where alone we can be truly happy, we have to use this world, not enjoy it.” WSA I/11, 107-8. Luther probably first encountered the distinction while studying Peter Lombard, Sent. I d. 1.2. Cf. Raymond Canning, “UTI/FRUI,” in Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., ed., Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 859-60. For the Augustinian theology of “boasting” vis-à-vis 1 Cor 4:7 and 1 Cor 1:31, see Pierre-Marie Hombert, Gloria Gratiae. Se glorifier en Dieu, principe et fin de la théologie augustinienne de la grâce (Paris: Instut d’Études Augustiniennes, 1996).
refers directly to Peter Lombard’s Sententiae Book I dist. 1, which establishes
Augustine’s uti/frui distinction as the organizing principle of his entire theology.\textsuperscript{180} Luther takes it up into his theology of sin and his mysticism of sanctification through tribulatio. Sin runs deep, and the uti/frui distinction serves Luther as a heuristic tool to penetrate its depths. In this context appears the famous claim that the wound of original sin has left our nature “so deeply curved in upon itself” (\textit{tam profunda est in seipsam incurva}).\textsuperscript{181} What does this mean? Fallen humans do not stop at turning God’s finest gifts back upon themselves for their own enjoyment; we even use God himself (\textit{ipso Deo vtatur}) to achieve this end.\textsuperscript{182} If we do seek God, we do so for our own sakes, using him to enjoy ourselves. Everything is upside down: God exists to serve my own ego, and I “serve” him only insofar as he serves me, and gratifies my own desires. I am a mercenary, serving God for pay; I am the kind of child who “loves” his parents only in order to get out of them what he wants. God is in the creature’s place, and the sinful creature has exalted himself to God’s throne. As Lohse aptly puts it, “sin is the desire to set oneself in place of God, not allowing God to be one’s God.”\textsuperscript{183}

The original sin, as an historical act of transgression, took just this form: Adam usurped God’s place, thinking it better to reign in his own hell than to serve in God’s heaven. Now even the saint, still bearing the remnants of original sin in his flesh, usurps God’s place precisely as he grows and increases in his service. For God’s gifts are so lovely and so “vigorously excite enjoyment” that his fallen nature rushes in upon

\textsuperscript{180} WA 56.305.6-7, LW 25.292. Cf. the 1544 lecture on Gen. 41:40, WA 44.433.22-3, LW 7.181: “‘But,’ you say, I am born from a famous and illustrious heritage, I am a doctor of the law, I am a philosopher.’ Correct indeed! \textit{Sed his omnibus utendum est, non fruendum, iuxta distinctionem Augustini.}”
\textsuperscript{181} WA 56.304.25-6, LW 25.291.
\textsuperscript{182} WA 56.304.27-8, LW 25.291.
\textsuperscript{183} Lohse, \textit{Luther’s Theology}, 250.
the “enjoyable” sin of resting in the gifts themselves, instead of thankfully resting in God the Giver alone. He does not “love and worship God purely for himself,” but for the sake of his grace and gifts. He “luxuriates” in the enjoyment of received grace. This *fruitio acceptae gratiae* is tantalizing and irresistible. He cannot help but enjoy his own holiness. But this means he enjoys the creature instead of the Creator.\(^{184}\) He worships himself instead of God. He does not yet attain his true end, he is not yet restored to the original purity of his nature, for he does not yet glorify God and enjoy him. That is—unless God gives him the even higher, yet deeply hidden, gift of sharing in Christ’s cross, which “comes and takes away everything he has” to lead him through hope’s dark path to the praise and the enjoyment of the Giver in the pure affection of friendship and love.\(^{185}\)

4. The Promise of the Serpent-Crusher and his grace and gift

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed: he shall crush your head, and you shall crush his heel” (Gen. 3:15). Ulrich Asendorf asserts that Luther’s christological interpretation of the *Protevangelium* became the “organizing principle” of his mature theology, which “finds its monumental expression in the Genesis Lectures.” If it is something of an exaggeration to claim that this verse comprises “the summa of Luther’s theology,” Asendorf’s championing of its importance does accurately reflect its utter centrality in the Lectures and in the lives of the Genesis saints.\(^{186}\) Lecturing on Gen. 3:14 but already anticipating its sequel, Luther himself laments his inability to do the text the full justice it deserves, “for it


\(^{185}\) WA 56.305-6, LW 25.292-3.

contains whatever is excellent in all Scripture.” If this too sounds like a (for Luther admittedly characteristic) overstatement, consider a complementary claim from his 1525 *de servo arbitrio*: “Take Christ from the Scriptures—and what more will you find in them?” Jesus Christ is the res of the Bible, and Gen. 3:15 is his first appearance on the stage of the history of salvation. Because he is present here in the first promise of all, the “source of all mercy and fountainhead of all promises” that would follow, Luther’s (and Asendorf’s) valuation of the excellency of this verse is in fact quite straightforward. Asendorf, who depends heavily on Oswald Bayer’s seminal monograph on *Promissio* in Luther’s Reformation theology, may be consulted for an exhaustive treatment of this theme; here I attend only to matters of direct relevance to my argument.

In the first place, Luther’s lectures on Gen. 3:9-15 are highly forensic. Earlier I claimed that the two basic problems facing fallen mankind are the corruption of his nature and the wrath and judgment of God against his sin. My study of Luther’s

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187 WA 42.137.14-5, LW 1.183.
189 WA 42.142.33-4, LW 1.191.
190 Oswald Bayer, *Promissio: Geschichte der reformatorischen Wende in Luthers Theologie*. Bayer argues forcefully that from the 1520 Babylonian Captivity onward, the *promissio-fides* relation becomes “the crystallization point of Luther’s reformational theology” constituting the real *Grunddifferenz* between evangelical theology and Catholic tradition; in particular, he pits evangelical faith in the promise over against the (German) mysticism of Luther’s early *theologia crucis* (12; cf. 166, 173, 181, 191, 195, 235-6, 285, 299-301). Faith in the justifying Promise of the Seed is certainly a major theme in the Lectures. Indeed, the high profile of God’s promises in Moses’s First Book, beginning with Gen. 3:15 and crescendoing in the history of the patriarchs through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to the last great promise to Judah at Gen. 49:9-12, may have been among the reasons Luther resolved to invest the last decade of his life laboring exegetically over this particular book; interestingly, Bayer suggests that Luther’s insights regarding the promise solidified in 1519 precisely as he preached his way through Genesis (243). But I will argue below in chapter 5.3 that Bayer is wrong to dichotomize *promissio* and *crux* theology; Luther’s mature theology and spirituality of holiness is a *theologia mystica promissionis, fidei, et crucis*. 
theology of sanctification will focus on the healing or restoration of human nature. But I hope this suggests neither an aversion on my part toward the Reformer’s teaching about sin, guilt, judgment, and wrath (doctrina legis), nor that modish distaste for his—or anyone else’s—theology of atonement, forgiveness, justification, and reconciliation through Christ’s death on the cross (doctrina evangelii) which seems to be afflicting much of historical, exegetical, and dogmatic theology today. To the contrary, the proper correlation of forgiveness and renewal constitutes a deep and abiding concern for Luther and a key aspect of my research. For primarily exegetical reasons, the balances tip here in the forensic direction: God enters into judgment with Adam and Eve, and this is the story of their trial, conviction, and sentencing. Thus Adam, who “sinned and is guilty of death,”¹⁹¹ “stands before God’s judgment seat and is now called in for his punishment.”¹⁹² To be sure, the vitiation of Adam’s nature is on full display: his flight from God, his excuses and prevarications, his aversion from the One who had not long since been his greatest delight, his sense of wrath and Anfechtung, all demonstrate that “Adam is no longer the same that he was, but that he has undergone a change and has become a different person (mutatum et alium esse factum).”¹⁹³ Luther is especially keen to underscore the way Adam’s turn to self functions in the state of despair brought upon a man by the sense that his sin has made God his implacable foe: though his only hope of help consists in turning away from himself to God, apart from God’s own merciful intervention his bentness toward self only disposes him to run further away, whether by hiding from God altogether, or

¹⁹¹ WA 42.130.34, LW 1.175.
¹⁹² WA 42.130.7, LW 1.174.
¹⁹³ WA 42.130.17-8, LW 1.174.
by justifying himself, or by laying the blame for his sin at God’s own feet. “Thus we see Adam and Eve so fallen and sunk in sin that they cannot sink deeper.”\textsuperscript{194} Only the promise of God’s mercy is powerful enough to evoke such a sunken heart’s faith, to pull it back out of its despairing obsession with itself to vivifying fellowship with God: “Unless hearts are raised up through trust in mercy (\textit{fiducia misericordiae}), this nature cannot be urged on beyond this point.”\textsuperscript{195} The word that promises divine mercy, the pardon of transgression and the abolition of God’s wrath through Christ, is itself the root of man’s renovation; there is here a possible echo of Staupitz’s inversion of \textit{gratia gratum faciens} as the grace that makes God pleasing to the sinner, an object no longer of fear but of hope and trust because of the Gospel.\textsuperscript{196}

Regardless, Luther sets out to exegate this text as the story of how God, in his mercy, makes himself pleasing to pitiable and cowering Adam and Eve. He finds evidence of this gracious turning already to hand in the fatherly way the Lord deals with his rebellious subjects, who had been the object of Satan’s cruelty and deception, as opposed to the stern and unqualified judgment with which he handles the Deceiver. This in two respects: first, the fact that God calls Adam and Eve back from their sin. Fascinatingly, Luther avers that this fatherly turning “shows that even then Christ, our Deliverer, had placed himself between God and man as a Mediator”\textsuperscript{197} (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5). He explains further: “although the promise concerning Christ”—viz., Gen. 3:15—“is not

\textsuperscript{194} WA 42.134.4-5, LW 1.179.  
\textsuperscript{195} WA 42.134.9-10, cf. LW 1.179.  
\textsuperscript{197} WA 42.135.17-8, LW 1.181.
yet there, it is already noticeable in the thought and counsel of God."\textsuperscript{198} This is either a rather daring piece of speculative theology bordering on the later Reformed concept of the intra-trinitarian \textit{pactum salutis} (a real possibility given its medieval precedents\textsuperscript{199}) or at the least a more scripturally-grounded insistence that God’s mercies are always grounded in and with a view toward the mediation of Jesus Christ and the reconciliation between God and man achieved by his self-interposing in taking man’s flesh and suffering on the cross. The second pre-promise evidence of God’s fatherly affection for Adam and Eve consists in the cursing of the serpent in Gen. 3:14. The Devil’s unmitigated punishment itself comforts them by assuring them that God has entered into the lists as the enemy of their own foe: “Here in the midst of most serious threats the Father reveals his heart,” and promises victory over the deceiver and conqueror of human nature.\textsuperscript{200} These proofs of the Father’s mercy and affection for his human creatures are of decisive importance for their destiny, for as guilty traitors worthy of death their most pressing need is for a merciful pardon that would restore them to the good graces of their Sovereign.

Now to the \textit{Protevangelium} itself. For Luther, the promise of a “Seed” born from the woman who will crush the Serpent’s head is a fully-orbed presentation of the Gospel of the incarnation of God’s Son from Mary and his victory over sin, death, and the powers of hell through his death and resurrection. Combined with the threats of Gen. 3:14, this first promise draws up Adam and Eve into battle against the Devil and

\textsuperscript{198} WA 42.135.21-2, LW 1.181.
\textsuperscript{199} So Christine Helmer, “God from Eternity to Eternity: Luther’s Trinitarian Understanding,” \textit{HTR} 96/2 (April 2003): 127-46, here 140-1, who—evincing her penchant for theological genre—points to intimations of the eternal decree of redemption in medieval art, the mystical poetry of Mechthild of Magdeburg, Bernard’s sermon on Ps. 85 [84], and the speculative philosophy of John Duns Scotus.
\textsuperscript{200} WA 42.141.38-41, LW 1.189.
alongside God himself, “with the hope of help from the Son of God, the Seed of the woman.” Thus forgiveness of sins and reception back into God’s grace are extended to Adam and Eve through this promise: “Their guilt has been forgiven; they have been won back from death and have already been set free from hell.” In accord with the forensic emphases of the trial at God’s judgment seat, the promise of the Woman’s Seed has as its real focal point the liberation, through Christ’s atoning sacrifice, of Adam and Eve from the guilt of their sin and its just punishment in death and hell. To expound the meaning of the promise, Luther turns rather naturally to Rom. 4:25 ("Christ died for our sins and rose again for our justification") and John 1:29 ("Behold the Lamb of God, which bears the sin of the world"). The joining of these verses embodies the inseparable nexus in Luther’s kerygmatic theology of objective substitutionary atonement through Christ’s shed blood and its subjective implicate, free justification by grace through faith in Christ (cf. Rom. 3:21-28). Held together as Luther holds them here, they show how atonement by the cross and justification by faith are two sides of the same coin. It is no accident that the very same verses, in the same order, front Luther’s presentation of “the first and chief article” regarding “the office and work of Jesus Christ, or to our redemption” in the 1537 Smalcald Articles (on which more below in chapter 2). There as here, the primary issue for Luther is “the glory of our redemption and deliverance” from sin, death, and hell; and this glory belongs by right and quite exclusively to the Son of God, the Promised Seed. In short: “the Son of God had to become a sacrifice to achieve these things for us, to take

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201 WA 42.142.12-7, LW 1.190.
202 WA 42.143.38-40, LW 1.192.
203 SA II, BSLK, 726-8, BC, 300-1.
204 WA 42.144.1-2, LW 1.192.
away sin, to swallow up death, and to restore the lost obedience.” Thus the mercy and affection of the Father, who turned to his lost and ruined creatures already with a view to their redemption through the Mediator, first promises and then finally secures the pardon, justification, and reconciliation of sinners to himself through the death of his Son, Eve’s Seed. It is noteworthy that in a text so given to the Christus Victor theme, which is by no means absent in the lecture, it is the Seed come as the sacrificial Lamb who triumphs and crushes Satan’s head. The Son’s sacrifice on the cross is itself the great victory over the Devil: through it, sin’s power to condemn is destroyed; death, the just wages of sin, is therefore abolished; and in this way, the head of the murdering, lying, and accusing adversary is crushed.

In the next chapter, I will argue that in the 1530s and 40s Luther’s typical shorthand for this gift of forgiveness and justification received at the hands of God’s fatherly mercy and secured through Christ’s blood is gratia, “grace.” It is the heart and soul of the first promise as Luther exposits it in the Lectures, and as such it constitutes the central reality of the patriarchal saints who, like Adam and Eve, put their trust and hope in the promise of God’s grace in Christ. However, as my introductory reading of Luther on Ps. 51 has already shown, this does not exhaust the fullness of his theology of the ransomed and restored human creature. The first promise, and the Gospel as such, necessarily emphasizes the grace of reconciliation with God through Christ

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205 WA 42.147.4-5, LW 1.197.
because the basic disaster of ruined humanity is alienation from God through sin. But in Luther’s theology, the promise of a grace and mercy strong in Christ to restore the sinner to fellowship with God always and necessarily entails the promise of the restoration of the sinner himself, the healing and restoration of his nature into the fullness of life and joy in union with God. This, in Luther’s shorthand, is the Spirit-worked *donum* or “gift,” a term sufficiently elastic to encompass all the element’s of man’s renewal from regeneration, through progress in sanctification, to the full glory of the resurrection.

In the lecture on Gen. 3:15, this theme is present but muted, not because of Luther’s lack of interest in it but because of the mainly forensic themes called for by the scriptural text itself. Still, it is there: those who believe the promise are enlisted in battle, by faith in the Seed, against the Devil; and they are able to do so effectively because in addition to abolishing sin as guilt, the promise of the Seed also brings with it the renewal of Adam and Eve’s lost obedience. Thus Jesus Christ defeats the devil, death, sin, and the Law’s power to condemn (“grace”), “and not only this, but at the same time the obedience which was lost is restored (*restituitur simul obedientia, quae amissa est*)” (“gift”).207 This restoration is real but imperfect in this life: “we make some progress (*aliquousque procedimus*),” but the abiding presence of sin warring in our members—Luther alludes here to Rom. 7:23—prevents the perfection of righteousness in this life.208 Thus Adam and Eve, restored through faith in the promise of the Seed,

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207 WA 42.146.36-41, cf. LW 1.196.
208 WA 42.147.17-21, LW 1.197.
are not yet fully restored to the life they had lost; they live in hope of the resurrection of their flesh and the eternal life that is promised to them through the Son of God.209

Now, as Peura has pointed out,210 what is intriguing about this claim is Luther’s contention that unfallen Adam and Eve had already lived in hope of a resurrection-like *translatio*. What Luther seems to be saying is this: on the one hand, partially restored but still sinful humans are not yet possessed of the full vigor of righteousness, life, and joy enjoyed by Adam and Eve prior to the fall. Yet at the same time, their partial restoration to that originally given holiness of life entails within it a full restoration to the original state of eschatological hope. Adam has forfeited his chance at obtaining the *translatio* through his own obedience, but in the end he will arrive at his originally appointed destination nonetheless through the obedience unto death and the victorious resurrection of the Second Adam, the Son of God. In the meantime, *post as ante lapsum*, he lives in hope.

What of the restoration of the image itself? In the immediate vicinity of the lectures on Gen. 1:26 that I explored above, Luther found the occasion to discuss the loss of the image through original sin and its restoration through the grace and gift of the Gospel: *imago illa reparetur.*211 The Gospel brings it about that ruined humanity is re-formed (*reformemur*) “according to that familiar and indeed better image.” For through it, we are “born again into eternal life, or rather into the hope of eternal life by faith, that we may live in God and with God and be one with him, as Christ says”

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209 WA 42.147.34-39, LW 1.197-8.
210 On this point, see Peura 1990, 141-47.
211 WA 42.48.11, LW 1.64.
Luther rushes ahead, as it were, to the final glory of the complete restoration of human nature, even to the extent of its deifying union with God, then pulls back to reassert the same eschatological reserve we saw above: we are reborn into the hope of eternal life. There follows a compact summary of Luther’s theology of grace and gift, with the restoration of the image both in this life and in the next falling under the latter category. Faith takes hold of God’s mercy through Christ, acquires Christ’s merits, and knows that by Christ’s death we have been set free. This is man’s rebirth ad iustitiam, the righteousness of faith through which he is set free from guilt and condemnation and reconciled to God. But from it (inde) “that other righteousness of ours arises, namely that newness of life (novitas vitae) by which we are zealous to obey God.” To be sure, this second kind of righteousness is never perfect in this life and, therefore, can never stand as the basis for one’s standing before God’s righteous judgment. But by the Holy Spirit given to us through the Gospel, a real beginning is made in newness of life (cf. Rom. 6:4), fierce resistance is offered against the flesh that remains (cf. Rom 7:14-25), and the “grace” of God’s mercy in Christ covers whatever is lacking in the “gift” of the Christian’s renewal.213 “In this manner”—that is, by the gift of inchoate renewal empowered by the Spirit—“this image of the new creature (imago ista novae creaturae) begins to be restored by the Gospel in this life, but it will not be finished in this life.”214 Then, when the image is perfected in the Father’s kingdom, man’s natural psychological faculties will be restored: the will made truly free and

212 WA 42.48.13-6, LW 1.64.
213 WA 42.48.17-26, LW 1.64.
214 WA 42.48.27-8, LW 1.65.
good, the mind enlightened, the memory steadfast and sure.\textsuperscript{215} That is, the natural perfections that rendered Adam originally \textit{capax} of deifying union with God, ruined by his rebellion, will be restored; which is why, as we saw just above, Luther explicitly describes the eschatological completion of the redeemed in the Johannine terms of eternal life in, with, and united to God. In short: “the godly have within themselves that unfinished image (\textit{imaginem rudem}) which God will on the Last Day bring to perfection in those who have believed his Word.”\textsuperscript{216}

Those who have believed his “Word”—that is, the Promise of the Gospel, first freely spoken by God in his mercy to unworthy Adam and Eve at Gen. 3:15. It is crucial to grasp that both the grace of forgiveness and reconciliation with God through Christ and the gift of the restoration of human nature, the \textit{novitas vitae} begun in this life and perfected in the glory of the resurrection, are included in and given with the Promise of the serpent-crushing Seed. There is a real priority to “grace,” for at least two reasons: first, the origin of the redemption and restoration of ruined mankind lies entirely in the merciful purpose of the Father, who turns to us in Christ the Mediator; second, the incompletion (in this life) of the saint’s renewal after the image of God in true holiness ever stands in need of being covered over by the mercy of God in Christ.\textsuperscript{217} But grace is ordered to glory, and the final aim of God’s mercy in pardoning and accepting sinners through Christ is the restoration of these ruined creatures to their true end of glorifying and enjoying him. That, after all, is what the invidious

\textsuperscript{215} WA 42.48.28-31, LW 1.65.  
\textsuperscript{216} WA 42.48.36-7, LW 1.65.  
\textsuperscript{217} WA 42.147.15-21, LW 1.197.
Devil sought to destroy: the image of God which is the *summum cultum*.

When the generous God purposes in mercy to destroy the work of the Devil, and promises Adam and Eve that he will do so by crushing the Serpent’s head through Eve’s Seed, it is the *whole* evil work that he purposes to undo and overcome. Thus “grace” leads to glory through the ongoing restorative work of the “gift.” Grace, we might say, restores the union of God and man from God’s side of the relation, through his own free mercy and through the Mediator and his sacrifice. But it is the gift of the Spirit’s renewal that restores this union from man’s side, healing and renewing his inmost being and thus empowering him to trust and love, hope and delight in the God who has accepted him freely in Christ. Each of these two blessings, the grace of forgiveness and the gift of the image’s renewal into the highest righteousness of eucharistic life, is given in the promise of the Gospel and received by faith/hope: “These treasures we possess in Christ, but in hope.”

The following chapter pursues Luther’s mature theology of grace and gift in greater depth.

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218 WA 42.110.12, LW 1.146.
219 WA 42.147.5-6, LW 1.197. Juhani Forsberg, *Das Abrahambild in der Theologie Luthers: Pater Fidei Sanctissimus* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1984), 91-2, notes rightly that for Luther hope is often tied so closely to faith that they are nearly interchangeable concepts (*Wechselbegriffe*). Cf. Rom. 4:13-25, 8:24-5, Gal. 5:5, Heb. 11:1.
We come now to the heart of my argument in this book: in the present chapter expositing the mature Luther’s dogmatics of holiness, then in Part II exploring its roots in the young Luther’s appropriation of the old Augustine’s theology of sin, grace, and holiness. Since in chapter 1.4 I have already introduced the dogmatic subject matter to be taken up at length here, I can afford to be relatively brief in this introduction. My principal object is to set forth Luther’s creedal and evangelical theology of forgiveness and justification in Jesus Christ (gratia/Gnade) and regeneration and progressive renewal in holiness of life by the Holy Spirit (donum/Gabe); and to do so attending carefully to the kind of “sin” which characterizes the saints of God as they live, suffer, and fight in via under the covering of Christ’s great grace and in the strength of the Spirit’s effectual gift. In process, I have three subordinate goals in mind as well: first, to drawn attention to the scriptural exegesis that informs and shapes Luther’s dogmatics; second, to highlight the robust economic trinitarianism that is virtually co-extensive with this scriptural dogmatics; third, to bring to light the reality and nature of the renewed spiritual agency which the Holy Spirit brings about in the saints of God by his gift. A few comments on these three ancillary aims will, I think, help to elucidate my approach in this chapter.

In the first two points, I stand close to Ulrich Asendorf both in his critique of much modern historical and dogmatic theology and in his proposed alternative. Discussing Gerhard Ebeling’s influential work on Luther’s hermeneutics, Asendorf states that as a rule, “the more abstract one’s understanding of the Word, the greater
the possibility that the interpreter is removed from Luther and his biblical fullness.”

That strikes me as exactly right; and one concrete way to counteract this scholarly flaw is to attend with great care to the proof-texts that Luther appeals to as he argues theologically, rather than skipping on (as is the scholarly fashion) past his scriptural premises to the conclusions he reaches thereby. The better we become at listening to Luther as he listens to the Word of God, the deeper our grasp of his response to that Word—i.e., his theology—will become; and beyond the real gains to be had in historical comprehension, this increased proximity to the Word will better position us to critically assess both the strengths and the weaknesses of Luther’s dogmatics in lumine scripturae.

As to the second point: Asendorf speaks of the older Luther’s growing concern to integrate Scripture and Dogma, the result being a lively, dramatic, and “integral theology” that echoes the Bible’s polyphony and revolves around the cantus firmus of Gen. 3:15; and for Luther, a kind of patristic exegete born out of season, the Protevangelium is empty and lifeless apart from the rich trinitarian christology that he finds hidden in the enigmatic promise of an eternal redemption through the mortal human Seed of Eve which only the true and living God himself could ever possibly accomplish. In the course of his own meditations on Luther’s exegesis of Gen. 3:15,

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220 Asendorf, Lectura in Biblia, 14.
221 Cf. Luther’s 1539 Preface to the Wittenberg Edition of Luther’s German Writings (WA 50.657.25-30, cf. LW 34.284): “Neither Councils, Fathers, nor we, in spite of the greatest and best success possible, will do as well as the Holy Scripture, that is, as well as God himself has done. Though we also must have the Holy Spirit, faith, divine speech and work, as that we may be blessed, so that we may let the Prophets and Apostles sit in the professor’s lectern while we, here below at their feet, hear what they say; we do not say what they must hear.”
222 Asendorf, Lectura in Biblia, 11-14. Luther’s comments on the traditioning of the promise to St. Abraham at Gen. 12:1-3 are especially illuminating in this regard. Referring twice to John 8:56, Luther engages in bold midrashic speculation on the inferential reasoning of Abraham the
Asendorf draws on Albrecht Peters’ great *Kommentar zu Luthers Katechismen* to establish this point; and even if one must decline Asendorf and Peters’ suggestion that Luther’s resolute focus on the saving economy of God in Christ signals a return past *die augustinisch-scholastischen Trinitätsspekulationen* back to *die altkirchlichen Trinitätstheologie* exemplified by the Cappadocian fathers—since, on the one hand, Augustine’s and Thomas’ speculations were deeply grounded in the biblical economy of salvation, and on the other Basil, the two Gregories, and Luther were all keenly interested in speculative trinitarian theology—still, I think they are quite right to say that Luther’s relentless attention to the biblical *Zentrum* of the gospel led to an enriched trinitarianism as a matter of course.\(^{223}\) In Luther’s mature theology of God’s free bestowal of grace in Christ and renewal by his Spirit’s gift, we shall see this reinvigoration of a scriptural, evangelical, and catholic trinitarianism on full display.\(^{224}\)

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theologian. Abraham “understood the promise beautifully” for “he reasoned (*ratiocinatus est*)” (WA 42.448.17-18, LW 2.261) in the following way: First, the promise clearly states that through Abraham all the nations of the earth will experience “blessing”: specifically, blessing to overcome the curse that entered upon the human race because of original sin. Thus Abraham correlates the new promise of Gen. 12:3 with the original promise of Gen. 3:15, interpreted with the help of the curse/blessing contrast elaborated by St. Paul in Gal. 3:10-14 (WA 44.448.3-5, LW 2.261). The curse of sin, death, and damnation that afflicts the entire human race is to be removed, somehow, “in” Abraham, and replaced with the blessing of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Abraham knows this cannot possibly come to pass through his own person, for two reasons: first, he is mortal, and second, he is himself a sinner saved by sheer mercy. Therefore, the promise must refer to one of his heirs, the “Seed” (cf. Gen. 22:18) who will be such a Man as to be blessed in his own person (*per se benedictus*) and thus without need of the blessing of another. But in order to bring blessing to the entire world, this human offspring of Abraham must necessarily be true God at the same time. He therefore concludes his vaguely Anselmian logic: “He must necessarily be God and not a human being, although He will be a human being and will take on our flesh so that He is truly my seed” (WA 42.447.20-29, LW 2.260). Thus Abraham reasoned, on the basis of Gen. 12:3’s promise of “blessing” (and back of it, the first promise of Gen. 3:15), to the fully-orbed doctrine of the two natures in Christ’s person that encompasses the *mysterium incarnationis filii Dei* (WA 42.448.17, LW 2.260).


\(^{224}\) On the depth of Luther’s creedal catholicity, see G. Kretschmar, “Die altkirchliche Tradition in der evangelischen Kirche,” in *Tradition und Glaubensgerechtigkeit: Das Arnoldshainer Gespräch zwischen Vertretern der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland und der Russischen Orthodoxen Kirche*
The creedral and richly trinitarian dogmatics of holiness that I read in Luther’s texts puts me at odds with some major currents in the scholarship. In the first place, for Luther the gospel of grace in Jesus Christ is unintelligible apart from the revelation of God’s just judgment and fierce wrath against sin through the law. Since condemnation to death and hell at the hands of God’s justice is the great and fundamental disaster facing fallen mankind, the satisfaction of God’s justice through the merciful donation of his own Son pro nobis in the cradle and on the cross—and above all, the shedding of his blood as our substitute—stands at the heart of the gospel of grace (Rom. 1:18-3:26, 8:1-4). The verbum crucis is not in vogue today, but

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225 Cf. Matt. 16:21-3, Rom. 1:16-17, 9:30-10:4, 1 Cor. 1:17-2:5, Gal 5:11, 6:11-14, and Phil. 3:18. To take one important example: Oswald Bayer’s 31 Oct. 2003 lecture before the Evangelical Faculty at Tübingen, which posed the timely question “Was ist evangelisch?” and attempted to supply an answer that we could “stake our life on with utter certainty in life and death,” reflects a general tendency toward theologies of justification abstracted from the concrete reality of the flesh, blood, cross, and resurrection of the Son of God. But for Luther, these concrete realities constitute the material content of the gospel promise—viz., the doctrina evangelii—and, as such, the object sine qua non of justifying faith. Thus Luther on Gen. 15:6, WA 42.567.23-4, LW 3.26: “Every promise of God includes Christ; for if it is separated from this Mediator, God is not dealing with us at all.” See Bayer, “What is Evangelical? The Continuing Validity of the Reformation,” trans. Jeffrey G. Silcock, in LQ 25 (2011): 1-15. This inattention to the real Jesus Christ, true God and Man in one Person, nailed to the cross for our sins and raised for our justification, is, I think, a structural flaw in Bayer’s 2003 book on Martin Luther’s Theology. In e.g. cp. 10.3.2 (“Christ’s Nature is His Work—Christ’s Work is His Nature”), Bayer interweaves passages from the Large and Small Catechisms: “That now is the summa of this article, that the little word ‘Lord’ simply means the same as ‘Redeemer,’ that is, he
these dogmatic themes cannot be avoided without running the risk of a serious historical misapprehension of Luther’s mature doctrine of “grace.” No presentation of Luther’s theology of holiness that minimizes the cross of Christ and the free gift of righteousness won by it (and given freely to faith) can do real justice to the Reformer’s actual position. Rather than arguing for the reality of renewal in holiness at free justification’s expense, I follow Luther’s texts in emphasizing both; and perhaps I will find a few salty amici crucis (or even a Bluttheologe like Joachim Mörlin) amongst my readers.226

The deep trinitarianism of Luther’s dogmatics of holiness cuts against another and perhaps more surprising grain in the scholarship. There is a tendency in some

who brought us back from the devil to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and keeps us there” (p. 232, LC, BSLK, 1056.18-20, BC, 434), then “who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, acquired, won from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil... with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death” (p. 233, SC, BSLK, 872.4-7, BC, 355). Well and good; but Bayer dances around the quite explicit and concrete teaching of the LC on (1) God’s wrath against sin, and the sentence of eternal damnation which fallen human beings have merited and deserved (BSLK, 1056.6-9, BC, 434), and (2) the satisfaction Christ rendered through his death: “He became man, conceived and born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin, free from all sin, so that he would be the Lord of sin; to that end he suffered, died, and was buried, so that he might make satisfaction (gnug thete) for me and pay what I had owed, not with silver or gold but with his own precious blood [1 Pet. 1:18-9]” (BSLK, 1056.24-9, BC, 434). Bayer’s omissions are telling in themselves: but in his comments on the material that he does quote from the Catechisms, he engages in rather speculative meditations on the intersection of eternity and time in the identity of God and fails to attend to the simplest and most important matters at hand, to wit, Jesus Christ and him crucified. It would seem that, in principle, Bayer’s attempt to distance the law from the God of the Gospel (“one cannot attribute the law that kills to the triune God, pure and simple,” 224) has eliminated a priori both the possibility of and the need for the satisfaction of God’s justice through the penal sufferings of the incarnate Son. Similar criticisms might be leveled against, e.g., Gerhard Ebeling, Gerhard Forde, and George Lindbeck, whose contribution to the Forde-festschrift is especially illuminating: “Justification and Atonement: An Ecumenical Trajectory,” in Joseph A. Burgess, ed., By Faith Alone: Essays on Justification in Honor of Gerhard O. Forde (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 183-219. For a critical analysis of this major problem in modern Lutheran dogmatics, see Jack D. Kilcrease, “The Self-Donation of God: Gerhard Forde and the Question of Atonement in Lutheran Tradition” (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2009).

226 Olli-Pekka Vainio, Justification and Participation in Christ: The Development of the Lutheran Doctrine of Justification from Luther to the Formula of Concord (1580) (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 25-6, is such a friend, as are Asendorf and Peters. Vainio (124) relates that in his polemics against Mörlin, Osiander derided him as a “blood theologian.”
Finnish theologians to read both *gratia* and *donum* in christological terms at the expense of the proper work of the Spirit, often in concert with a somewhat forced differentiation between Luther and Melanchthon in this regard.\(^\text{227}\) One of my major aims in this chapter is to accentuate the pneumatological character of the “gift” in Luther’s mature theology, and in so doing to establish the inseparability of forgiveness in Christ (*gratia*) and real renewal by the Spirit (*donum*) on the sure trinitarian footing that it in fact enjoys in the works of his maturity.

I have a hunch that this is not unrelated to the third of my ancillary aims in this chapter. At the center of Mannermaa’s groundbreaking work is the thesis that Jesus Christ himself is present in faith: *in ipsa fide Christus adest*. On my reading, this is in fact a vital theme for Luther in not a few of his writings, including some of his most important and well-known, *e.g.*, the 1520 *Freedom of a Christian*, the 1521 *Antilatomus*, and in particular the great 1531/5 *Lectures on Galatians* upon which Mannermaa rested most of his case.\(^\text{228}\) In some of his comments on Gal. 2:20 (“Now it

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\(^{228}\) On Gal. 2:16, WA 40/1.228.31-229.30 [Dr] (cf. LW 26.129-30): *fides Christiana non est otiosa qualitas vel vacua siliqua in corde quae possit existiere in peccato mortali, donec charitas accedat et eam vivificet, Sed si est vera fides, est quaedam certa fiducia cordis et firmus assensus quo Christus apprehenditur, Sic ut Christus sit obiectum fidei, imo non obiectum, sed, ut ita dicam, in ipsa fide Christus adest. Fides ergo est cognitio quaedam vel tenebra quae nihil videt, Et tamen in istis tenebris Christus fide apprehensus sedet, Quemadmodum Deus in Sina et in Templo sedebat in medio tenebrarum. Est ergo formalis nostra iustitia non charitas informans fidem, sed ipsa fides et nebula cordis, hoc est, fiducia in rem quam non videmus, hoc est, in Christum qui, ut maxime non videatur, tamen praesens est. Iustificat ergo fides, quia apprehendit et possidet istum thesaurum, siclicet Christum praesentem. Sed quo modo praesens sit, non est cogitabile, quia sunt tenebrae, ut dixi. Ubi
is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me”). Luther’s emphasis on the real presence of Christ in faith does seem to overwhelm any sense of a distinct personal agency on the believer’s part; and because of their zeal to promote the ontological reality of union with Christ, this is a point the Finns are inclined to underscore. If this Finnish emphasis on Christ’s agency is then combined with vague assumptions about Luther’s “monergism” (Alleinwirksamkeit) based upon impressions formed by the 1525 de servo arbitrio—assumptions which, I suspect, grow in force in inverse proportion to how closely that intricate text is actually read—the notion of Luther as a theologian of renewed human agency would seem a most unlikely hypothesis.

Yet I will argue that this is just what we find in the texts at hand: a repeated grappling with the mysterious interplay of divine and human action, carried out within a broadly Augustinian framework but now with Augustine’s gratia cooperans reworked into Luther’s donum Spiritus Sancti. To be sure, the fallen human being can only suffer the advent of grace. But once a dead son or daughter of Adam is reborn in Christ and made alive by the Spirit, the latter’s vivifying gift renews the nature vitiated

ergo vera fiducia cordis est, ibi adest Christus in ipsa nebula et fide. Eaque est formalis iustitia propter quam homo iustificatur, non propter charitatem, ut Sophistae loquantur. Summa: Sicut Sophistae dicunt charitatem formare et imbuere fideem, Sic nos dicimus Christum formare et imbuere fideim vel formam esse fidei. Ergo fide apprehensus et in corde habitans Christus est iustitia Christiana propter quam Deus nos reputat iustos et donat vitam aeternam.


in Adam and thus restores believers to the spiritual agency in which real human holiness chiefly consists: believing God's promise, hoping in his faithfulness, loving him with all the tattered fragments of one's broken heart, rejoicing in his goodness, and giving him thanks. This very much includes that high pitch of spiritual agency which only comes about amidst the extreme sufferings of the Anfechtungen. By the Spirit's hidden co-operations, an actio spiritualis comes into being precisely and only in summa passione, in process refining the spiritual agent’s character in the virtues of faith, hope, patience, detachment, and love. Attending to the Holy Spirit’s role in the economy of salvation will help bring Luther’s reflections on human agency out from under the dark shadow of determinism into the light of the true freedom which God gives again to the redeemed of Jesus Christ in the depths of their being through the operations of his Spirit. In the words of ancient prophecy and promise: “I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live” (Ezek. 37:14).

The scholarship on “grace,” “gift,” and the “simul” is immense; though there is no need to rehearse here what I have written in the introduction to this book, I think it is helpful to focus our attention on a few salient figures. Most misreadings of Luther’s theology of holiness can be traced back to Rudolf Hermann’s 1930 monograph on the “simul” via Wilfried Joest’s 1951 Gesetz und Freiheit. I will engage Hermann at length in Part II below. In this chapter, Joest’s introduction of a distinction between the Total- and Partialaspekt of the “simul” will occupy my attention. Joest’s Totalaspekt is so deeply ensconced in the literature that it is pretty much assumed in many quarters as a kind of primum principium for interpreting Luther’s theology of renewal in holiness—that is to say, for taking as granted that he doesn't really have
much of one. David Yeago first taught me to question the validity of this principle, and my confidence in rejecting it has grown steadily as I have studied the works of Julius Köstlin, Reinhold Seeberg, Axel Gyllenkrok, Regin Prenter, Philip Watson, Manfred Schloenbach, Erwin Iserloh, Juhani Forsberg, Jarod Wicks, Gilbert Meilaender, Simo Peura, Sammeli Juntunen, Andreas Wöhle, Otto Hermann Pesch, Theodor Dieter, Reinhard Hütter, Risto Forsberg, and the late Gilbert Meilaender.

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231 David Yeago, “Martin Luther on Renewal and Sanctification: Simul Iustus et Peccator Revisited.”
236 Philip Watson, “Luther and the Heiligung,” in Vilmos Vajta, ed. Lutherforschung heute, 75-84.
239 Forsberg, Das Abrahambild.
244 Andreas H. Wöhle, Luthers Freude an Gottes Gesetz: Eine historische Quellenstudie zur Oszillation des Gesetzesbegriffes Martin Luthers im Licht seiner alttestamentlichen Predigten.
Saarinen, Olli-Pekka Vainio, Mickey Mattox, and Jairzinho Lopes Pereira. In their diverse ways and to varying degrees, each of these theologians has argued against Hermann and/or Joest (or other readers of Luther who take their lead from them) in the course of arguing that real renewal in holiness constituted a core dogmatic commitment for the historical Luther. My argument in this chapter stands on their shoulders. This includes those occasions when I have found it necessary to correct an emphasis here or there, usually in relation to how a given reader of Luther calibrates the often complex interrelation of the dogmatic and spiritual realities summed up in the three helpful verba that orient this chapter: gratia, donum, simul. If there are particularly novel aspects to my work, I suspect they lie in two areas: one, my contention that the “simul” as Luther held it was deeply Augustinian, and perhaps above all in his consistent and adamant insistence that the saint’s refusal of consent to his residual sin is the gift-empowered conditio sine qua non for his remaining in the grace of Christ; two, my exclusive focus on writings from the last decade of Luther’s life. This, as opposed (say) to the richly rewarding—and programmatic—Antilatomus

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246 Theodor Dieter, Der junge Luther und Aristoteles.

247 Reinhard Hütter, Bound to Be Free, 111-67.

248 Risto Saarinen, “Klostertheologie auf dem Weg der Ökumene”; Weakness of Will in Renaissance and Reformation Thought, 23-6, 119-27

249 Vainio, Justification and Participation in Christ.


251 Jairzinho Lopes Pereira, Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther on Original Sin and Justification of the Sinner.
(1521), the penetrating *de servo arbitrio* (1525), or the joyful *Galaterbrief* (1531/5), all of which set forth substantially the same dogmatics of sin, grace, and holiness that I exposit in this chapter on the basis of texts ranging from late 1536 to 1544.

We begin with the *Smalcald Articles*.

1. The *Smalcald Articles* (Dec. 1536/Jan.-Feb. 1537—1538)

In June 1536, Pope Paul III called for a general council to meet in Mantua the following year. The Elector of Saxony, John Frederick, did not intend to participate in this council—which did not, of course, materialize until 1545 as the Council of Trent—but he did wish to present it with a clear statement of the confessional position of the Saxon churches. To this end, he commissioned Luther (assisted by Melanchthon, John Bugenhagen, Nicholas von Amsdorf, John Agricola, George Spalatin, Justus Jonas, and Caspar Cruciger Sr.) to draft a confession. The *Smalcald Articles* were ready by February 1537 to be presented to the meeting of the defensive league whence the confession took its name; though the text did not take hold as a binding confession till the intra-Lutheran disputes of the 1550s culminating in its inclusion in the *Book of Concord*.²⁵²

I anchor this chapter with the SA for two reasons. First, as a confessional text it offers dogmatic conciseness and clarity that helps bring focus to Luther’s mature theology of grace, gift, and the “simul.” A real strength in this regard is its firm theology of atonement through Christ’s cross and forensic justification by faith alone. As Brecht says of the SA: “Like no other Reformation confession, they were based on

²⁵² For more historical detail, see Brecht, *Preservation*, 178-85; for an overview of the SA, see William R. Russell, *Luther’s Theological Testament: The Smalcald Articles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).
the central doctrine of justification.” Second, the trenchant, feisty, and pugnacious tone of the SA vis-à-vis Rome make them an ideal source for Luther’s robust theology of holiness. For if we find such a theology in this “warlike manifesto” where Luther explains “all that we teach and live against the pope, the devil, and the world” and condemns “many noxious maggots and the excrement of various idolatries” in no uncertain terms, we can rest assured that this theology of holiness is indeed the Reformation theology of the evangelical Luther; or else, if here too the Reformer is found to have retained “pre-reformational” relics from his theological past, I suppose confessional Lutherans will need to embrace the catholicity of their tradition.

1.1. Gnade

Like the 1530 Augsburg Confession penned by Melanchthon, Luther’s Articles begin by confessing the common Catholic faith in the Trinity, the two natures in Christ’s

253 Brecht, Preservation, 181.
255 SA II.1, BSLK, 728.11-12, cf. BC, 301.
256 SA II.2, BSLK, 732.13-14, BC, 303.
257 This is the rather implausible argument of Lowell Green regarding most of Luther’s writings up to 1530, in his book How Melanchthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel: The Doctrine of Justification in the Reformation (Fallbrook, CA: Verdict Publications, 1980). But “vorreformatorisch” is a common adjective used by scholars in pursuit of the Durchbruch to described either (1) Luther’s theology prior to what they pinpoint as the decisive breakthrough to Reformation, or (2) bits and pieces of Luther’s pre-breakthrough theology that linger on inconsistently after the breakthrough. So, e.g., Oswald Bayer (Promissio, 12) argues against “the popular canonizing of the Heidelberg Disputation” (held 26 April 1518), since one can be quite Catholic and embrace its theologia crucis; whereas the same cannot be said of the theologia promissionis et fidei clearly articulated for the first time in the disputation pro veritate inquirenda et timoratis conscientiis consolandis held in the early summer months of the same year. Cf. ibid., 166-7, 173, 181, 191, 195, 235-6, 285, 299-301, 340. In my judgment, Volker Leppin’s stepwise approach to Luther’s development has much to commend it. There was no sudden breakthrough, but instead a series of gradually mounting shifts from the monastic piety-theologian to the Reformer: Staupitz leading Luther to the solus Christus in 1513, Augustine to sola gratia by 1516, St. Paul to sola fide by the Heidelberg Disputation, and Melanchthon (and John Eck at the Leipzig Disputation) spurring full-blown sola scriptura commitments in 1519, all culminating in the unmistakably “reformational theology” of the great Reformation treatises written in the summer and early fall of 1520 (Martin Luther, 107-64, summarized at 116-7).
person, and the history of his birth from Mary the Virgin, his death, descent, resurrection, ascension, rule, and promised return in judgment. This amounts to a summary of the ancient Creeds of the Church, and the Reformer refers to and upholds the Apostles’ and Athanasian Creeds by name (SA I.1-4). The brevity of this portion of the confession must not belie its decisiveness. Everything else that Luther states builds upon this foundation, which does not need to be further explicated because it is shared in common with his Roman Catholic opponents. In the foremost place, this holds true of *der erste und Heubartickel* which immediately follows, viz., regarding the office and work of “Jesus Christ, our God and Lord” in the redemption of sinners through his death on the cross (SA II.1).258

Though the word *Gnade* appears only once in passing, it is here that Luther lays down the theology of “grace” that definitively shapes the rest of the confession. As the catena of scriptural texts marshaled by Luther demonstrates, “grace” refers to the forgiveness and justification that God in his mercy grants a Gospel-believing sinner on the exclusive basis of the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ. Indeed, as I argued in chapter 1, the objective, self-substituting, sin-bearing death of the God-Man on the one hand, and the acquittal or justification of the sinner on the other, form two sides of the same coin in Luther’s theology.259 This is why Rom. 3:23-8 proves to be so

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258 BSLK, 726.25-6, BC, 300.

259 Referring to SA II.1, Althaus (*Theology of Martin Luther*, 225) observes that it “refers to Christ’s work and justification as one and the same thing.” This is quite clear in Luther’s 1531/5 *Lectures on Galatians*, 3:13. On the one hand: “Here you see how necessary it is to believe and confess the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. When Arius denied this, it was necessary also for him to deny the doctrine of redemption. For to conquer the sin of the world, death, the curse, and the wrath of God in Himself—this is the work, not of any creature but of the divine power. Therefore it was necessary that He who was to conquer these in Himself should be true God by nature” (WA 40/1.441.14-19, LW 26.282). On the other: “The doctrine of justification must be learned diligently. For in it are included all the other doctrines of our faith; and if it is sound, all the others are sound as well.
structurally significant in SA II.2. The Reformer merely reproduces St. Paul's insistence on the inseparability of redemption and propitiation through Christ's shed blood (vv. 24-5) on the one hand, and justification by grace (v. 24) and faith (vv. 26 & 28) on the other. Into this basically Pauline fabric, Luther weaves texts from St. John and Isaiah: Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world (John 1:29) when the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all (Isa 53:6). Because of this slain Lamb, though all have sinned and fall short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23),

... werden on verdienst gerecht aus seiner Gnade, durch die Erlösung Jhesu Christi inn seinem blut etc., Ro. 3.

... they become righteous without merit by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ in his blood etc., Rom. 3[;24-5].

According to the Apostle and to the Reformer, since this undeserved justification before God is "by his grace" (Gnade)—accomplished apart from our works and solely through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross—it may be grasped only by faith.

"Because this must be believed and may not be obtained or grasped otherwise with any work, law, or merit, it is clear and certain that this faith alone makes us righteous, as St. Paul says," citing Rom. 3:28: "Wir halten, das der Mensch gerecht werde on

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260 For Rom. 3:23-8 in Luther's translation, see WA DB 7.38.23-28: Denn es ist hie keyn vnterscheyd, sie sind alle zumal sunder, vnd mangeln des preyse des got an yhn haben sott, vnd werden on verdienst gerechtfertiget, aus seyner gnad, durch die erlosung, so durch Christo geschehen ist, wilchen gott hat furgestellet zu eynem gnade stuel, durch den glawben ynn seynem blut, da mit er die gerechtickeit, die fur yhm gilt, beweyse, ynn dem, das er vergibt die sund, die zuvor sind geschehen vnter gotlicher gedult, die er trug, das er zu disen zeyten beweysete die gerechtickeyt, die fur yhm gilt. Auff das er alleyne gerecht sey, vnd rechtigete den, der da ist des glawbens an Jhesu. Wo ist denn nu deyn rhum? er ist außgeschlossen, durch wilch gesetz? durch der werck gesetz? Nicht also, sondern durch des glawbens gesetz. So halten wyrs nu, das der mensch gerechtfertigt werde, on zu thun der werck des gesetzes, alleyn durch den glawben.

261 Note well that in the 1522/46 Deutsche Bibel, Luther renders Paul's hilasterion with gnade steul. Christ crucified, the Propitiator, is the throne of "grace." WA DB 7.38.25.

262 BSLK, 726.27-31, cf. BC, 301.
werck des Gesetzes durch den glauben.” Such faith does not justify by its own intrinsic virtue, but by virtue of the object it apprehends: Jesus Christ and his cross. When an ungodly sinner hears this Gospel of “grace”—that is to say, of redemption, forgiveness, and justification through Christ’s shed blood—and believes it, God mercifully justifies him on the just basis of Christ’s substitution: “That he alone may be righteous (Gerecht sey) and may make righteous (gerecht mache) the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26).

“Grace” (Gnade), then, refers at once to Jesus Christ and his atoning work and to the forgiveness and justification that faith receives through him. Thus in SA III.3 (“On Repentance”), with John 1 especially in mind, Luther contrasts the convicting “hammer” of God’s law (cf. Jer. 23:29) with “the consoling promise of grace (verheissung der gnaden) through the Gospel.” The Reformer vividly portrays his classic law/Gospel contrast through the figure of John the Baptist, who preached repentance to convict open sinner and false saint alike and thus prepare them “for the Lord to receive grace (die gnade zu empfahen), to await and accept from him the forgiveness of sins.” St. John told everyone without exception: “You all need the forgiveness of sins,” then pointed his finger to the Lamb of God and proclaimed: “God is present there, in the One from whose fullness we all must receive grace upon grace (gnade umb gnade) and without whom no human being can be righteous before God.” Note how Luther combines John 1:16’s gnade umb gnade with the Pauline

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263 BSLK, 728.1-4, BC, 301.
264 BSLK, 728.5-6, cf. BC, 301.
265 BSLK, 752.6-7, BC, 313.
266 BSLK, 752.9-14, BC, 313.
language of righteousness before God, all in the overarching context of the movement in John 1 from the incarnation of the Word at v. 14 to the sin-bearing Lamb at v. 29. Thus in the following paragraphs, when Luther defines evangelical contrition (reu), confession (Beicht), and satisfaction (gnugthuung), the last consists “in the suffering and blood of the innocent Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”

Incarnation, atonement through satisfaction, forgiveness and becoming righteous before God: Gnade. In these later passages from SA III.3, as in the foundational confession of the chief article in SA II.1, by “grace” Luther means the forgiveness of sins and justification before God that are to be had only through God’s incarnate Son and blood-shedding Lamb, Jesus Christ.

What of the “gift”?

1.2. The deep, evil corruption of nature

To grasp Luther’s theology of the “gift,” I need first to sketch his teaching on the depth of sin’s corrupting power and thus the totality of the repentance required by the Law’s judgment upon the sinner. In SA III.1 (“On Sin”), Luther reiterates the Augustinianism he embraced as a lecturer on Romans in 1515, including its application contra pelagianos modernos in much the same manner Leif Grane has accounted for in the earlier period (matters that will occupy our full attention in Part II below). In 1537 the aging Reformer still stakes his position on Rom. 5:12-19, and the entire article prioritizes the “original sin” (Erbsunde) of Adam. Through his disobedience, “all people have become sinners (sind Sünder worden) subject to death and the devil.”

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268 BSLK, 762.13-26, BC, 318.
269 Leif Grane, Modus Loquendi Theologicus.
270 BSLK, 746.17-20, cf. BC, 310.
This “chief sin” (Heubtsunde),\textsuperscript{271} inherited by all, has caused “a deep, evil corruption of nature (verderbung der natur).”\textsuperscript{272} From it grow subsequent evil works, as the rotten fruits of a wounded tree (cf. Matt. 7:17-20).\textsuperscript{273} In short, Adam’s filii sin because they are born sinners; they do not become sinners by committing discrete sinful acts. 

Agere sequitur esse. This is why a theology of repentance (SA III.3’s topic) that focuses exclusively on actual sins—in Luther’s judgment, “the false penance of the Papists” consisting in contrition, confession, and satisfaction—fails to grapple with the real issue at hand, “always doing penance but never arriving at repentance.”\textsuperscript{274} True repentance begins when people who are sinners hear and take to heart the Law’s sobering—indeed, strictly speaking, mortifying—judgment:

You are all of no account, whether you are open sinners or saints; you must all become different and act differently (Ir müst alle anders werden und anders thun), no matter who you are and what you do now, be you as great, wise, mighty and holy as you want, here no one is godly (cf. Rom. 3:10).\textsuperscript{275}

Such a law-crushed, contrite heart makes the total confession: “We are all lost, neither hide nor hair of us is good, and we must become altogether new and different people (müssen schlechts neue und andere Menschen werden).”\textsuperscript{276}

Once God’s “hammer” (the law) has effected this true contrition and elicited this absolute confession, the sinner is prepared to receive the Gnade of satisfaction through God’s Lamb. But the “grace” of forgiveness through Christ, inestimably precious as it is in itself, does not exhaust the fullness of God’s redeeming work in the

\textsuperscript{271}BSLK, 746.20, BC, 310.
\textsuperscript{272}BSLK, 746.27, BC, 310.
\textsuperscript{273}BSLK, 746.21-26, BC, 310.
\textsuperscript{274}BSLK, 758.5 (BC, 315): Das hies imerdar gebüsst und nimer mehr zur busse komen.
\textsuperscript{275}BSLK, 752.1-5, cf. BC, 312-3.
\textsuperscript{276}BSLK, 762.10-12, cf. BC, 318.
Gospel. For the law exposes the awful reality of sin not only as guilt but also as corruption, and thus lays bare humanity’s need not only for forgiveness by “grace” but also for renewal by the “gift” (Gabe) of the Spirit, to the end that justified sinners may become neue und andere Menschen.

1.3. Gabe

In the SA, there are two principal loci to examine regarding this gift of renewal: the conclusion of SA III.3 on repentance, and III.13 on justification and good works. For reasons that will become clear presently, I first turn briefly to the latter. Appealing to Acts 15:9, Luther states that “through faith (as St. Peter says) we receive a different, new, pure heart (ein ander neu, rein hertz).” Though he does not use the word, this is an account of the spiritual regeneration that either takes place through faith (as Luther puts it here) or is identical with the Spirit-worked gift of faith itself, the donum fidei in the heart (Eph. 2:8). The “different, new, pure heart” of faith marks the real beginning of the “new and different man” called for by the Law and sought ought in repentance. As the broken-hearted penitent takes hold of the grace of forgiveness in Christ by faith, he does so by virtue of the very gift that initiates the inchoate renewal of his vitiated nature. The two realities—forgiveness and newness of life—are distinct, but inseparable. Thus Luther lines up “faith, renewal (verneuerung), and forgiveness of

\[\text{277 BSLK, 776.15-16, cf. BC, 325.}\]
\[\text{278 Cf. WA 44.824.23-5, LW 8.332 (on Gen. 50:19-23): Ideo non paratur ea [fides] nostris viribus, non est acquisita fides, sed ut Paulus ait, 'donum Dei est, non ex nobis.' On this ambiguity, see Manfred Schloenbach, Heiligung, 13-18. As for regeneration, see e.g. Theses Concerning Faith and the Law (11 Sept. 1535), #65-6, WA 39/1.48.14-18, LW 34.113.: '65. Justification is in reality a kind of rebirth in newness (revera regeneratio in novitatem), as John says: who believe in his name and were born of God (John 1:12-13, 1 John 5:1). 66. Therefore, Paul calls baptism 'the washing of regeneration and renewal' (lavacrum regenerationis et renovationis) (Tit. 3:5) and Christ himself says, 'Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John 3:3).'}
“sin” in grammatical parataxis, innocent of the later Lutheran scruple to reverse their order; convinced of the inseparable unity of grace and gift in the divine work of redeeming and renewing lost sinners, it is enough to insist upon their ontological and temporal priority vis-à-vis the doing of good works.279 As in the fallen creature, so in the creature restored by the grace of Jesus Christ and the gift of his Spirit: action follows being, as the good fruits springing forth from an old and rotten tree made new and fruitful.

Having considered the beginning of renewal in regeneration, we can now turn to the concise but rich explanation of die Gabe des heiligen Geists in SA III.3 (which follows on the heels of the Christ- and Gnade-focused material I considered above).280

279 BSLK, 776.20-21, BC, 325: “Good works follow such faith, renewal, and forgiveness of sin...” Hence the next two theses that follow Luther’s discussion of regeneration in the 1535 disputation I cited in the preceding footnote (WA 39/1.48.19-23, LW 34.113): “67. For that reason, it is impossible to be justified by good works, since it is impossible for us to be born of our works, but rather, the works are born of us, so to speak. 68. By the same Spirit we are called righteous, a new creature of God (nova creatura Dei) and the firstfruits of God’s creatures, who according to his will brought us forth by his Word (2 Cor. 5:17, Jas. 1:18).”

280 The phrase die Gabe des heiligen Geists is ambiguous: is the Spirit himself the gift, or does the Spirit give a gift distinct from himself? On this question, Risto Saarinen’s interpretation of Luther’s shifting stances vis-à-vis the scholastic distinction between gratia increata et creata is quite illuminating: “Ipsa Dilectio Deus Est: Zur Wirkungsgeschichte von 1. Sent. dist. 17 des Petrus Lombardus bei Martin Luther,” in Tuomo Mannermaa, Anja Ghiselli, and Simo Peura, eds., Thesaurus Lutheri: Auf der Such nach neuen Paradigmen der Luther-Forschung (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola, 1987), 185-204. Saarinen shows (pp. 192-3) that in the 1509/10 Sentenzkommentar, Luther recognizes that Peter’s Augustinian emphasis on uncreated grace stands in some tension with later developments in scholastic theology; for assuming the ascendancy and primacy of an Aristotelian theory of virtue as habitus somewhat stacks the deck against a robust account of the role of gratia increata in the Christian life. Luther tentatively suggests an alternative (WA 9.42.39-43.8): quando Augustinus dicit quod dilectio est deus, non intelligatur cum praecisione seu exclusive i.e. quasi dilectio sit tantum deus, Sed concedendo quod dilectio sit deus, Sed non tantum. Sed est etiam dilectio creat. Sicut ‘Christus est fides, justitia, gratia nostra et sanctificatio nostra.’ Et videtur Magister non penitus absurdissime loqui: in eo quod habitum dicit esse spiritum sanctum. Quia commentum illud de habitibus opinionem habet ex verbis Aristotelis rancidi philosophi. Alias bene possit dici, quod spiritus sanctus est charitas concurrents seipso cum voluntate ad productionem actus amandi, nisi sit forte determinatio ecclesiae in oppositum (i.e., at the Council of Vienna 1311/12; see DEC I.361.9-25, esp. ll. 17-18: et culpa eisdem [parvulis] in baptismo remittitur et virtutes ac informans gratia infunduntur quod habitum). Saarinen next argues convincingly that the Augustinian Rom. 5:5/1 John 4:8-centered theology of caritas as gratia increata stands near the center of Luther’s polemics
Recall that the overall context of the article is the contrast between false and true repentance, the former focused on actual sin and the latter—without disregarding actual sin—pressing deeper to the sinful or corrupt nature of the sinner. Now, as I will argue in Part II of this book, Luther has been convinced since his reading of St. Paul and the anti-Pelagian treatises of Augustine in 1515 that the dregs and remnants of this vitiated nature remain a force to be reckoned with (and fought against) in the lives of the renati, who are really but only partially renewed in this life. For this reason, repentance can only be restricted to actual sins dealt with in the context of sacramental penance at the risk of mortal spiritual danger to the penitent. Rather, as Luther put it in the first of his Ablaßthesen (31 Oct. 1517), “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ‘Repent’ (Matt. 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance (omnem vitam fidelium penitentiam esse).”\footnote{WA 1.233.10-11, LW 31.25. Cf. Volker Leppin, “‘Omnem vitam fidelium penitentiam esse voluit’—Zur Aufnahme mystischer Traditionen in Luthers erster Ablaßthese,” ARG 93 (2002), 7-25. Leppin against Ockham, Biel, et al. in the 1515-17 period (pp. 193-8). Later on, however, Luther assumes a mediating position (pp. 199-201). On the one hand, in the 1537 Zirkulardisputation De veste nuptiali he explicitly rejects Peter’s teaching in Sent. I d. 17 (WA 39/1.309.25-320.18): Charitatem fecerunt [scholastici] creatam et increatam. Charitas increata, quae est ipse Deus, iustificat, sed creat a non iustificat, nisi in futura vita; ibi erit perfecta. Iam magister sententiarum est reprehensus, qui dixerit, Spiritum sanctum esse ipsum charitatem in nobis, et non distinctum inter charitatem infusam seu creatam et increatam. On the other hand, in the Promotionsdisputation von Palladius und Tilemann of the same year, Luther argues that the real presence of the indwelling Spirit and the gifts of faith, hope, love, etc. which he infuses are inextricable (WA 39/1.245.12-246.11 [A]): Neque tantum venit ad nos sicut artifex aliquis, qui aedificat domum et postea abit et tradit eam alteri possidendam. Sed semper adest nobis, fulcit et conservat nos. Denn er hat immerdar an uns zu halten, und wie an einem alten bösen pelzt zu flicken. Itaque cum infundit nobis fidem, spem, charitatem, modestiam, libertatem, beneficiantium, longanimitatem, non discedt, sed manet in nobis. Es were denn, das wir in selber mutwilliglich mit unsern sünden von uns jagten. Hoc tantum bonum summa cum veneration et gratiarum actione agnoscedendum est et cavendum, ne amittamus. Et ut Spiritus sanctus nobis adest, ita adest pater, filius, in suis involucris conclusi et tecti veluti puer in fascis. Saarinen thus observes that for Luther in 1537, the Holy Spirit, personally present in the saints as the divine Giver, is really distinct from his gifts, yet inseparable therefrom (p. 201). This, I suggest, is the nuanced dogmatic position that lies behind the ambiguity in Luther’s oft-repeated phrases die Gabe des heiligen Geists and donum Spiritus sancti. I will explore this farther in the argument below, especially with respect to texts like Rom. 8:13.
mature theologian holds the same doctrine of repentance: “This repentance endures among Christians till death, since it struggles with the leftover sin in the flesh (der ubrigen sunde im fleisch) through the whole life.”

In the Augustinian tradition, the classic scriptural locus for this “leftover” or “residual sin in the flesh”—in Nikolaus Selnecker’s 1584 translation, peccato residuo in carne—is St. Paul’s forthright confession at Rom. 7:14-25 of his grievous battle with the lex peccati indwelling his members. Luther appeals directly to it here: “As St. Paul bears witness in Rom. 7[:23], er kempff mit dem Gesetz seiner glieder etc.” This battle against the stubborn remnants of original sin, this true and enduring repentance, forms the spiritual Sitz im Leben for the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit by his “gift” in the regenerated saint’s heart. St. Paul fights against his own flesh, not as a strong Pelagian but as a weak Christian, that is,

... er kempff mit dem Gesetz seiner glieder etc., Und das nicht durch eigen kreffte, sondern durch die Gabe des heiligen Geists.

... he battles with the law of his members etc., and that not though his own powers, but through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(This “gift,” he adds, “follows upon the forgiveness of sins,” i.e., “grace,” thus reversing the order found later at SA III.13.) The Spirit’s gift empowers the believer for the great battle against “sin”/flesh through lifelong daily repentance. And as the gift of God the Holy Spirit, it is not weak and ineffectual but potent and transformative: “This

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argues convincingly for the decisive influence of the mysticism of John Tauler, the Theologia Deutsch, and John Staupitz for the formation of Luther’s Bußtheologie.

282 BSLK, 764.3-4, cf. BC, 318.
283 BSLK, 765.3-4: Haec poenitentia in Christianis durat usque ad mortem, quia luctatur cum peccato residuo in carne per totam vitam.
284 BSLK, 764.4-5, cf. BC, 318.
285 BSLK, 764.5-6, cf. BC, 318.
286 BSLK, 764.5-7, cf. BC, 318.
same gift (Gabe) daily purifies and sweeps out the remaining sins (die ubrige sunden; in Selnecker’s Latin, reliquias peccati) and works to make people truly pure and holy (recht rein und heilig zu machen).”

Here, then, is a concise formulation of Luther’s trinitarian theology of grace and gift circa the winter of 1536/37: Jesus Christ brings forgiveness and righteousness to condemned sinners by his death on the cross, and the Holy Spirit works progressive renewal in forgiven but still partly sinful or fleshly believers, making them truly pure and holy.

1.4. Agricola’s Antinomian and Luther’s “Augustinian Simul”

Luther’s strongly-worded articles were presented to the princes of the Smalcaldic League in February 1537, but for use in their negotiations with Rome they chose Melanchthon’s more irenic Augsburg Confession and its Apology. When Luther eventually prepared his articles for publication in 1538, he appended two highly significant paragraphs to SA III.3. This addendum is directed primarily against the theological antinomianism of John Agricola, the erstwhile friend and colleague with whom Luther engaged in protracted controversy from 1537 to 1540. But it also addresses the popular abuse and degeneration of Luther’s teaching on free grace and justification into a convenient excuse for licentiousness. *Esto peccator et pecca fortiter,* after all: reducing progress in sanctification to “the art of getting used to justification”

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287 BSLK, 764.7-9, cf. BC, 318.
288 The controversy that flared up in 1537 had roots in the dispute between Agricola and Melanchthon in the 1520s. See Timothy J. Wengert, *Law and Gospel: Philip Melanchthon’s Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over “Poenitentia”* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997).
is a perenniilly popular theological option.\textsuperscript{289} As such, these paragraphs—which fit seamlessly into the confession, and do not introduce any substantial change in its doctrine—shed invaluable light on the Reformer’s theology of grace and gift, especially as it pertains to the surprisingly specific sense in which he regards the graced and gifted Christian as a “sinner.” Luther’s opponents

... maintain that all who once have received the Spirit or the forgiveness of sin or have become believers, should they sin after that, would remain nevertheless in the faith, and such sin would not harm them. They shout, “Do what you will! If you believe, then nothing else matters. Faith blots out all sin,” etc.\textsuperscript{290}

In short, believers may indeed go on sinning that grace may abound: do what you like, since faith in Christ blots out all sin. Thus Luther’s doctrine of free justification elicited from some the same response as St. Paul’s (Rom. 6:1, cf. 3:5-8), and the Reformer’s response to the antinomian abuse of his teaching was identical to the Apostle’s: unmitigated opposition. “I have encountered many such foolish people, and I am concerned that such a devil is still present in some.”\textsuperscript{291} This is an ominous allusion to Agricola, no doubt. In it Luther stoutly rejects—as demonic—any version of the “\textit{simul}” that eliminates the Christian’s real renewal in holiness and winks at sin in the name of an exclusively forensic doctrine of justification. Against antinomianism refined or vulgar, Luther the theologian and pastor urges that sin does indeed do great


\textsuperscript{290} BSLK, 764.15-19, cf. BC, 318.

\textsuperscript{291} BSLK, 764.21-2, BC, 319.
harm to the Christian, who may not do whatever he wills if he wills to remain in Christ.

In what sense, then, is the real Christian—forgiven by Christ’s grace and renewed by the Spirit’s gift—still a sinner? If it is not exactly decisive, it is nonetheless important that in his explanation of his position Luther does not appeal to “the simul” (though he describes it) nor does he call Christians “sinners” (though he does explain the sense in which that is not an improper appellation). Better to call believers “the holy people (die heiligen Leute),” with this qualification: “they still have and feel the original sin (die Erbsünde noch haben und fülen) against which also they daily repent and struggle.” As a partly but not yet perfectly renewed “holy people,” believers must still fight the Pauline battle against the lex peccati lodged within them, which they have and feel but to which they do not yield their consent. Rather, by virtue of the Spirit’s Gabe, they overrule the sinful inclinations, desires, and impulses which their imperfectly renewed nature still obliges them to suffer. As Vinzenz Pfnür has recently observed vis-à-vis SA III.3, Luther insists that in God’s saints, the Holy Spirit does not allow die sunde to rule [Rom. 6:12a] and gain the upper hand so that it is brought to completion (volnbracht werde) [cf. Rom. 7:18b], but controls and forbids, so that it [sc. die sunde] is not able to do what it wants [Gal. 5:17c].

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294 BSLK, 764.27–9: Denn der heilige Geist lesst die sunde nicht walten und überhand gewinnen, das sie volnbracht werde, Sondern steuret und wehret, das sie nicht mus [alt.: darf] thun, was sie wil. Selnecker translates a little freely (BSLK 765.25–7): Spiritus enim sanctus non sinit peccatum dominari, invalescere et victoriam obtinere ac consummari, sed reprimit et coércet, ne facere possit, quod vult. Kolb and Wengert accept the suggested alternate, reading “darf” for “mus” (BC, 319); this makes better sense of the grammar, and fits with Selnecker’s translation.
The Reformer thus acknowledges the presence of “sin” in God’s holy people only in the limited sense of the persisting remnants of original sin that are throttled, reigned in, checked, and overruled by the Spirit’s sanctifying Gabe.295

This is Luther’s real “simul” in its most basic form. The twin facts that he (1) states it in terms drawn from Rom. 6–7 and Gal. 5:17, interpreted unselfconsciously through the lens of the traditional facere/perficere (volnbracht) distinction, and then (2) proceeds to summarize his position by pairing together 1 John 3:9 and 1:8 in just the manner that Augustine had modeled at pecc. mer. 2.7.9–8.10 in the winter of 411/12,296 strongly suggests the depth of its roots in Augustine’s own theology.

As St. John says: “Whoever has been born of God does not sin and cannot sin (sundigt nicht, und kan nicht sundigen)” [1 John 3:9]. Nevertheless, this is also the truth (as the same St. John writes): “If we say that we have no sin (wir nicht sunde haben), we lie, and God’s truth is not in us” [1 John 1:8].297

295 Cf. Risto Saarinen, “The Pauline Luther and the Law: Lutheran Theology Reengages the Study of Paul,” Pro Ecclesia 15/1 (2006): 64–86, here 81: despite the fact that the sinful subject of Rom. 7 is the spiritual man, “for Luther this does not mean that the speaker in question would actually perform a morally bad action”; Mickey Mattox, “Martin Luther’s Reception of Paul,” 120: “Paul as Luther imagines him was not at all a man who struggled with besetting sins.”

296 CSEL 60.79–82, WSA I/23.84–5. From Augustine’s summary at §8.10, the matrix for which is provided by Rom. 8:23–5 (CSEL 60.81–2): Adoptio ergo plena filiorum in redemptione fiet etiam corporis nostri. primitias itaque spiritus nunc habemus, unde iam filii dei re ipsa facti sumus; in ceteris vero spe sicut salutis, sicut innouati ita et filii dei, re autem ipsa quia nondum salutum, id est nondum plene innouati, nondum etiam filii dei, sed filii saeculi. proficimus ergo in renouationem iustamque vitam per quod filii dei sumus et per hoc peccare omnino non possumus [cf. 1 John 3:9b], donec totum in hoc transmutetur, etiam illud, quo adhuc filii saeculi sumus; per hoc enim et peccare adhuc possumus. ita fiet ut et qui natus est ex deo non peccat [1 John 3:9a] et, si dixerimus, quia peccatum non habemus, nos ipso decipiamus et veritas non sit in nobis [1 John 1:8]... nunc ergo et similis ei esse iam coepimis primitias habentes spiritus et adhuc dissimiles sumus per reliquias uetustatis. proinde inquantum similis, in tantum regenerationem spiritu filii dei, in quantum autem dissimiles, in tantum filii carnis et saeculi. illsi ergo peccare non possumus [1 John 3:9b]; illsi vero, si dixerimus, quia peccatum non habemus, nos ipso decipimus [1 John 1:8] donec totum transeat in adoptionem et non sit peccator et quaeras locum eius et non inuenias [cf. Ps. 37:10].

297 BSLK, 764.30–33, cf. BC, 319. In citing 1 John 1:8 here, Luther adds the word “Gottes” prior to “warheit.”
In Parts II and III of this book, I will attend in depth to the question of how Luther’s theology of sin, grace, and holiness relates to Augustine’s. For the time being, I pause to mark the baseline content of Luther’s “Augustinian simul” in its striking Johannine formulation by supplying (in gut augustinisch fashion) interpretive glosses taken from Rom. 7/Gal. 5:16-17. Luther’s position in the 1538 addendum to SA III.3 comes to this:

(1) The born of God confess that they have “sin,” that is, the remnants of original sin, the sinful flesh, the law of sin, the law of one’s members, etc.

(2) Despite this, the regenerate do not sin and indeed cannot sin: that is, because they are born of God, regenerated by water and the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit’s gift, they refuse to gratify the sinful desires they still have and feel within them, and instead restrain and fight against them by the Spirit’s strong Gabe.

This is, I think it safe to say, a far cry from standard assumptions about Luther’s “simul.” The reborn kan nicht sundigen! Still, it is important to specify what he takes St. John to mean. Luther rejects outright the ancient perfectionist claim—revived by some Anabaptists in the sixteenth century—“that if someone sins after receiving faith and the Spirit, then that person never really had the Spirit and faith.” On Luther’s reading, 1 John 3:9 does not mean that the regenerate have already obtained the high gift of not being able to sin at all: in Augustine’s and Peter Lombard’s terms, the complete eschatological freedom of non posse peccare. Rather, 1 John 3:9 means that

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298 BSLK, 764.19-20, BC, 318.
299 Sent. II d. 25 cp. 6 de quatuor statibus liberii arbitrii (Grott. I/464-5). Drawing heavily on Augustine, Peter distinguishes the power of free decision (1) ante peccatum, when nothing impeded Adam from obtaining the good, and nothing compelled him toward evil; (2) post peccatum but ante reparationem gratiae, when the fallen human being potest peccare et non potest non peccare, etiam dannabiliter; (3) post reparationem but ante confirmationem. This is the Christian life of grace in via, when the regenerate premitur a concupiscencia, sed non vincitur; et habet quidem infirmatatem in malo, sed gratiam in bono: ut possit peccare propter libertatem et infirmatatem, et possit non peccare ad mortem propter libertatem et gratiam adiuvantium; nondum tamen habet posse omnino non peccare vel non posse peccare, propter infirmatatem nondum perfecte absorptam, et propter gratiam nondum perfecte consummatam; (4) post confirmationem, i.e., in glory, when weakness will
insofar as the regenerate are and remain so, they do not and cannot sin. But for Luther, with the Catholic tradition he inherits and the Lutheran tradition he inspires—but unlike later developments amongst the Reformed—regeneration is amissible (and, by God’s grace, recoverable).\(^{300}\) When the regenerate do in fact commit sin by succumbing to the “sin” that they “have” (1 John 1:8), they thereby forfeit their regeneration.\(^{301}\) So it turns out that the regenerate *kan* sin after all: but if and when they do so, they *ipso facto* cease to be the regenerate.

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\(^{300}\) I claim no authority of my own regarding Lutheran Orthodoxy; but according to Heinrich Schmid’s useful anthology, the later Lutheran scholastics followed Luther on the amissible nature of regeneration. See *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles A. Hay and Henry E. Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1899), 458-9, citing David Hollaz (1646-1713): “It depends, too, upon the fidelity of man, whether he will persevere in the new condition of regeneration or not, and thus regeneration is amissible; but, at the same time, it is recoverable by the grace of God, for the way of return to the state of regeneration, so long as life lasts, is open to him who has fallen from grace.” For Luther, as an Augustinian of the rock-ribbed variety, the recovery of lost grace is not in one’s own power to obtain. See, e.g., WA 43.537.7-11, LW 5.157-8 (on Gen. 27:38): *Fruamur itaque praesenti benedictione, et oblata gr atia post renatam lucem Euangelii, nec simus negligentes aut ingrati. Si enim semel ablata est benefictio: non est id in nostro arbitrio, ut eam recuperemus, sed in donacione Dei gratuita, atque ita, ut nullius lachrymis, clamoribus, laboribus moveatur;* WA 44.822.9-14, LW 8.329-30 (on Gen. 50:19-23): *Sed regia via incendendum, et fugiendum est peccatum. Quanquam enim promisit Deus veniam, sicut ait Augustinus, tamen non promisit hoc, quod certo sis rediturus post lapsum, sicut Saul et Iudas non redeunt. Non est in nostra potestate apprehendere gratiam, neque scis, an possis remissionem oblatam accipere. Ideo timendus est Deus, qui et praesumptionem et desperationem odit.*

\(^{301}\) *Pace e.g.* Berndt Hamm, “What was the Reformation Doctrine of Justification?” cp. 6 in idem, *The Reformation of Faith in the Context of Late Medieval Theology and Piety: Essays by Berndt Hamm*, ed. Robert J. Bast (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004), 197-201. Hamm asserts that for Luther, as for Reformation theology as a whole, “Salvation means the unconditional and thus final acceptance of the godless, an acceptance that cannot be reversed” (p. 200). That is incorrect: in this section of his paper, Hamm conflates Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin on the unconditional eschatological finality of justification and, therefore, the assurance of persevering to the end in salvation. I shall return to this point in the conclusion of this book.
In the addendum to SA III.3, Luther makes this point clear by using the story of David’s great fall from grace and gift alike as an example (2 Sam. 11). When David commits adultery, murders to cover it up, and thus blasphemes God, he falls into “open” or “public sin” (offentliche sunde). “At that point,” declares Luther without the slightest equivocation, “faith and the Spirit have departed.”\footnote{BSLK, 764.25-7: ... das als denn der glaube und Geist weg ist gewest. Cf. BC, 319.} For “when sin does what it wants”—that is, when the believer stops repenting and struggling by the Gabe against the residual sin still present in his members, and instead gives free reign for it to break out into open, actual, consentient sin—“then the Holy Spirit and faith are not there.”\footnote{BSLK, 764.29-30: Thut sie [sc. die sunde] aber, was sie will, So ist der heilige Geist und glaube nicht dabey. Cf. BC, 319.} David might have resisted the urges of his flesh by the Spirit’s gift, but he did not; and when he yielded his consent, die sunde lurking in his flesh began to rule, gained the upper hand, and brought to completion its evil desires. Having laid down his spiritual arms, quit the holy battle of repentance, and given way to the residual sin in his flesh, David forfeited his good standing in “the holy people” who enjoy the exalted status gratiae et doni.

In terms of Luther’s polemic against antinomian counterfeits of his theology of justification, this means that when David progresses (that is, regresses) from “having and feeling sin” in his flesh to the point of actually committing sin through consent, the “simul” simply breaks down. Suppose a hypothetical fighting David, who saw Bathsheba, manfully resisted the lusts of his flesh by the Spirit’s Gabe, and turned the other way. He could not but confess that he is a sinner, for he laments and longs to be freed from the sinful desires that afflict him; yet he would remain very much a...
righteous and holy man at the same time, the grievousness of his lust to his own soul being the chief proof of the reality of his holiness. And to this we can add that, having engaged in such a painful conflict and emerged the victor by the Spirit’s power, a sin-killing, repenting, and believing David would have made real progress in holiness. For in that case, the Spirit’s Gabe would have purified and swept away der ubrigen sunde a little bit more, and worked to make him recht rein und heilig. But alas, David chose not to fight this battle; faith and the Spirit departed from him; and this meant, in Luther’s judgment, that fallen David—prior to the subsequent renewal of his repentance and faith in the Gospel (2 Sam. 12:13, Ps. 51)—became an unqualified peccator, no longer iustus in any sense at all.\textsuperscript{304}

1.5. Grace, gift, and the “simul”

To this point I have referred to Luther’s “simul” exclusively in terms of the real but partial renewal in holiness effected by the Spirit’s gift. This is, as I argued above, its baseline content, and David’s example leaves no room for doubt on this score. Only spiritually regenerate, Gabe-empowered, sin-fighting, daily-repenting believers attain the lofty status of the “simul.” But this does not yet fully describe the complexity and richness of Luther’s teaching; and to do this, we must take into account the ongoing role of “grace” in the life of the Spirit-gifted believer. In stressing (as I have, following Luther) the distinction between “having and feeling sin” on the one hand, and committing sin through consent on the other; and in insisting on the spiritually-

\textsuperscript{304} Selnecker’s translation captures this powerfully. For Luther’s Thut sie aber, was sie will, So ist der heilige Geist und glaube nicht dabey, Selnecker provides: Si vero facit, quod vult, certe Spiritus sanctus et fides amittuntur nec simul adsunt (BSLK, 765.27-9). In other words: the Spirit and faith cannot be present together with consentient “sin” in the same person simul.
decisive role of refusing consent to residual sin through gift-empowered repentance; it is possible to lose sight of the fact that the “sin” which a regenerate believer has, feels, and fights against is in fact—*sin*. This, as Luther sees it, is the basic error of his opponents. Having denuded the *lex peccati* of its sinful quality in the baptized, “they only do penance for actual sins, such as evil thoughts to which they consent (*böse bewilligete gedancken*),” because in itself—apart from consent—the “evil impulse, lust, and inclination was not sin (*böse bewegung, lust, reitzung, war nicht sünde)*.”

Now, in saying this Luther is not dismissing the spiritually vital significance of refusing consent to indwelling sin’s *böse bewegung, lust, or reitzung*. David’s example proves that in this respect, the Reformer agrees with his opponents: whether the believer retains faith and the Spirit through repentance or forfeits both through consent to the evil impulse in his flesh determines whether or not he remains *in statu gratiae et doni*. Rather, Luther is insisting—against the majority position in the tradition—that already prior to consent, the evil impulse, lust, and inclination that constitutes the remnant of original sin in the regenerate is itself intrinsically sinful. In Part II below, I will come to the question of how this relates to Augustine’s shifting evaluations of *concupiscentia* in the 410s and 20s and Luther’s engagement with Augustine’s texts in 1515. For now, I content myself with an analysis of how the real sinfulness of original sin’s remnants in the saints factors into Luther’s theology of grace, gift, and the “*simul*.”

To this end, we return once more to SA III.13: “How a person becomes righteous before God (fur Gott gerecht wird), and concerning good works.” I drew attention above to Luther’s teaching on regeneration/renewal in this article; now we must see how the gift of new life, fruitful in good works, relates to the grace of forgiveness in Christ. Luther sums up his entire theology of grace and gift in their interrelation vis-à-vis the saints’ residual sin in a two-sentence proposition:

... wir durch den glauben (wie S. Petrus sagt) ein ander neu, rein hertz kriegen und Gott umb Christi willen, unsers Mittlers, uns fur gantz gerecht und heilig halten wil und hellt; ob wol die sunde im fleisch noch nicht gar weg oder tod ist, so wil er sie doch nicht rechen noch wissen.

... through faith (as St. Peter says) we receive a different, new, pure heart, and for the sake of Christ our Mediator, God wants to and does regard us as completely righteous and holy; although the sin in the flesh is still not completely gone or dead, God will nevertheless not count it or consider it.

The first sentence comprises Luther’s teaching on how a sinner becomes righteous (gerecht wird) in the gracious divine act of justification: his heart is renewed through faith, and God regards him as completely righteous and holy for the sake of Jesus Christ the Mediator. In short, Gabe and gnade, real renewal and forensic/imputational justification propter Christum, together form the complex reality of justification conceived as a whole; they are, as we saw in Luther’s 1532 comment on Ps. 51:2, the “two parts of justification.” But why, if the sinner has really received a new and pure heart through faith, does he still need God to regard him as righteous and holy for Christ’s sake?

The renewed believer, pure of heart by faith, still needs Christ’s mediation and God’s justification because of “the sin in the flesh,” which despite the reality of renewal

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“is still not completely gone or dead.” It is, I think, unfortunate that Kolb and Wengert omit the word die before sunde im fleisch in their translation. Their anarthrous “sin in the flesh” leaves the door open to the very sort of antinomian interpretation of his theology that Luther is keen to stamp out, for it obscures the specificity of die sunde that keeps the pure-hearted Christian in constant need of die Gnade of forgiveness in Christ. In fact, Luther operates here with the same high degree of precision regarding the nature of “the sin” that remains in believers which we saw above. “The sin in the flesh” that is not yet completely gone or dead despite the different, new, pure heart that comes through faith is the original sin of Adam in the depleted, fragmentary, residual, and overruled form it assumes in the regenerate person. By the power of the Gabe, the renewed repent of and fight against this sin in their flesh; that is, they refuse to yield to its böse bewegung, lust, or reitzung. But because the sin in the flesh really is and remains sin even in its overruled condition, it still needs to be forgiven if the “sinful” believer is to enjoy reconciled fellowship with the true God, who is perfect in holiness. This lack, the Gnade of forgiveness and (forensic) justification through Christ the Mediator supplies. For his sake, God “wants to and does regard us as completely righteous and holy,” even though we are in fact only partly so, inchoately renewed through faith but still bearing the remnants of Adam’s sin in our flesh. The latter God in his mercy does not “count” or “impute” (rechen) to our account. In short, through Jesus Christ the Mediator the remaining “sin” in believers is not imputed to their account, and instead God regards them as perfectly righteous and holy.

This is the “grace” that, so far from conflicting with the role of the “gift” in the lives of the renewed, complements and completes it. The Spirit renews the redeemed
of Jesus in true righteousness and holiness; and whatever remains of the old Adam in
their flesh as they are progressively renewed, God mercifully covers, overlooks, and
disregards for the sake of Christ, seeing in believers only the perfect righteousness and
holiness of the Mediator whom they grasp hold of by faith. Translated into the terms
of the “simul,” this means Luther teaches that believers are “sinners” for one reason,
but righteous and holy for two. They remain sinners because of die sunde im fleisch,
the remnants of Adam’s sin that persist in them despite the reality of their renewal.
Yet they are righteous and holy—partly but really—through the Spirit’s Gabe, the gift
of faith that renews and purifies their hearts and empowers them to rule over the sin
that remains. And this sin cannot harm them, because they are also righteous by the
Gnade of Jesus Christ, who presents them holy and blameless before the Father by the
power of the blood he shed in their place as the Mediator. That is to say, this sin
cannot harm them so long as they continue to battle against it in repentance and to
grasp hold of Christ by faith. If, as in the case of David, the sinful flesh is permitted to
break out into open sin, it is spiritually lethal: faith and the Spirit depart; Christ’s
righteousness, graspable only by faith, is grasped no longer; and the one who had once
been righteous in two senses and “sinful” only in the very specific way I have just
described is righteous no longer, a sinner pure and simple.

This is Luther’s mature theology of residual sin, grace, and holiness as he
confesses it in the Smalcald Articles.

2. The First (18 Dec. 1537), Second (12 Jan. 1538), and Third (6 Sept. 1538) Disputations
against the Antinomians
We have already seen Luther expositing his theology of grace, gift, and the “simul” with respect to John Agricola’s aberrant antinomianism. I turn now to the set of three disputation which Luther held in 1537 and 1538 to publicly clarify his position on the proper use of the law *in articulo iustificationis*. For the purposes of my argument, however, both the tangled skein of the number of uses Luther envisions for the law and the time-honored Lutheran pastime of distinguishing law and Gospel are mainly tangential. My object is again to set out his theology of grace and gift, and in so doing to elucidate the sense in which the Christian remains sinful while advancing in real holiness of life. For the most part, I follow Martin Brecht’s recent analysis of these texts: though his spare remarks on the sanctifying work of the Spirit are underdeveloped, his compelling case for the continuity of Luther’s *Bußtheologie* from 1517 on, with its focus on the *peccatum remanens*, points in the right direction. I have chosen to treat the three disputation as a single text. Though this is somewhat artificial, their thematic unity, their temporal proximity to one another, and the consistency of Luther’s theology within this short span of time (as within his last

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310 Martin Brecht, “Luthers Antinomerdisputationen. Lebenswirklichkeit des Gesetzes,” in Dietrich Korsch & Volker Leppin, eds., *Martin Luther – Biographie and Theologie* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 195-210. For a detailed analysis of the historical context of the disputation, see Brecht, *Preservation*, 156-71; Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Luther and the False Brethren* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 156-79. Brecht has crossed swords with Leppin over the latter’s argument for the role of German mysticism in the formation of Luther’s theology of repentance c. 1516-18. If one sides with Leppin against Brecht about the early texts, but agrees with Brecht regarding the continuity of these texts with Luther’s theology in the 1530s and 40s, it then stands to reason that the influence of Tauler and the *Theologia Deutsch* extends into the latter period; and in fact this is just what we find in the works of Luther’s maturity. On this point, see section 3 of this chapter below, as well as Part III, cp. 5.
decade taken as a whole) argue in favor of this approach. For ease of reference, I will abbreviate as follows: “D 1.4” refers to the first disputation in its fourth argument.

2.1. Luther’s theology of grace and gift in the Disputations

Because the presenting issue in the disputations is the role of the law, the lion’s share of passages wherein Luther’s theology of grace and gift surfaces speak directly and concretely of Jesus Christ’s work in fulfilling the law once for all on the cross (“grace”) and the Holy Spirit’s work in the saints empowering them to keep the law in their own right (“gift”). The quasi-technical use of the terms *gratia* and *donum* to designate this trinitarian soteriology is present in the disputations, but relatively rare.

2.1.1. Gratia and donum: verba et res

To begin with “grace”: at D 1.3, for example, Luther states that “grace properly (*gratia proprie*) is the fulfillment of the law, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and life in Christ.”

Note that to the familiar “grace” of forgiveness, righteousness, and life in Christ is now added the fulfillment of the law. This does not mark a substantial innovation so much as an epexegetical fleshing-out of the fullness of Christ’s grace. The believer has Christ’s perfect obedience, even to death on the cross, as his own; and to say this is to say that he possesses forgiveness, righteousness, and life *propter Christum*. This is *gratia proprie*. Thus at D 1.14, Luther explains that the law-broken penitent ought to hear the “word of grace” (*verbum gratiae*) from his choice Pauline

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31 WA 39/1.368.11-12 [A], *ATD*, 39.
proof-text, Rom. 3:22-24: “the free forgiveness of sin by God’s grace (per gratiam Dei) is to be taught, through the redemption (per redemptionem) which is in Christ Jesus.”

The same nexus of grace and redemption through Christ’s cross emerges at D 1.21. Referring to John 1:29, Isa. 53:4-6, and Gal. 2:21, Luther explains that the Gospel teaches that satisfaction for sins comes about only through God’s slain Lamb, and declares that all who believe this cannot doubt the grace of God (gratia Dei) unless they want to imply that Christ died for nothing. Similarly at D 2.13, those whom the law has taught to “learn to aspire for grace (gratiam)” seek and thirst for Christ, the Lamb of God. By faith in the Gospel of grace through the Lamb, the embattled Christian can tell the law that accuses him of his sins:

Behold, Christ is already present here, without me (hic iam adest sine me). For I certainly have this Christ (eum habeo Christum), who makes me alive, saves, justifies, and gives eternal life, and this freely (gratis) and though I am unworthy, therefore without me (sine me). And now, be quiet! For Christ is already here, that is, peace and the forgiveness of sin because of his blood.

The odd-sounding adest sine me in the first sentence becomes clearer by the end of the second: “without me,” that is, without regard to the sinner’s own unworthiness, Jesus Christ is freely present with and for him, bringing the grace of forgiveness and peace with God won for the believer by his shed blood. Finally, two passages from D 3 which illuminate the connection between “grace,” imputation, and the blood of the

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312 WA 39/1.382.18-25 [A], ATD, 50.
313 WA 39/1.396.23-397.3 [A], ATD, 61.
314 WA 39/1.456.5-6 [A], cf. ATD, 106.
315 WA 39/1.456.11-15 [A], cf. ATD, 106.
Mediator. In his preface, Luther explains that sin is taken away completely by imputation (reputative seu imputative), which means that “the mercy and grace (gratia) of God has removed sin.” This gracious imputation takes place through and for the sake of Jesus Christ, “the Propitiator and Mediator,” whom the condemned sinner grasps by faith. Likewise at D 3.2.2[29], believers are already “utterly saints and righteous by way of imputation,” because it is certain that “we have been baptized in Christ’s blood and received by the Father into grace for Christ’s sake (in gratiam propter Christum), in whom we believe.”

In sum: in these disputations, gratia properly defined is virtually identical to Gnade in the SA, and Luther develops his theology of grace on the basis of the same catena of scriptural texts taken from Isaiah, John, and Paul. “Grace” means free forgiveness, righteousness, and peace with God for the unworthy, through faith in the Lamb who made satisfaction for sins and brought redemption to his own by his blood. If there is a new nuance here, it lies in the tendency to define grace in terms of God’s merciful imputation for the sake of Christ’s perfect fulfillment of the law. And in fact, as I suggested above and as we shall see in further depth below, for the most part it is this forensic nuance that takes center-stage in the disputations regardless of whether or not the Reformer speaks explicitly about gratia. But as the texts I have cited demonstrate, each mention of God’s gracious or merciful imputation and/or Jesus Christ’s propitiatory and redeeming fulfillment of the law marks an instance of Luther’s theology of grace.

316 WA 39/1.491.24-492.1 [A], ATD, 141.
317 WA 39/1.492.21-493.5 [A], ATD, 142.
318 WA 39/1.562.15-563.1 [A], ATD, 185.
On my reckoning, there are only three explicit references to the *donum* of the Holy Spirit in the disputations. In each case, the context is an interesting pneumatological parallel to Luther’s familiar christological distinction between God hidden in his majesty and revealed in the incarnation and cross of the Son.\(^{319}\) When, in accordance with John 16:8, the Spirit acts to convict the sinner, he speaks in his divine majesty and terrifies hearts. “Yet when he is enveloped in tongues and spiritual gifts (*donis spiritualibus*), then he is called the gift (*donum*), sanctifies, and vivifies.”\(^{320}\) In D 1.17, Luther explains further: “For usually we call the Holy Spirit the One whom Christ sent us from the Father as gift (*donum*) in order that he might be our Vivifier, Sanctifier (*noster vivificator, sanctificator*), etc.”\(^{321}\) Thus when the Spirit is “God in his nature,” he is the Law’s author and he convicts of sin; but when he is “the gift through Christ (*donum per Christum*), he is our Vivifier and Sanctifier.”\(^{322}\) Arguing along the same lines at D 2.29, Luther concludes that “the Holy Spirit as God terrifies by the law, but as gift (*donum*), in the form of a dove, in the fiery tongue, he consoles, sanctifies, and vivifies.”\(^{323}\) Thus in the disputations, the “gift” of the Holy Spirit refers principally to the Spirit himself in his evangelical (as opposed to legal) operations, that is, the Spirit clothed in his *dona spiritualia* and at work in the saints of God thereby, sanctifying them and giving them life. As we shall see presently, in the context of the disputations Luther primarily correlates the Spirit’s sanctifying work with the renewal

\(^{319}\) On this point, see Pekka Kärkkäinen, *Luthers trinitarische Theologie des Heiligen Geistes*, 134-141.

\(^{320}\) D 1.4, WA 39/1.370.18-21 [A], *ATD*, 40.

\(^{321}\) WA 39/1.389.5-7 [A], cf. *ATD*, 56.

\(^{322}\) WA 39/1.391.17-20 [A], *ATD*, 57.

\(^{323}\) WA 39/1.484.20-22 [A], cf. *ATD*, 122-3.
of law-keeping in the justified. In each case, this is an instance of his theology of the
gift.

2.1.2. Grace and gift: res, non verba

I turn now to some select examples of how Luther develops his theology of grace and
gift in the disputations without mentioning either gratia or donum, and instead
describing the work of Jesus Christ and the Spirit in terms taken directly from the
Bible. Sometimes, he does so without immediate reference to the law. For example, at
D 1.14 Luther sums his theology of grace and gift by coupling John 1:29 and 3:8: “Christ
is the Lamb of God on whose shoulders the sins of the entire world are placed, and the
Holy Spirit is efficacious (efficax) and blows and works where he wills.”324 Likewise at
D 1.20, Luther sets out the same teaching by joining Rom. 8:1 and 8:13: “There is no
condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus; and if they still have remnants of sin,
nevertheless by the Spirit those remaining deeds of the flesh are put to death.”325 Or,
in a compact statement of this theology found in the preface to the third disputation,
Luther alludes to Rom. 4:6-8/Ps. 32:1-2 and 8:23 to this effect: Christians are “pure and
holy, but first through imputation, because sin is not imputed to us; secondly, we also
are formally righteous, as soon as I, through these firstfruits (primitias) and the Holy
Spirit given to me from heaven, through faith begin to wrestle and fight with sin and
blasphemy.”326 Finally, in a fascinating witness to the enduring role of Brautmystik in
his theology—drawn from the Song of Songs, Eph. 5:23-32, etc., and mediated above
all by Bernard of Clairvaux—at D 3.1 Luther teaches that when it is a matter of

324 WA 39/1.383.24-26 [A], cf. ATD, 51.
325 WA 39/1.398.23-399.1 [A], cf. ATD, 63.
326 WA 39/1.493.25-494.3 [A], cf. ATD, 143.
justification and the peace of consciences, “here we are in the Lord, who is our Bridegroom (*noster sponsus*) and does not suffer anyone else to sleep with us in this narrow bed.” For in the bridal chamber of the believer’s conscience, only Jesus Christ may reign as king. But this regal Lover is impatient with his consort’s flesh, and leads the fight against it, remaining in his chamber to console his bride and giving the Holy Spirit to arm her for the battle. In each of these passages and in scripturally-varied ways, Luther exerts his theology of grace, forgiveness, and justification in Jesus Christ and of ongoing growth in real holiness through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

2.1.3. *Grace, gift, and impletio legis: res, non verba*

More often than not, Luther sets his theology of Christ’s grace and the Spirit’s gift in direct relation to the fulfillment of the law (impletio legis). In such cases, Matt. 5:17 (“I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it”), Matt. 22:37-40, Gal. 3:13, Rom. 3:31, 8:1-4, 8:23, and 10:4 are especially prominent. Luther’s own remarks at D 1.1 provide a useful summary statement of his position: “By freely submitting himself to his own law, and enduring all its curses, Christ merited the Spirit for those who believe in him; and with the Spirit impelling them, they begin to fulfill the law even in this life; and in the future life, a most joyful and perfect obedience to the law will be in them, so that in body and soul they will do then what the angels do now.” The Reformer revisits this twofold trinitarian *impletio legis* so frequently in the disputations that it would be

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327 WA 39/1.498.15-21 [A], cf. ATD, 146-7. Cf. Luther’s 1545 lecture on Gen. 49:11-12, WA 44.772.4-23, LW 8.263.
328 WA 39/1.365.2-6 [A]: *Christus tamen per hoc, quod legi sua sponte se subiecit et omnes eius maledictiones pertulit, emeruit credentibus in se Spiritum, quo impellente incipiunt etiam in hac vita legem implere, et in futura vita iucundissima et perfectissima obedientia legis erit in eis, ut corpore et animo eam faciant, ut nunc angeli.* My translation; cf. ATD, 36.
tedious to review each occurrence.\footnote{See, e.g., D 1.2, WA 39/1.367.7-11 [A]; D 1.6, WA 39/1.372.19-4 [A]; D 1.16, WA 39/1.387.16-388.6 [A]; D 1.21, WA 39/1.395.20-24 [A]; D 2.7, WA 39/1.444.4-11 [A]; D 2.16, WA 39/1.468.10-469.3 [A]; D 2.27, WA 39/1.482.13-483.1 [A]; D 3.13, WA 39/1.526.2-8 [A].} But I will supply representative examples that draw out particular nuances within his overall design.

(1) In the preface to the first disputation, Luther cites Matt. 5:17 and then exegetes it, from the perspective of Jesus, in terms of Christ’s and the Spirit’s work in bringing about the law’s fulfillment in the redeemed:

I did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it, which demonstrates that my office is not to take away the law, but to fulfill it: and to fulfill it in such a way, that those who believe that they are redeemed from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13) through this, my fulfillment of the law (\textit{hanc meam legis impletionem}), may know that the law is to be fulfilled by them here (\textit{legem a se hic impleandam}), especially since they have already received the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:23).\footnote{WA 39/1.363.8-10 [A], my translation; cf. \textit{ATD}, 35.} Luther goes on to explain this further in terms of Rom. 3:31 and 8:3-4. Justification by faith apart from works of the law (Rom. 3:28) does not destroy the law, but establishes it: first by setting sinners free from its curse through Christ’s \textit{impletio legis}; then by empowering the redeemed to do in the Spirit’s strength what had previously been impossible for them to do on their own, \textit{ut iustificatio legis impleretur in nobis}.\footnote{WA 39/1.363.3-7 [A], my translation; cf. \textit{ATD}, 35.} Both in Christ \textit{extra nos} and by the Spirit \textit{in nobis}, the law is upheld and confirmed precisely because it is kept. On the basis of Christ’s fulfillment of the law in the sinner’s place, God justifies the ungodly with full respect to the perfection of his own justice as it is expressed in the law; and this forensic, atonement-focused justification in Christ is intrinsically ordered to the \textit{Gerechtmachung}, the \textit{iustificatio legis in nobis},
that begins to take shape in the redeemed by the power of the Spirit’s *primitiae* (Rom. 8:23).

(2) In D 1.12, the polemicist *gegen die Antinomer* explains the precise sense in which he too affirms that Jesus Christ has abolished or abrogated the law. As the above-quoted excerpt from Luther’s preface already demonstrates, Gal. 3:13’s *maledictum legis* provides the crucial distinction. It is with respect to the law’s “curse,” that is, to the law in its exacting, accusing, condemning, terrifying, and punishing function, that Christ has abrogated the law. As for St. Paul in Gal. 3-4, so for Luther here, the emphasis therefore lies on Christ’s self-substituting submission to the law in penal suffering (cf. Gal. 4:4-5). Because the law condemned him though he was innocent (cf. Rom. 8:3), Christ took from it its whole power to condemn anyone who trusts in him (cf. Rom. 8:1). When Christ is present, the exacting law that punishes sinners comes to an end (Rom. 10:4), since he has already fulfilled all its demands. This takes place “through the forgiveness of sins and divine imputation,” that is to say, “God wills to consider the law fulfilled (*Deus vult habere legem pro impleta lege*) when we believe in the Fulfiller of the law (*impletorem legis*).” Though the law’s sentence is not fulfilled in the believing sinner, who deserves nothing short of death and hell, God forgives him and regards him as a righteous law-keeper on account of Christ the *impletor*. So far the theology of “grace” in D 1.12, to which Luther promptly annexes the complementary “gift”: “On top of this, God gives the Holy Spirit, in order that we may

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332 Cf. D 1.2, WA 39/1.365,14-17 [A]: *Lex est abrogata id est maledictum legis. Nam cum venerit Christus, non habet vim accusandi nos.* Cf. ATD, 37.
333 WA 39/1.380,1-3 [A]: *quia lex eum innocentem condemnavit, abstulit legi universam vim, quae est exigere, accusare et perterrefacere. Ista exaction cessavit in Christo.* Cf. ATD, 48.
334 WA 39/1.379,16-17 [A], cf. ATD, 48.
335 WA 39/1.379,16-380,5 [A], cf. ATD, 48.
begin to fulfill the law here,” with a view to the future life when we will be similes
impletori Christo (cf. 1 John 3:2) and thus keep the law perfectly.\footnote{WA 39/1.379.16-380.5-6 [A], cf. ATD, 48.}

(3) In D 1.13, weaving together Acts 15:9-11 and Matt. 11:28-30 with allusions to
Rom. 5:1, 5:12-21, and Phil. 2:8, Luther states that the condemning “yoke” of the law is
replaced by Christ’s light and easy yoke, “so that they may live in peace under him
who rendered the obedience owed and required by the law, and gives it to those who
believe in him.”\footnote{WA 39/1.381.4-7 [A], cf. ATD, 49.} As in the preceding argument, the overarching terms are set by Gal.
3:13 and liberation through Christ’s impletio legis from the law’s curse. But whereas at
D 1.12 the emphasis rested on Christ’s substitutionary penal sufferings, here his own
“active” (to speak anachronistically, but clearly) obedientia rises to the fore: to those
who lack the obedience owed to the law, Christ gives his obedience as their very
own.\footnote{Vainio (Justification and Participation in Christ, 25) notes the usefulness of the later scholastic
distinction between Christ’s active and passive obedience for describing Luther’s atonement
teology (in its res), while making the same caveat I do here, viz., that Luther himself did not
employ the distinction in so many words.} Thus the believer is not only set free from the law’s curse by Christ’s becoming
a curse in his place. He is also given Christ’s entire obedience as his own, possessed of
which he stands before God as innocent and blameless as Christ himself. By faith, he
has fulfilled the law, because by faith he has Christ’s obedientia—or, as Luther
explicitly says at D 2.4, Christ’s aliena iustitia\footnote{WA 39/1.436.6 [A], cf. ATD, 93.}—as his own. Et tamen, the law is still
to be fulfilled by the godly (piis) as well: and to this end, they mortify the deeds of the
flesh by the Spirit (Rom. 8:13) and purge out the old leaven (1 Cor. 5:7).\footnote{WA 39/1.381.7-9 [A], cf. ATD, 49.} Thus the
“gift” of law-keeping by the Spirit, so far from being rendered superfluous by Christ’s
“grace,” is in fact rendered possible by the transformation (through that grace) of a grievous and intolerable burden into the light and easy iugum Christi. Once again, grace in Christ is ordered to the gift of the Spirit.

(4) In D 1.14, Luther develops the same theology with special reference to Rom. 8:3-4, which he interprets in light of his distinction between an imputational and a real or formal fulfillment of the law. Weakened by the flesh, the law cannot justify and save. But God in his mercy has done what the law, thus weakened, could not do: “he sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and damned sin in the flesh through sin, in order that the justification of the law (iustificatio legis) might be fulfilled in us.”

Luther takes full advantage of this rich scripture to elaborate his bedrock theology of incarnation and atonement. Bearing our flesh, Christ “killed” our sin by his sacrifice on the cross, “so that in this way, the righteousness of the law (iustitia legis) might be fulfilled in us.” This righteousness, obtained by the cross of God’s Son, is fulfilled in nobis in two ways: “first, by way of imputation (imputative), then also formally (formaliter).” This second kind of righteousness refers to the formal renovation of human nature, such that the ungodly is not only declared to be righteous from without for Christ’s sake but is in fact also made righteous deep within by the operation of the Spirit. The God who sent his Son in our flesh to shed his blood ex gratia

... gives the Spirit to those who believe this (haec [viz., gratia]), in order that they may begin to hate sin ex animo, to acknowledge this immense,
incomprehensible, and ineffable gift (*donum*) and to thank God for it, to love, worship, and call upon God, to expect everything from him.\(^{344}\)

Since Luther quotes Rom. 8:32 in the next sentence, it is clear that the “gift” in question here is the gift of God’s Son in the incarnation and on the cross—a good reminder that *gratia* and *donum* do not always function as technical terms.

Nevertheless, in D 1.14 we again find Luther developing his creedal theology of grace and gift, of righteousness won through the cross of God’s incarnate Son, imputed to believers, and effectually worked within them by the Spirit through the formal renovation of their nature. For by the Spirit’s renewing work, the vitiated *filii Adae* begin again to engage in those spiritual actions which unite them with God, viz., to know, acknowledge, thank, worship, and love God.

None of this, Luther insists, comes *ex nobis*. Rather, all is *ex gratia Dei mittentis filium in carnem*.\(^{345}\) This reflexive anti-Pelagian qualification of formal righteousness probably has two points of reference in this context. On the one hand, Luther upholds the commonplace Augustinian conviction that all righteousness has its origin in the free generosity of God: *non ex nobis, sed ex gratia Dei* (cf. Eph. 2:8). In this regard, Luther stands in an august line of high and late medieval Augustinians *contra pelagianos modernos*. But on the other hand, he seems to be making a point more immediately related to the dynamics of his own theology of grace and gift, namely, that the formal renewal of the justified into real righteousness of life is itself the fruit and outworking of God’s “grace” in the incarnation and atonement of his Son. In other words, he is again linking the Spirit’s “gift” to Christ’s “grace” in the closest possible

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\(^{344}\) WA 39/1.383.10-13 [A], cf. *ATD*, 42.

\(^{345}\) WA 39/1.383.9-10 [A], cf. *ATD*, 42.
way, by causally rooting the gift of formal renewal by the Spirit in the grace of atonement and (forensic) justification through the Son.

(5) I turn last to the Reformer’s rich exposition of these themes at D 2.3, where three times he unfolds his theology of grace and gift vis-à-vis the law’s fulfillment both imputatively and formally or purgatively. He builds the first on a christological interpretation of Isa. 9:4. Jesus Christ breaks “the yoke of burden and the rod of the exactor,” that is, the *exactio legis* which accuses the sinner, because he “devours (devorantem) our sin in his own body” (cf. 1 Pet. 2:24). Thus Luther explains that by way of imputation (*imputative*), sin is dead and ceases to affect the Christian “when I receive forgiveness of sins because of faith in Christ, and I am utterly set free from sin, as if it were nothing, as if we were already in heaven.” But at the same time, because “certain remnants (*reliquiae*) of every kind of sin” adhere in us, sin is also removed and ceases in Christians *formaliter et expurgative*. Notably, in this first case Luther does not actually speak of the Spirit’s sanctifying work at all—though it is assumed—and locates the agency of progressive growth in holiness firmly in the renewed Christian himself: “Day by day, more and more, I purge and mortify (*expurgo et mortifico*) the sin still adhering in my flesh, till finally everything that belongs to the old man is taken away and consumed, and a pure and glorified man, without any spot or blemish, comes forth.”

Luther’s *donum*-rendition of the traditional *gratia cooperans* becomes clearer in the second instance of his theology of grace and gift in D 2.3. The believer is free

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348 WA 39/1.432.7-8 [A], cf. *ATD*, 91.
349 WA 39/1.432.8-11 [A], cf. *ATD*, 91.
from sin and the accusing law first *imputative*, “since sins against the law are not imputed to me and are pardoned on account of the most precious blood of the immaculate Lamb, Jesus Christ my Lord.” Then, Luther immediately adds, he is also set free from sin *expurgative*, “when the Holy Spirit is given to me.” But this purgation by the gift of the Spirit is not a monergistic affair, for the Spirit’s operation quickens and sustains a spiritual agency on the part of the redeemed person himself: “having received the Spirit, I begin to hate *ex animo* everything that offends his name, and I become a pursuer of good works. And if there is something of the remnant of sin in me, I purge it until I become totally pure—and this in the same Spirit (*in eodem spiritu*) who is given for Christ’s sake.”

The third place builds on the first two, implicitly explaining the relation between the Spirit’s work and the redeemed person’s renewed spiritual agency in terms of the latter’s new-found love for the righteousness required by the law. In a

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350 WA 39/1.434.6-8 [A], cf. *ATD*, 92.
351 WA 39/1.434.8-9 [A], cf. *ATD*, 92.
352 WA 39/1.434.9-12 [A], cf. *ATD*, 92. I intend to develop this theme throughout this book, in correction of the one-sided emphasis on divine action at the expense of renewed human agency which one frequently finds in the scholarship. This probably goes back at least to Karl Holl’s stark monergism and its influence on the Luther Renaissance he inspired. More recently, see e.g. Tuomo Mannermaa, *Der im Glauben gegenwärtige Christus*, esp. 56-62, 80-3; Reijo Työrinoja, “Opus theologicum,” 119-53; Reinhard Hütter, “St. Thomas on Grace and Free Will in the *Initium Fidei*: The Surpassing Augustinian Synthesis,” *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition 5/3 (2007): 521-554, esp. 524-34; and Jennifer A. Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), cp. 6: “Luther: Saved Hypocrites.” Though her argument is deeply flawed, Herdt’s chapter is useful for assessing the *status questionis* since she writes on Luther secondhand and acknowledges her dependence on the work, e.g., of Wilfried Joest, Alister McGrath, Bernhard Lohse, Tuomo Mannermaa, Gilbert Meilaender, and Paul Althaus. Joest and Mannermaa make strange bedfellows, to be sure. But in some of the Finns’ work—Mannermaa and Työrinoja being two cases in point—their welcomed emphasis on Christ’s real presence in faith and *his* divine action in the believer (Gal. 2:20) can overwhelm the reality of the believer’s own creaturely agency as it is restored by the Spirit’s renovating gift (Rom. 8:13). It is ironic that the Finnish recovery of “the Catholic Luther’s” doctrine of salvation through union with Christ has at times induced a diminished appreciation of his Augustinian theology of vitiated human agency restored by the inner-workings of the Spirit.
striking use of Col. 2:14, Luther first states that “Christ took our place and supplied what we lack, and erased by his blood the handwriting of the decree which was against us, until the law was finally satisfied by one in the place of us all.” Thus sin’s guilt and the accusing law are clear taken away by Christ’s death in our place. But sin is also taken away formaliter when it is “purged and eliminated,” and the law itself—that is, the accusing law—also ceases formaliter

... when what the law demands is done in us (fit in nobis), and we render it freely and willingly (ultro et volentes), not just because the law demands it, but out of love of righteousness (ex amor iustitiae) and the right and of God himself.

Prior to the renovating operation of the Spirit, fleshly humans only ever keep the law out of fear of punishment or hope of reward. But in those redeemed from the law’s debt-sheet by Christ’s blood, the Spirit so transforms the heart that the Christian is no longer motivated to keep the law by compulsion or self-complacence, but by real love for the righteousness expressed in and required by it. I shall attend to this point further in section 2.2 below.

In sum, Luther’s position in the disputations comes to this: although it is no longer possible, after the fall of Adam, for vitiated humans to keep the law, God sent his Son in our flesh to keep it for us, in our place. He fulfilled it positively through his active obedience (as later Protestant theology would put it), keeping all its commandments; and he fulfilled it negatively through passive obedience, suffering all

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353 WA 39/1.434.14-16 [A], cf. ATD, 92
354 WA 39/1.434.17-435.2 [A], cf. ATD, 93.
355 D 2.14, WA 39/1.460.17-21 [A]: quasi dicat lex: Ego spiritualis sum, hoc est, cor purum et spirituale requiro, non satisfit mihi nisi hilari corde et spiritu per Spiritum sanctum renovato; tu quidem speciosa opera, magna et utilia facis, sed quia impuro corde et spiritu vel amore tui et timore poenarum facis, non es ille, qui mihi satisfecerit. Cf. ATD, 109.
its sanctions by taking its curse upon himself on the cross in our place. In the
preaching of the Gospel, Jesus Christ gives his superabundant twofold impletio legis to
the believer as his own, and thus sets him free from the law’s curse. At the same time,
Christ gives his Spirit, so that the just requirements of the law—summed up in the
twofold love commandment—might begin to be fulfilled ex corde in those who have
been set free from its curse; and what is begun really but imperfectly in this mortal life
will be brought to completion in the resurrection to come. In the terms of this study,
Christ’s “grace” sets believers free from the law’s curse so that by the Spirit’s “gift” they
may begin to keep the law. This is Luther’s creedal theology of grace and gift,
transposed into the framework of the law in order to reply to the antinomian
challenge but identical in substance to his confession in the Smalcald Articles.

2.1.4. The renovation of Adam and impletio legis

In chapter 1, I argued that Adam’s being and life in the divine image needed to be
understood in part in terms of natural law. In his lectures on Gen. 1-3, Luther depicts
the unfallen Adam as one who keeps the law of his nature—which can be properly
reduced to wholehearted love of God and neighbor—spontaneously and with great
joy. Now I shall argue just the reverse, that is, that the theology of renewed law-
keeping by the Spirit’s gift set forth in Luther’s disputations is at once a theology of
the restoration of fallen and vitiated human nature to its original wholeness and
holiness. Theses 29-32 from D 1 show that Luther, no less than Irenaeus or Augustine,
is able to compress his entire soteriology into St. Paul’s Adam-Christ typology: dead in
sin through the first Adam, we are justified and made alive in the Last, \(^{356}\) who is the Promised Seed of Gen. 3:15. \(^{357}\) And in D 1.15, to which I drew attention above, Luther states that Christ is given in order that the “disease” (\textit{morbus}) infecting Adam’s nature may be “healed” (\textit{medeatur}); for he came in the likeness of Adam’s sinful flesh that “he might seek the lost and restore (\textit{restituat}) the corrupt nature to its integrity” (note Luther’s composite allusion to Luke 19:10 and Acts 3:21). \(^{358}\) In the fourth set of theses—which were never disputed—Luther says virtually the same thing, but now in terms not of nature but of law: in thesis 40 repeating his allusions to Luke 19:10 and Acts 3:21, then concluding in thesis 41 that “the law is not taken away through Christ, but restored (\textit{restituitur}), so that Adam might become such as he was and even better.” \(^{359}\) Thus for Luther, the law is restored in Christ because “Adam”—viz., \textit{humana natura}—is restored and perfected in him. But we shall have to look into this a bit further, in relation to the Spirit and the law.

Remember that for Luther vitiated humans need the help of the revealed law, summed in the Decalogue, the Golden Rule, and the twofold love commandment, “so that we might be reminded of what we were before Adam’s fall (\textit{quid ante lapsum Adae fuerimus}).” \(^{360}\) The law’s perfection and beauty gives some sense of what unfallen Adam’s original being was like in its natural perfections. Because he was given the gift of being and acting as a law-keeper by virtue of his creation in the divine image,


\(^{358}\) WA 39/1.386.8-11 [A], \textit{ATD}, 53.

\(^{359}\) WA 39/1.354.11-14, \textit{ATD}, 131.

\(^{360}\) D 2.13, WA 39/1.454.13-14 [A], \textit{ATD}, 105. Or, stated negatively at D 3.7, WA 39/1.516.5-8 [A], cf. \textit{ATD}, 158: “the law came and wished to show us that we are not what we were in Paradise, where Adam was a most beautiful man, great and whole in his powers (\textit{integer viribus}).” By stark contrast, now “we are dwarfs (\textit{homunciones}), and extremely corrupt by that original wound (\textit{illo vitio originis}).” Cf. WA 39/1.539.7-15, \textit{ATD}, 172.
obeying the law was not only a possible but an enjoyable or pleasant (*iucunda*) exercise for Adam; he obeyed it perfectly, “with the highest will and gladness of soul (*summa voluntate et laetitia animi*),” because it was identical to the law of his being as the protological Man. That, I argued in chapter 1, is the fuller picture that emerges from comparing Luther’s wistful portraits of Adam in the lectures on Gen. 1-3 with the theology of the law developed in the disputations.

In D 1.1, after asserting the glad and voluntary nature of unfallen Adam’s obedience to the law, Luther continues to explain that what was possible and pleasant for Adam has become impossible and terrifying to us, not because the law has changed but because we have by Adam’s fall. It is no accident that at this point Luther pairs our impossibility and terror before the law, for they correspond to the twofold predicament of Adam’s fallen children: natural corruption and subjection to the law’s curse of death and damnation. This sets the stage for the concise statement of the Reformer’s theology of grace and gift already noted above: “By freely submitting himself to his own law, and enduring all its curses, Christ merited the Spirit for those who believe in him; and with the Spirit impelling them, they begin to fulfill the law even in this life; and in the future life, a most joyful and perfect obedience to the law (*iucundissima et perfectissima obedientia legis*) will be in them, so that in body and soul they will do then what the angels do now.” It is at first glance a little odd that Luther begins with Adam only to end with the angels, but keep in mind that in Luther’s protology even unfallen Adam looked in hope for the future *translatio* to the

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36a D 1.1, WA 39/1.364.10-13 [A], cf. *ATD*, 36.
fullness of spiritual life with and in God. What Luther is saying therefore comes to this: Jesus Christ takes away the curse of the law, and with it its terror, making it “pleasant” once again to those redeemed by his blood. Then by the gift of his Spirit, he renders the law possible even in this life by beginning to restore vitiated human nature to its original perfection. This beginning will attain its end in the angelic, *iucundissima et perfectissima obedientia legis* that will be in us—body and soul—in the coming resurrection. Thus in D 1.1, and in terms of the *impletio legis*, Luther develops a full-fledged theology of Adam’s redemption and restoration in Christ by the Spirit.\(^364\)

2.2. Luther’s *partim/partim* or “Augustinian simul”

In these 1537-38 disputations, as in the 1538 addendum to SA III.3 examined above, Luther’s “*simul*” is predominantly and basically an account of the renewed Christian undergoing the Holy Spirit’s progressive sanctifying work while battling—in the power of the Spirit’s gift—against the “sin” or “flesh” that still remains in a depleted, fragmentary, and overruled form.\(^365\) The heart of this spiritual battle—fought only by the saints—is the struggle to refuse consent to the sinful desires that constitute one’s

\(^364\) Cf. D 1.7, WA 39/1.375.4-9 [A]: *Sic Christi officium est etiam in hac vita restituere genus humanum in amissam illam innocentiam et obedientiam legis iucundam, quae erat in paradiso in positivo, quod fecit, cum pro nobis mortuus est et legis maledictiones et poenas pertulit ac suam innocentiam iustitiam nobis donavit. Hoc modo fit nobis lex, obedientia aliquo modo iucunda, quam illic in superlativo praestabimus.*

\(^365\) Cf. Theodor Dieter, *Der junge Luther und Aristoteles*, 325: “For Luther, progress does *not* exclude the simul iustus et peccator, but rather explains and energizes it.” Likewise p. 344: “Luther’s understanding of progress does not exclude the simul: it incorporates it.” For Luther’s “*simul*” is only adequately grasped as an “incessant movement” from sin to righteousness (*semper in motu*). Dieter convincingly demonstrates (1) that the conjunction of *semper*- and *simul* statements in Luther’s early works is rooted in Ockham’s interpretation of Aristotle’s theory of motion, and (2) that this Ockhamist theory provides Luther with the set of conceptual tools he needs to account for the continuity of the Christian’s existence in grace without appealing to the usual scholastic categories of *accidens, habitus, qualitas*, etc. Thus “das Gerechtsein des Glaubenden wird als Gerechtwerden verstanden,” not because Luther anticipated Heidegger but because he appropriated Ockham.
“flesh.” These desires at once entice and grieve the renewed person, who, as “spirit” (spiritus), suffers their presence unwillingly (invitus) and longs for the eschatological freedom of perfection in righteousness. Thus we find ourselves once again in the familiar territory of an anthropology and penitential spirituality driven by a deeply Augustinian interpretation of Rom. 6-8, Gal. 5:16-17, and the Psalter. In this section I continue to build my case for this, Luther’s real “simul” by first studying the Spirit’s work in creating the renewed spiritus by producing holy desires in the donum-renovated heart. I then sample a few choice battle scenes that especially highlight the logic of non-consent to “sin” that comprises the spiritual linchpin of Luther’s “simul.”

In the following section 2.3, I will interpret the rather sparse texts that Wilfried Joest employed in 1951 to make his case for the so-called Totalaspekt of the “simul.”

2.2.1. The Spirit’s re-creation of the soul through holy desires

In studying D 2.3 above, I took note of the Spirit’s work in producing amor iustitiae in the renewed heart, so that the believer begins to keep the law willingly and gladly. This, states Luther at D 2.14, is what the law—grasped in its true spiritual depths—really requires of us: not just external conformity to precepts, but a pure, spiritual, joyful heart (or “spirit”) brought into being through the renovating work of the Holy Spirit. Such a heart is the effect and production of the Spirit’s gift in the redeemed: raised up by the promise of forgiveness through Christ (“grace”), “we receive through faith the Holy Spirit, who brings forth new emotions (novos motus parit) and

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permeates the will (*voluntatem imbuit*), so that it truly begins to love God and to
detest the sin left in the flesh.”

By the sixteenth century, “*motus*” had already enjoyed a long and distinguished
career in the tradition of moral psychology, with deep roots in ancient Stoicism. For
the Stoics, *motus animi* are emotions, commotions, passions, affections, perturbations,
agitations, disturbances, or impulses that take place in the soul through what Pierre
Hadot calls “the double aspect of the cognitive process—passive and active,

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constrained and free.” In essence, it consists in the complex psychological interplay of

(1) An external stimulus that pressures, allures, or otherwise “moves” the soul from without, thus giving rise to a pre-emotional impression (φαντασία/imago/visum). This happens willy-nilly to sage and fool alike.

(2) A rational process of judgment, in which the soul assesses the propriety of its pre-emotional impression in light of what it holds to be true about reality. This issues either in the decision to decline the initial impression’s suggested motus or to consent to it; and it is within the soul’s power to withhold or grant its consent (adsensus mentis/consensus voluntatis).

Since the initial impression affects the soul but falls short of causing a complete motus, it is sometimes theorized as either a pro-passio or a primus motus. When the fool, by an act of false judgment, grants consent to the appropriateness of the initial pre-emotional response, he inwardly experiences or “suffers” (patitur) a full-blown motus animi. The language of “movements,” “affections,” or “passions” connotes the passivity and responsiveness that is basic to emotional phenomena: because a person experiences some object as auspicious or threatening, it moves or affects him; and if in response he gives way and consents to suffering the full force of the suggested impulse, he is moved or affected in the depths of his soul. Thus passion is, by definition, mental suffering; it is intrinsically injurious to the soul’s well-being, a kind of psychological wound. For it is what happens to the fool when he permits an external reality to act upon and affect his soul. πάθος, motus, and affectus are therefore preferred and basically convertible terms in Stoic accounts of psychological affections: though Augustine, followed by Brachtendorf, notes that Cicero uses

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perturbatio to translate the Greek πάθος (Tusc. Disp. 3.10.23), while most other authors employ passio.\textsuperscript{370}

This will, I think, become clearer if I present the Stoic theory concretely vis-à-vis the classic “tetrachord” of the passions, of which the four genera are desire, pleasure, fear, and grief.\textsuperscript{371} At its heart, the project of ancient philosophy involved programs of therapy that aimed to heal the soul of its deep sadness and lead it instead to happiness, eudaemonia.\textsuperscript{372} In the train of the Socrates presented in Plato’s early dialogues, the Stoics held that happiness consisted exclusively in the possession of virtue. The moral excellence of the wise soul is itself the sumnum bonum. The notion that an external good might contribute to one’s happiness, or that an external evil might take away from it, is an error of philosophical judgment. Indeed, a quite literally pathological error: for the passions arise from believing this bad philosophy. Objects represented to the soul as pleasant and propitious (e.g., sexual pleasure or wealth), which the fool mistakenly thinks will bring him happiness if attained, move him first to desire, then to pleasure if he attains the desideratum. By a like error in judgment, objects perceived to be prejudicial to one’s self (e.g., torture or poverty) cause fear in anticipation, then pain or grief in the event. But this is all to reason irrationally, that is to say, to experience realities circumstantial to one’s soul in the manner proper to soulless beats; for humans are by nature rational beings whose happiness consists solely in the enjoyment of the inner good of wisdom. And as no external good can

\textsuperscript{370} Augustine, civ. dei 14.8 (CCSL 48.423, Bett. 558-9); Brachtendorf, “Cicero and Augustine on the Passions,” 290 n. 3. Brachtendorf suggests that the use of “passio” in such contexts was a neologism coined by Apuleius (p. 296), which is perhaps implied by Augustine’s comments at civ. dei 9.4.

\textsuperscript{371} See, e.g., Tusc. Disp. 3.11.24-5, civ. dei 14.3.

\textsuperscript{372} Cf. Augustine’s s. 150.4 (WSA III/5.31): “In common, all philosophers strove by dedication, investigation, discussion, by their way of life, to lay hold of the blessed life. This was their one reason for philosophizing.”
contribute to the happiness of wisdom, so no external evil can take it away. Since the
Stoic sage possesses this wisdom, if an initial pro-passio buffets him from outside the
inner citadel of reason and virtue, he defeats its assault on his tranquility and
blessedness by rendering a true judgment about both the irrationality of the proposed
passion and the sufficiency of the virtue which he already enjoys for his happiness.
The outcome is the goal of Stoic moral therapy. Though a fierce storm at sea makes
even the philosopher's face turn pale, he refuses to consent to the impulse of fear
suggested by his pre-rational (and thus pre-emotional) response to the external
provocation presented by the wind and the waves and the threat of impending death,
and remains unmoved in the freedom and felicity of apatheia.373 So far the Stoics on
matters moral-psychological.

In 1969, Wilhelm Maurer argued that the precocious Melanchthon acquired his early Affektenlehre by reading Cicero, Marsilio Ficino, and Lorenzo Valla at Tübingen
under the watchful eye of uncle Reuchlin: the Stoic theory of the affections shaping his
doctrine of sin, and Renaissance Platonism’s theory of love his doctrine of grace.374
Luther, by contrast, was just not interested in a theory of psychological affections; and
when he did come to speak of the affections, he did so on the basis of his own spiritual
experience in prayer, interpreted in the language of the Bible and especially the
Psalter.375 Maurer’s (and derivatively, Karl-Heinz zur Mühlen’s376) arguments

373 Some time before Hadot (The Inner Citadel, 102), Augustine used this example, drawn from
Aulus Gellius’ Attic Nights 19.1, to explain the Stoic theory at civ. dei 9.4.
374 Wilhelm Maurer, Der junge Melanchthon zwischen Humanismus und Reformation. Bd. 2: Der
375 Maurer, Der junge Melanchthon, 249-51.
376 Karl Heinz zur-Mühlen, “Melanchthons Auffasung vom Affekt in den 'Loci communes' von 1521,”
in idem, Reformatorische Prägungen: Studien zur Theologie Martin Luthers und zur Reformationzeit,
Athina Lexutt and Volkmar Örtmann, eds. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 84-95.
regarding the sources of Melanchthon’s moral-psychology are, I think, compelling. But
unless one is predisposed to drive a wedge between the biblical Luther and the
philosophical Melanchthon, Maurer’s assertions about Luther’s disinterest in a
theory of the affections appear to be groundless. For Luther too had read his
classics; and, as Risto Saarinen has recently argued, Cicero and Seneca in particular
were important philosophical influences on the formation of his thought.

Now, as Lodi Nauta has argued, for an Augustinian humanist like Lorenzo
Valla, Cicero had more to offer than elegant prose: he provided an alternative
philosophical discourse to the scholastic Aristotelianism that Valla had grown tired
of. One part of this bigger humanist program of Antischolastik via Ressourcement—

377 From his Duke dissertation, Timothy J. Wengert has labored indefatigably to disabuse the guild
of Reformation studies from this predisposition. See e.g. Philip Melanchthon’s Annotationes in
Johannem in Relation to its Predecessors and Contemporaries (Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 1987),
57-8, where Wengert locates Maurer’s Humanismus—Reformation dichotomy in the tradition of
Wilhelm Neuser, Adolf Sperl, and Ekkehard Mühlenberg. By the mid 1530s, Luther was already
aware of the emerging differences between his theology and that of his junior comrade-in-arms;
but into the 1540s, Luther continued to hold Master Philipp in the highest regard. See, e.g., WA Tr
5.204.16-28, cf. LW 54.441-2 (#551, winter 1542/43): “If one wishes to become a theologian, he has in
the first place a great advantage: he has the Bible. This is now so clear that he can read it without
any trouble. Afterward he should read Philipp’s Loci Communes. This he should read diligently and
well, so that he has it all in his head. If he has these two, he is a theologian whom neither the Devil
nor any heretic can shake. The whole of theology stands open to him, and afterward he can read
whatever he wants for edification. If he wishes, he can read Philipp’s Romans, my Galatians,
Deuteronomy; that’ll give him eloquence and an abundance of words. You will find no book under
the sun in which the whole of theology is so excellently gathered together as in the Loci Communes.
Read all the fathers, the sententiaries, etc., it’s nothing. There is not a better book after holy
scripture. Philipp is more efficiently machined than I am: he fights, and he teaches. I’m garrulous,
and more rhetorical.”

378 Helmar Junghans, Der junge Luther und die Humanisten (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht,
1985); Brecht, Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation 1483—1521, trans. James L. Schaaf
(Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985), 38-44.


380 Lodi Nauta, In Defense of Common Sense: Lorenzo Valla’s Humanist Critique of Scholastic
Philosophy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), esp. 155-74 on Valla’s insistence that
virtue is an affect, not a habit, and his debt to Cicero’s eclectic Stoicism—despite, ironically, Valla’s
bitter polemics against Stoicism—in which points he parallels both Augustine and, I am arguing,
Luther. Cf. Charles Trinkhaus, In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian
Humanist Thought (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); William Bouwsma, “The Two Faces
in which figures as diverse as Petrarch, Valla, Luther, Melanchthon, and Calvin all participated in their different ways—involved the displacement of virtue theory from the *habitus* tradition inspired by Aristotle (and ascendant in the schools) into the sphere of “Emotionstheorie als Affekte,” the special province of the Stoics.\(^{381}\) So the supposition that Luther acquired the elements of his affective theory directly from Cicero or Seneca is not outside the realm of possibility. Indeed, Volker Leppin has argued that Luther participated quite self-consciously in “die humanistische Front gegen Aristoteles.”\(^{382}\)

That being said, I think it is highly probable that Luther’s (and Melanchthon’s, for that matter) appropriation of the Stoic *motus*-theory—like Valla’s a century before—is mediated through Augustine’s own reworking of the psychology of human motivation in the context of his theology of grace.\(^{383}\) Ockham’s useful razor suggests as

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\(^{382}\) Leppin, *Martin Luther*, 93-4.

\(^{383}\) With respect to Melanchthon, in the same breadth Maurer (p. 258f) asserts both (1) that “Diese einzigartige Synthese von Cicero und Plato ist Melanchthons eigenstes Werk,” and (2) that “Von Augustin an bis zu Erasmus hin kannte die abendländische Rhetorik und Psychologie eine Synthese von Cicero und Plato.” Which one is it? I think certainly the latter. In *civ. dei* 9.4, Augustine is already discussing (with approbation) Cicero’s argument for the real identity of Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic virtue theory in his *de finibus bonorum et malorum*. Colish (*The Stoic Tradition*, 1/141-2, 153-55) confirms that Cicero attempted a synthesis of Platonism and Stoicism: in *e.g.* his *Tusculan Disputations*, he upholds the ancient Stoic theories about passion, virtue, and *apatheia* even as he revises its psychological monism by incorporating faculty psychology in the tradition of Plato and Aristotle. This, as *civ. dei* 9.4 attests and as Colish (II/165-79, 207-25), James Wetzel, and Sarah Byers have cogently argued, approximates at least one side of Augustine’s complex position (i.e., the moral-psychological; the other being the theology of grace): see Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Byers, “Augustine on the ‘Divided Self’: Platonist or Stoic?” *AugS* 38/1 (2007), 105-18. It will be remember that from the
much: if Luther read Cicero and Seneca, he “devoured” Augustine; and Augustine’s critical revision of the Stoic theory is there in the texts, ripe for the harvest by one who has the ears to hear to it. (On the nature of this revision in a moment.) Indeed, we know that by 1509 Luther had read and annotated—briefly, but in a way that evinces understanding—civ. dei 14, arguably the most important essay in moral psychology in Augustine’s works; and in any case, by 1515 at the latest he was voraciously engaging the anti-Pelagian writings bound up in vol. 8 of the new Amerbach edition of Augustine’s works, writings replete with Augustine’s philosophical psychology for the very reason that their main object is the defense of a scriptural theology of human renewal by grace.


WA Tr 1.140.5, #347 (1532): Principio Augustinum vorabam, non legebam. Cf. LW 54.49.

WA 9.25.19-23. At 14.6 (CCSL 48.421, Bett. 555-6), Augustine argues that diverse affections/motus are nothing but diverse forms of one’s voluntas transformed by one’s response to diverse objects: Voluntas est quippe in omnibus [motibus]; immo omnes nihil aliud quam voluntates sunt... Et omnino pro varietate rerum, quae appetuntur atque fugiuntur, sicut allicitur vel offenditur voluntas hominis, ita in hos vel illos affectus mutatur et vertitur. Luther accurately notes: Perturbationes sunt voluntates. On 14.8, Luther’s terse Stoicorum philosophia seu potius stultitia {Apathie/pathe} is an accurate if unsympathetic summary of the specific Stoic doctrine against which Augustine writes in bk. 14, even as he draws other key elements from the Stoics for use in fashioning his own moral psychology.

This, I think, suggests a more (though not less) than quellenkritisch reason for the hypothesis that Luther acquired his moral psychology from Augustine. For it is no accident that the old Augustine (in Julian of Eclanum) and the young Luther (in Gabriel Biel, and in Bartholomäus Arnoldi von Usingen and Jodocus Trutfetter, his Erfurt teachers) faced diverse species of a cognate philosophical, spiritual, and theological position, to wit: Aristotelian virtue theory recast within the Sitz im Leben of Christian asceticism and a theology of merited grace. Faced with similar “Aristotelian” opponents, Augustine in the 420s and Luther in 1515—the latter, certainly, intending dependence upon the former; and both alike, from the vantage of catholic dogmatics but also defensibly from an historical perspective, engaged in the same struggle that St. Paul had (Phil. 1:30)—responded with robust pneumatologies

__387__ Henri Strohl, *Luther jusq'en 1520* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), 181: “The adversary is the same.” Cited in Pereira, 29 n. 11, who argues in his own right (p. 26) that Luther turned to Augustine because they shared a common interest, to wit, “the struggle against Pelagianism in the Church.” Indeed, this is the thesis of Pereira’s book (p. 17): “The radical anthropological and soteriological insights with which Augustine opposes the theologians associated with fifth century Pelagianism are the key for understanding the early stages of Luther’s call for Reformation of the doctrine of the Catholic Church regarding Original Sin and justification.”

__388__ Cf. John Owen, writing in 1674, on the course of the Church’s grasp of the nature of the Spirit’s regenerative and sanctifying operations: “This, I acknowledge, was variously contended about of old; and the truth concerning it hath scarce escaped an open opposition in any age of the church. And at present this is the great ball of contention between the Jesuits and Jansenists; the latter keeping close to the doctrine of the principal ancient writers of the church; the former, under new notions, expressions, and distinctions, endeavoring the re-enforcement of Pelagianism, whereunto some of the elder schoolmen led the way, of whom our Bradwardine so long ago complained. But never was it with so much impudence and ignorance traduced and reviled as it is by some among ourselves [i.e., by English Socinians and Arminians]… The ancient writers of the church, who looked into these things with most diligence, and labored in them with most success, as Austin, Hilary, Prosper, and Fulgentius, do represent the whole work of the Spirit of God towards the souls of men under certain heads or distinctions of grace; and herein were they followed by many of the more sober schoolmen, and others of late without number… And although there may be some alteration in method and ways of expression—which may be varied as they are found to be of advantage unto them that are to be instructed—yet, for the substance of the doctrine, they taught the same which hath been preached amongst us since the Reformation, which some have ignorantly traduced as novel. And the whole of it is nobly and elegantly exemplified by Austin in his Confessions; wherein he gives us the experience of the truth he had taught in his own soul.”
of grace. The main object of these pneumatologies of effectual or operative grace was
the affective renovation of vitiated human beings enslaved to their “selves” by the
perversity of their vicious loves; and that is to say, from the perspective of ancient
philosophy, that the main object of Augustine’s (and by derivation, Luther’s) theology
of renovating grace was the resolution of an aporia in the moral-psychological
tradition.

Aristotle didn’t really know how a vicious person could become virtuous (nor
the Stoics, for that matter389): the self-transformation of one’s character from the
quality of injustice to justice via the repeated performance of just acts is a moral
theory hard to square with a metaphysics that insists that a being in a state of potency
cannot reduce itself to a state of action. Something existing at a greater level of being
must act upon it: for the vicious soul to become virtuous, it must undergo or suffer the

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389 Primarily due to the co-inherence of two defining moral-psychological theories, viz., (1)
psychological monism, and (2) the doctrine that anything less than complete virtue is vice. See e.g.
Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, 1/44: “The sage possesses all virtues; the fool possesses all vices. To
possess one vice or one virtue is to possess all, for vice and virtue are not a congeries of individual
acts but expressions of unified, consciously determined states of being. Thus both vice and virtue
are all-or-nothing propositions. For the ancient Stoa there is scarcely any possibility of a gradual
change from folly to wisdom or vice versa.” Colish (1/45-50) argues that Middle Stoics like
Panaeetus and Posidonius modified these doctrines in Platonic directions, while the later Romans
drew upon both currents in the tradition: Epictetus tending more to ancients like Zeno and
Chrysippus, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius to the moderating doctrines of the middle Stoa. Cicero
has much in common with the Middle Stoic effort to combine the strengths of Stoic virtue theory
with the faculty psychology of Plato and Aristotle; as a conduit of Stoic doctrine to the Middle
Ages, he stands second only to Seneca (1/127).
agency of another more virtuous than itself.\textsuperscript{390} (A bald-faced theory of self-realization would have to wait for the likes of Fichte and Nietzsche;\textsuperscript{391} but seeing as it is the \emph{philosophia perennis} ingrained in the hearts Adam’s children, it ought not surprise the Christian theologian that the 17\textsuperscript{th}-century turn to the self has culminated in the commonsense nonsense of the autonomous creation of one’s “self” \emph{ex nihilo} that holds the field today in our acutely Adamic culture.)

Plato could speak indefinitely of a kind of mystical “grace,” a door closed to the other philosophical schools.\textsuperscript{392}

Augustine—as a kind of Platonist to be sure, but also as a kind of Stoic and, above all, as a student of the Bible and a preacher of the Gospel—surmounted this

\textsuperscript{390} Dieter, \emph{Der junge Luther und Aristoteles}, 153-75. Dieter (pp. 156-8) notes that Aristotle recognizes the aporia in his own thought at \emph{Nichomachean Ethics} 2.3, for acting virtuously presupposes the presence of virtue. He also discusses (pp. 168ff) a sermon from 1 Jan. 1517, where Luther interacts with the problem directly (WA 1.119.23-39): \textit{At dicitur ‘si ergo Abraham iustus ante Circumcisionem et Abel ante oblationem, similiter et omnes S. Patres, Quid ergo necesse fuit illos operari? Et nos cur operamur? Simus otiosi et dormitantes, quia in gratia sumus’. Sic sapiunt qui ex circumcisione et operibus iustificari quaerunt, quia sine illis ideo non putant esse iustitiam, quia eis non sit opus si iam iustitia habetur. Quare enim audita iustitia statim dicunt ‘non ergo operemur bonum’, nisi quia ea velut causam iustitiae posuerunt, tamquam habito effectu, iustitia scilicet, iam non sit necessaria causa. \textit{Haec ergo est perversitas tota, cum etiam secundum Aristotelem, licet ipse iustitiam ex operibus fieri dicat, actibus scilicet frequentatis, tamen docetur, quid, cum iusti fuerimus, tum maxime possimus iusta operari. Quis enim discit cantare, ut cum scrierit nungquam cantet, ac non potius ut saepe cantet? Ita iustitia fidei sine quidem operibus datur, sed tamen ad opera et propter opera datur. Cum sit res quaedam viva nec possit esse otiosa. Sic Circumcisionis Abrahae fuit opus fidei seu iustitiae et non causa iustitiae: accepit enim eam pro signaculo iustitiae fidei, Rom. 4. Ac sic omnes Sanctorum antiqui aliquod signum foris necessario in opere habuerunt, quo fidei iustitiam intus testarentur foris. Sic Abel suae fidei signaculum habuit sacrificium, et consequenter postea omnes S. Patres.}

\textsuperscript{391} Reinhard Hütter, \textit{“(Re-)Forming Freedom,”} in \textit{Bound to be Free}, iii-44, esp. 116-24, citing and translating e.g. J. G. Fichte’s \textit{System der Sittenlehre nach den Prinzipien der Wissenschaftslehre} (GA I/5.208, F 4.229): “Independence—which is our ultimate goal—consists in the fact that everything depends on me and I depend on nothing; that what I will occurs in the complete world of senses, that it occurs absolutely and merely through the fact that I will it—in the same way that it occurs in my body, the starting point of my absolute causality. The world has to become for me what my body is to me. Although this goal cannot be reached, I have to continually approximate it, i.e., to treat everything in the world of sense such that it becomes a means for reaching this final goal. This approximation is my final goal.”

philosophical impasse with his theology of effectual grace. The Spirit’s operations in
the depths of the self-enclosed heart are alone able to reorient it to God by changing
from within what such a heart in fact desires, fears, enjoys, and grieves, i.e., what
moves the heart and thus produces motus animi. The unregenerate person neither
fears nor desires God. This includes the virtuous pagan and above all the Stoic sage:
for possessed as he is of his own self-cultivated virtue, he is quite happy all on his own
and is in principle committed to the proud and vain notion that he does not need to
live in dependent communion with God. Thus the filii Adae do not find God
“moving,” as we say today. And even if they do, it is not because the real God moves
them in truth, i.e., in accord with the ordo rerum and, therefore, the ordo amoris.

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393 civ. dei 14.5 (CCSL 48.420, cf. Bett. 554): “Anyone who exalts the nature of the soul as the
sumnum bonum and censures the nature of the flesh as evil in fact both desires the soul in a fleshly
way (animam carnaliter adpetit) and flees the flesh in a fleshly way, since his opinion stems from
human vanity, not divine truth.” See too s. 150.8-9 (WSA III/5.35-6): “The Epicurean, who places
man’s supreme good in the body, is placing his hopes in himself. But after all, the Stoic who places
man’s supreme good in the mind has indeed placed it in man’s better part; but even he has placed it
in himself. Now the Stoic is a man just as much as the Epicurean. ‘Cursed therefore is everyone who
places his hope in man’ (Jer. 17:5) … A virtuous mind is something very praiseworthy; sagacity,
telling the difference between bad things and good, justice, distributing to all what is theirs by
right, moderation, curbing lusts, courage, imperturbably enduring trials. A great thing, an
admirable thing; admire it, Stoic, as much as you ever can. But tell me: where do you get it from? It
is not precisely your virtuous mind that makes you happy, but the One who has given you virtue,
who has inspired you to desire it, and granted you the capacity for it… You are among those who
trust in their own virtue; among those who place their hopes in man. Virtue delights you; it’s a
good thing that delights you. I know, you are thirsty for it; but you can’t pour yourself a drink of
virtue. You’re dry; if I show you ‘the fountain of life’ (Ps. 36:9), you will probably mock. You’re
saying to yourself, you see, ‘Am I going to drink from this crag?’ The rod was brought, and water
poured out (cf. Num. 20:11, 1 Cor. 10:4). ‘For Jews seek a sign’; but you’re not a Jew, Stoic, I know;
you’re a Greek: ‘and Greeks seek wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified’—the Jew is shocked, the
Greek sneers—to the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and to the nations folly; but to those who are
called, Jews and Greeks—that is, to Paul himself, once Saul, and to Dionysius the Areopagite, and
such as these and such as those—‘Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God’ (1 Cor. 1:22-4).
Now you are not mocking such a crag; recognize the cross in the rod, Christ as the gushing torrent;
and if you are thirsty, drink your fill of virtue. Take your fill from the Fount, and perhaps you belch
out your gratitude. What you get from him you won’t now be giving yourself, and you will exclaim
with your belching, ‘I will love you, Lord, my virtus’ (Ps. 18:1).”

394 civ. dei 15.22, on Gen. 6:2 and the disordered love of the filii dei for the bodily pulchritudo of the
filiae hominis (CCSL 48.487-8, Bett. 592-3): Sic enim corporis pulchritudo, a Deo quidem factum, sed
Rather, the idea of God either moves the fallen soul to a selfish desire for the reward he wishes to obtain from God’s hands, a reward he would just as happily enjoy on his own apart from filial love and intimacy with his Father (cf. Luke 15:12-3); or else it moves him to sheer terror when faced with the prospect of God’s judgment. For the vetus homo is ruled by, indeed in the depths of his Adamic psychology he is constituted by, perverse desire for his own self. Adam’s children find their selves deeply “moving,” and regard their own selves and their needs and desires as objects of sacred worth and worship.

Now it is good to lift up your heart: but not to your own self, which belongs to pride, but to the Lord, which belongs to obedience; and obedience can only belong to the humble.\(^{395}\)

But the transition from the self-deifying worship of pride (amor sui, which is “vice”) to the humble creaturely praise of God (amor dei, “virtue”) is not in one’s power to attain, as neither Aristotle nor Zeno could see but as Aristotle’s metaphysics might have taught him; it is a miracle of free grace, as St. Paul, John, Peter etc. heard and believed. The God of all grace (1 Pet. 5:10), whose infinite fullness of being, goodness, and life is pure lively activity without the slightest hint of potency, mercifully acts upon the

\(^{395}\) civ. dei 14.13 (CCSL 48.434-5, cf. Bett. 572): ut natura sit, ex eo habet quod a Deo facta est; ut autem ab eo quod est deficiat, ex hoc quod de nihilo facta est. Nec sic defecit homo, ut omnino nihil esset, sed ut inclinatus ad se ipsum minus esset, quam erat, cum ei qui summe est inhaerebat. Relicto itaque Deo esse in semet ipso, hoc est sibi placere, non iam nihil esse est, sed nihilo propinquare. Vnde superbi secundum scripturas sanctas alio nomine appellantur sibi placentes. Bonum est enim sursum habere cor; non tamen ad se ipsum, quod est superbiae, sed ad Dominum, quod est oboedientiae. quae nisi humilium non potest esse.

temporale carnale infimum bonum, male amatur postposito Deo, aeterno interno sempiterno bono, quem ad modum iustitia deserta et aurum amatur ab auaris, nullo peccato auri, sed hominis. Ita se habet omnis creatura. Cum enim bona sit, et bene amari potest et male: bene scilicet ordine custodito, male ordine pertubato... Creator autem si veraciter amat, hoc est si ipse, non aliud pro illo quod non est ipse, ametur, male amari non potest. Nam et amor ipse ordinate amandus est, quo bene amatur quod amandum est, ut sit in nobis virtus qua uiuitur bene. Vnde mihi uidetur, quod definitio breuis et uera uirtutis ordo est amoris; propter quod in sancto canticco canticorum cantat sponsa Christi, ciuitas Dei: ‘Ordinate in me caritatem.’ Cf. Song 2:4 LXX.
hapless self-obsessed soul. He transforms it from within by his Spirit, quickening its *aptitudo passiva* from the death and sorrow of its inherited self-enclosure into the spiritual life of joyful communion with God. For the Holy Spirit renovates the vain heart by permeating it with new motions, impulses, desires, and affections, which lead it out of its passion for its self into holy and delighted love for God. Thus *affectus affectu vincitur*, as a prodigious Augustinian philosopher and theologian put it in 1521.

Perhaps Luther’s most striking elaboration of these Augustinian themes in the disputations comes at D 1.6. The argument’s terms are set by the high praise of God’s

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396 Dieter rightly concludes (*Der junge Luther und Aristoteles*, 173) that the young Luther affirms Aristotle’s metaphysical *Grundsatz* but then uses Aristotle’s metaphysics to develop an anti-Aristotelian/Scholastik moral theory, citing WA 56.364.17-20 (Rom. 8:7 scholion, early 1516): *Non ex operibus et actibus virtus, Vt Aristoteles, Sed ex virtutibus fiunt actus, vt Christus docet. Quia actus secundus presuponit primum et operatio prerequirit substantiam et virtutem et effectus causam.* Dieter’s great work is impressive, but I think he leaves Luther’s Augustinianism underdeveloped and this is telling a case in point: in pitting Aristotle against Aristotle, Luther is also siding with Augustine. On the “passive aptitude” of the fallen human being, a kind of potency, see above cp. 1.3 and WA 18.636.16-22: *At si vim liberi arbitrii eam diceremus, qua homo aptus est rapit spiritu et imbui gratia Dei, ut qui sit creatus ad vitam vel mortem aeternam, recte diceretur; hanc enim vim, hoc est, aptitudinem, seu ut Sophistae loquuntur dispositiva qualitatem et passivam aptitudinem et nos confitemur, quam non arboribus neque bestis inditam esse, quis est qui nesciat? neque enim pro anseribus (ut dicitur) coelum creavit.*

397 Pekka Kärkkäinen, *Luthers trinitarische Theologie des Heiligen Geistes*, 107-12 on “Die Sendung des Geistes als Eingießung der göttlichen Liebe,” e.g. p. 107 (aptly citing WA 56.338.6-12): “… der anwesende Heilige Geist mit der eingegossenen Liebe den Menschen einen neuen Willen gibt, der bereit zur Erfüllung dessen macht, was das Gesetz fordert.

398 From Melanchthon’s original *Loci communes theologici*, on free choice §2 (MW 2.1.27, cf. Wilhelm Pauck, ed., *Melanchthon and Bucer* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969], 27): *intimi affectus non sunt in potestate nostrae. Experimenta enim usque commerimus non posse voluntatem sua sponte ponere amorem, odium aut similes affectus, sed affectus affectu vincitur, ut, quia laesus es ab eo, quam amabas, amare desinit. Nam te ardentius quam quemvis alium amas.* In this first edition, Melanchthon set forth both an Augustinian-“Stoic” affective moral psychology and what is, for Augustine himself, its theological corollary, i.e., St. John’s and Paul’s doctrine of predestination and grace. For this reason, it is no accident that Luther lavished high praise on the 1521 *Loci* in the introduction to his 1525 *de servo arbitrio*. WA 18.601.1-6 (cf. Packer, 62-3): besides the fact that Luther has already refuted Erasmus’ (and the Sophists’) arguments for *libero arbitrio* in many works, “Philipp Melanchthon, in his unconquered little book *de locis Theologicis*, has trampled them in the dust.” So much so, that “in my judgment, that little book of his is worthy not just of immortality, but even of the ecclesiastical canon.”
law in Ps. 19 and 119; but just beneath the surface lie texts like the following from one of Augustine’s initial forays against Pelagius, the de spiritu et littera of 412:

If the commandment is observed out of fear of punishment, not out of love of righteousness (amore iustitiae), it is observed slavishly, not freely, and for that reason it is not observed. For there is lacking the good fruit that springs up from the root of love. But if faith that works through love (Gal. 5:6) is present, one begins to delight (incipit condelectari) in the law of God in the interior human being (Rom. 7:22). This delight is a gift, not of the letter but of the Spirit (delectatio non litterae, sed spiritus donum est), even if another law in one’s members resists the law of the mind (Rom. 7:23), until the whole oldness (tota uetustas) is changed and passes over into the newness (nouitatem) which grows from day to day in the interior human being (2 Cor. 4:16), as we are set free from the body of this death by the grace (gratia) of God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 7:24).³⁹⁹

For our purposes, notice three things from this excerpt, the whole tenor of which is set by citations from St. Paul and especially Rom. 7:22-24: first, Augustine’s insistence on the need for amor iustitiae in order to keep the law; second, his teaching that this love comes into being when the Holy Spirit bestows delight (delectatio) in the law as a gift (donum) within one’s inmost being; third, the fact that this incipient delight in the law, confessed by St. Paul at Rom. 7:22, is limited by the counterbalancing weight of the alia lex in membris which still repugnat legi mentis, as Paul also confesses in the next verse. This, in basic outline, is Augustine’s teaching on how the Spirit renovates the heart through the grace of holy delight, which in this instance he actually calls the Spirit’s donum.

In its real content, if not necessarily in its use of the word “donum,” this is the traditional soil in which Luther’s theology of the gift took root and grew. His

presentation of the Spirit’s work at D 1.6 is especially germane to this point, because it centers expressly on the Spirit’s recreation of the fallen soul through delight. Luther first sets out a characteristic and pithy statement of Christ’s work in redeeming sinners from the law’s curse (“grace”), then goes on to explain that the Redeemer

... brings (affert) the Holy Spirit to those who believe in him, in order that they may have pleasure (voluptatem) in the law of the Lord, according to the first Psalm [1:2; cf. Rom. 7:22]. And thus through it (per eam [viz., voluptatem]) their souls are recreated (recreantur), and he gives the will (voluntatem) in order that they may do it (eam [viz., legem]), this spirit (hic spiritus). But in the future life, they will have the will to do the law (voluntatem faciendi legem) not only in the spirit (in spiritu), but also in the flesh—which, so long as it lives here, strives against this delight (adversatur huic delectationi).

The two ambiguous pronouns, and the awkward hic spiritus, make this a difficult text to translate. I have suggested my interpretation in the brackets and will defend it here. Luther is giving an account of how the Holy Spirit transforms a vitiated or fleshly soul into a voluntary law-keeper, that is, one moved from within by holy desire for the beauty, pleasantness, and goodness of the law’s commandments. To this end, the Spirit produces a pleasure in the law within the soul, of the sort that David (Ps. 1:2) and Paul (Rom. 7:22) attested; Luther calls this first voluptas and later delectatio.

Through the gift of this pleasure, the soul itself is recreated: both grammatically and in accord with the sense of the passage, Luther’s ambiguous per eam must refer back to the believer’s voluptas in the law. So, Christ gives the Spirit in order that believers may take pleasure in the law; and through this pleasure, their souls are recreated (recreantur) such that they become the kind of people who want (voluntas) to perform the law, and do in fact perform it, because they delight in it. As Augustine once said,

WA 39/1.373.1-6 [A], my translation; cf. ATD, 42.
everything is easy for love. Right action springs forth from the goodness of the renewed will, and the will’s renovation follows from its permeation by the Spirit with new, holy, and spiritual affections, pleasures, delights.

This is Luther’s account of the inner-workings of the Spirit’s gift within the soul, and its Augustinian character is further confirmed by two details relating to his appropriation of the Pauline and Augustinian spiritus/caro distinction. Consider first the awkwardly placed hic spiritus. It is possible to read this as a reference to the Holy Spirit, in which case Luther is clarifying that the One who gives the will (datque voluntatem) to keep the law is the Spirit of God. But I suggest that it is better to interpret it as a reference to the spiritus created by the Holy Spirit within the soul. By his gift, the Spirit makes the fleshly soul spiritual, a new creation constituted by voluptas, delectatio, and voluntas ordered to God’s holy law; and this law-delighted, Spiritually-renovated human being, who must still struggle with the remnants of his flesh, is spiritus, “spirit.” On this reading, Luther is specifying both the object of the Spirit’s recreating work and the subject of the holy pleasure and action thus brought into being. The recreated soul, which has a will to keep the law and does in fact keep it: this is the “spirit” produced by the Holy Spirit’s bestowal of holy delight. Luther’s next sentence, with its allusion to Gal. 5:17, argues in favor of this interpretation in two respects. First, Luther states that believers already possess the will to do the law in spiritu, but that in the resurrection to come this joy in the law will consume the entire

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401 Nat. grat. 69.83, CSEL 297.22-3: omnia quippe fiunt facilia caritati. Cf. WSA I/23.258. See too En. Ps. 31/2.5 (CCSL 38.228, WSA III/15.366-7): “Now, if faith is without love, it will be without a work. But lest you think too much about the work of faith, add to it hope and love, and you won’t want to think about what you will work. This love is not able to be idle.” Ibid., 31/2.6 (CCSL 38.229, WSA III/15.368): “The work of faith is love, and this love cannot remain idle: it must refrain from doing evil and do all the good it can.”
being of the redeemed person body and soul, such that not only the “spirit” but the flesh itself will be made new. (In passing, I note that in this text Luther identifies “flesh” with the human body itself. Often enough, it has been asserted that Augustine’s “Platonic” reading of *caro* as the natural human *corpus* fairs poorly alongside Luther’s genuinely Pauline interpretation of flesh as egoism.\(^{402}\) In point of fact, Augustine well knows that sin originated in the vanity and pride of an incorporeal angel,\(^{403}\) and believes firmly in the eschatological resurrection of the

\(^{402}\) Here are three important examples: (1) Rudolf Hermann, *Luthers These “Gerecht und Sünder zugleich,”* 149-50: Augustine’s *tantummodo concupiscere* means sensuality. Though he sometimes aims for a better definition of sin in terms of Adam’s disobedience to his Maker, it is always mixed up with the more fundamental “mönchisch-asketische” opposition between sensuality and spirit. (2) Anders Nygren, “Simul iustus et peccator bei Augustin und Luther,” *Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie* 16 (1 Jan. 1939): 364-79, e.g. p. 369: for Augustine, sin is being bound to earthly reality (*Erdegebundenheit*), whereas for Luther it is being bound to one’s ego (*Ichgebundenheit*); (3) Leif Grane, *Modus Loquendi*, 56: for Augustine, “das Fleischliche consists in the resistance of the bodily against reason and the grace-strengthened will. Thus ‘flesh’ quite unambiguously means bodily drives (*körperliche Triebe*); and along these lines, a fleshliness that could be seduced by the devil *sub specie spiritualis boni* to please itself even in pious works appears to lie outside the horizon.” For correctives, see Hamel, *Der junge Luther und Augustin*, 1/105-9, II/14 (but cf. II/34-5, where the Hermann-style contrast surfaces again); Christoph Marksches, “Taufe und Concupiscencia bei Augustinus,” in Theodor Schneider and Gunther Wenz, eds., *Gerecht und Sünder zugleich? Ökumenische Klärungen* (Freiburg: Herder and Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 92-108, who takes Nygren to task at pp. 105-8; Pereira, 61-71.

\(^{403}\) *civ. dei* 14 alone establishes this point. When Augustine discusses Gal. 5:16-21 at 14.2 (CCSL 48.415-6, Bett. 548-50), he takes great interest in the fact that St. Paul’s catalogue of the *opera carnis* includes in its number *animi uitia* like idolatry, enmity, envy, etc. On this scriptural basis, he explicitly affirms what Grane claims he could not say, viz., that a man may refrain from the pleasures of the body (*a voluptatibus corporis*) for the sake of subtle and refined evils like idolatry and heresy—“and nevertheless even this man, though he appears to restrain and suppress the *carnis libidines*, lives secundum carnem and is convicted by this apostolic authority; and by the very fact that he abstains *a voluptatibus carnis*, it is proven that he does *damnabilia opera carnis*.” In 14.3 (CCSL 48.417, Bett. 551-2), Augustine states that “those who think that all the evils of the soul derive from the body are in error,” arguing against Virgil and the *Platonica sententia* he upholds at *Aeneid* 6.730ff. “Our faith holds a very different position. For the corruption of the body, which weighs down the soul [Wis. 9:15], is not the cause of the first sin, but its penalty; neither did corruptible flesh make the soul sinful, but a sinful soul made the flesh corruptible.” The Devil is therefore an eminently fleshly being. For though he is no fornicator or drunkard, he is *maxime superbus atque invidus*; and Paul attributes demonic *vitia* like pride and envy to the flesh. “For it was not by having flesh—which the devil does not have—that man became like the devil; it was by living *secundum se ipsum*, that is *secundum hominem*. For the devil wanted to live according to his own self, when he did not stand in the truth.” This, I think, is just the kind of sin-qua-*Ichgebundenheit* that Augustine
dead;\textsuperscript{404} and, as the present text shows, on occasion Luther himself employs the usage wrongly attributed solely to Augustine.) Second, as the Reformer concludes his allusion to Gal. 5:17, where Paul has the flesh striving against the “spirit,” Luther has simply replaced—and thus equated—Paul’s \textit{spiritus} with Augustine’s \textit{delectatio}. The dregs of fleshly desire fight against the holy delight in God’s law produced by the gift of God’s Spirit; and the new spiritual being recreated by and consisting in this holy delight is the \textit{spiritus} that fights back—in the power of the Spirit’s gift—against the stubborn remnants of its \textit{caro}.

2.2.2. \textit{Battle scenes: Spirit-gifted non-consent in real time}

This restless Gal. 5:17-styled spiritual battle between “spirit” and “flesh,” the new creature and the old, the believer as renewed by Christ’s Spirit and the believer as yet bearing the remnants of Adam’s sin, forms the core content of Luther’s real “\textit{simul}.” Or to turn that around: the “\textit{simul}” as Luther holds it is a snapshot of the Christian saint as he battles against sin for the sole reason that he is undergoing the sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit. Thus in D 3.13, Luther has the law-fulfilling Christ (“\textit{grace}”) say to the Christian: “Be forgiven; but lest you complain that you are utterly forsaken, I will give you my Holy Spirit, who will make you a soldier (\textit{militem}).”\textsuperscript{405} The third disputation is especially replete with battle scenes depicting the Christian

\textsuperscript{404} See esp. \textit{civ. dei} books 13 and 22, e.g., 13.19 (CCSL 48.402, Bett. 532): “... at the resurrection, the saints will inhabit the actual bodies in which they suffered the hardships of this life on earth”; 22.21 (CCSL 48.841, Bett. 1064): “The spiritual flesh will thus be subject to the spirit, but it will be flesh, not spirit, just as the fleshly spirit was subject to the flesh, and yet was spirit, not flesh.”

\textsuperscript{405} WA 39/1.526.4-5 [A], cf. \textit{ATD}, 164.
believer as a brave and (by the Spirit’s power) victorious soldier fighting against and triumphing over his own flesh.

I will present a sampling of them in this section, but first I again take pains to specify the exact nature and limited scope of this spiritual combat. For here we have to do with “the constant struggle of believing saints (perpetua pugna sanctorum credentium) which is treated often in the Psalms, who complain and cry out about their evils (suis malis), even when they do not add any actual sin (actuale aliquod peccatum).”406 In Luther’s theology of holiness, the renewed saint does not fight against actual or consentient sin, because he sundigt nicht und kan nicht sundigen (1 John 3:9). Rather, he fights against the sinful desires (suis malis) stubbornly persisting in, and comprising, his “flesh” (cf. 1 John 1:8, Rom. 7:14-25, Gal. 5:16-17, and great stretches of the Psalter—not least as interpreted in the monastic tradition of theology and prayer). Actual sin is the visible tree that grows from the hidden root of evil desire, and the Christian’s aim in the daily struggle of repentance is to tear up sin at its roots in the depths of his soul. He does so, in the power of the Spirit’s renovating and delight-producing gift, by refusing to consent to the sinful desires that still indwell him. So, for instance, at D 2.4 Luther states that “after receiving the Holy Spirit we begin to detest sin, and hate it, and we purge it with the Holy Spirit himself helping us, not consenting to sin (non consentientes peccato) but fighting back.”407 This is the


407 WA 39/1.436.9-11 [A], cf. ATD, 94.
logic of non-consent that holds Luther’s real “simul” together, as we shall see vividly portrayed in the following battle scenes.

(1) In D 3.2, Luther first argues that the law belongs in the Church in order to stir up the saints, who still have “residual sin in the flesh” (peccatum reliquum in carne), to enter into “battle and military service (pugnam et militiam) against the remnants of sins (reliquias peccatorum) and temptations.”408 Even “holy and righteous Paul” needed the law in this way, “not insofar as he is righteous and holy, but insofar as he is flesh (inquantum est caro).”409 This is Luther’s basic spirit/flesh “simul,” exemplified by Paul and drawn directly from his letters. The very practical pastor and professor goes on to give a concrete example of the battle entailed by it that probably hit close to home for not a few of the university students listening to the public disputation:

For example: if I, a Christian, still a robust adolescent, were to fall for some beautiful girl or woman, in this case, unless I’m a total tree trunk, I’m not able to not be affected toward her (non possum non affici erga illam)—even if I were baptized and justified—so that I would desire to touch her (cuperem eam attingere) if it were permitted, and if it weren’t for the disgrace and penalty which I fear. Yet nevertheless, if I am a Christian, immediately the heart and the Holy Spirit cry out against this within, in the heart (statim reclamat cor et Spiritus sanctus intus in corde): “Get behind me, Satan [Matt. 16:23]! Say nothing! No, no Lady Flesh (domina caro), hush, be quiet! You shouldn’t impel or solicit me in this way to seduction, adultery, libido, or to do any other shameful acts against my God. But I will wait until God gives me someone whom I will love, and with her I will make an end; as for this one, I will leave her to her own spouse and her family.” These and other such voices of this kind are not of man, but of Christ and the Holy Spirit, who says in the heart: “Leave the girl in peace; I will give you another in due time, whom you will love without troubles.” This Christian, even if he is affected by sex (afficiatur sexu), nevertheless obeys the Spirit, averting the evil he feels (sentit) by praying that he will not enter into temptation [Matt. 6:13].410

408 WA 39/1.500.10-14 [A], cf. ATD, 148.
409 WA 39/1.500.14-16 [A], cf. ATD, 148.
410 WA 39/1.500.16-501.5 [A], cf. ATD, 148.
This, adds Luther, is what it really means “to take sin captive” (peccatum captivare), “even if it doesn’t happen without annoyance and many difficulties.” The “sin” in question is “the residual sin in the flesh,” which makes its presence known through its disordered, powerful, alluring and (at the same time) vexatious affections. In Luther’s Augustinian moral psychology, the sanctified Christian is not able to prevent his being affected by the stirrings, movements, and impulses of “Lady Flesh.” For he is no truncus, a cipher in Luther’s writings for either the apathetic Stoic sages of antiquity or the hermitic monastics he regarded as Stoics redivivi. The adolescent Christian is fired by sexual desire. He feels the evil impulse of his flesh. He wants to touch the girl whose beauty arouses him. But he fights back. His own heart, and the Holy Spirit shouting within it, resist, hush, stifle, repress, reign in, and overrule the illicit desires of his flesh. Prayerfully calling upon God for help (with the Lord’s Prayer, Matt 6:13),

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411 WA 39/1.501.5-6 [A], cf. ATD, 148.
412 In the terms of ancient philosophical psychology sketched above, these are pro-passiones which only ignite into full-blown passions with the granting of consent. More on this in chapter 3 below, but cf. Sarah C. Byers, “Augustine and the Cognitive Cause of Stoic ‘Preliminary Passions’ (Propatheiai)” Journal of the History of Philosophy, 41/4 (Oct. 2003), 433-48.
413 See, e.g., Luther’s comments in praise of Joseph’s weeping at Gen. 42:24, against the Devil’s saints, who are “Stoics seven times over” (WA 44.493.3-26): Hoc autem in primis notandum est, quod Ioseph descriptur plenus charitate et affectibus naturalibus ac fraterne benevolentia. Quanquam enim duriter compellat et tractat fratres, tamen ardet cor eius στορχῇ φυσικῇ et amore spirituali. Quia fides et Spiritus sanctus non corrumpit, aut destruet naturam, sed corruptam et destructam sanat et reparat. Manent itaque naturalissimi affectibus in parentibus, fratribus, uxoribus, qui non tolluntur per gratiam, sed excitantur. Monachi olim ex hominibus truncos et saxa insensibilia fecerunt, ac singulare praecomium de sanctis suis voluit celebrari Sathan, quod non commoveantur ullo genere affectuum, homines stolidi, ac septies Stoici. Gratia vero et spiritus sanctus non sic exuit humanam naturam sui motibus, ut pater Iacob non depleat fili interitum, hoc enim pugnaret cum natura sic condita a Deo cum affectibus. Vidimus autem ante aliquot annos fanaticos spiritus conari eiusmodi άραθενεις inveheri in Ecclesiam. Sicut Monetarius [viz., Thomas Münzer] eam vita et moribus studebat exprimere, tanquam singularem sanctimoniam. Cum enim nunciata ei esset nativitas filii, stetit ante altaram quasi mutus et surdus, non laetatus est nec gratias egit, neque quicquam respondit, ut ostenderet et truncum et stipitem esse et postea iactaverat naturam suam prorsus esse mutatam et mortificatam. Id revera fanaticum fuit longe deterius Stoicorum delirio. Deus enim vult servatam naturam, non extinctam, sed iubet eam corrigi, ut fiat purior et affectus magis sint compositi in piis, quam in gentilibus, qui non regunt eos timore et fiducia Dei, sed temere et sine certa lege verbi Dei iiis rapiuntur. Cf. LW 7.261.
and heeding the Word spoken by Christ and the Spirit within his heart, the Christian averts and overcomes the evil he feels in his flesh, obeys the Spirit, and looks the other way, leaving the girl in peace and waiting on God to provide a suitable wife. Without using the word consentire, Luther has thus provided a dramatic sketch of the co-operative workings of the Holy Spirit and the renewed Christian (who together employ scriptural teachings about chastity and God’s fatherly providence, which function analogously to the Stoic lekta) amidst the ultimately successful battle to refuse consent to the Christian’s residual flesh.

Later in the same argument, Luther explains that the same affective psychological phenomena occur in each instance of temptation, whether it be disobedience in the child, lust in the adolescent, ambition in the grown man, vainglory in the theologian, or—in “the true saints”—the “highest temptations” (summis tentationibus) of unbelief, despair, and blasphemy.⁴¹⁴ Here is the same hierarchy of temptations we took note of in chapter 1, culminating in the summa tentatio. Regardless of how the particular Christian is tempted by the sinful desires of his flesh, which vary by age and by degrees of growth in holiness,⁴¹⁵ “it belongs to all of us to take up the spear and sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God [Eph. 6:17], and to fight, not snore, amidst such great evils.”⁴¹⁶

(2) Luther carries the same themes into D 3.3. The Christian is a “true Thomas Thomist” (!) or “twin” (cf. John 11:16), who at the same time exists in triumphant and militant states: righteous, free, and glad by faith in Christ, but embattled and battling

⁴¹⁵ On degrees of growth in holiness, see D 1.8.
⁴¹⁶ WA 39/1.502.10-12 [A], cf. ATD, 148.
because “he still has sin inhering in himself.”

Luther equates this peccatum haerens with Rom. 7:23’s aliam legem in membris meis. After lamenting its wretchedness, he again vividly portrays the Christian’s battle against his own flesh:

But there (ibi), right away when these things happen [viz., evil desires], and this law (lex) or that carnal nature (carnalis illa natura), infected by Satan’s poison in Paradise, shows itself and incites the wretched Christian [miserum christianum, Rom. 7:24] to sexual desire or avarice or desperation or hatred of God, there (ibi) I say the Christian rouses himself and says, as if in wonder: “Behold, and are you still here? Welcome, Lord Sin (domine peccatum)! Where were you? Where were you off amusing yourself all this time? Are you still alive? From where do you come to us? Away with you to the cross (Apage te in crucem)! Not this way, it will not be this way! I will protect my virgin [cf. 1 Cor. 7:37] and I will do what is just, even against your will (te invito). And the more you torture me, or invite and incite me to seduction, sexual desire, or desperation, the more I will laugh at you, and with a great and strong soul—supported by the help of my Christ—I will despise you and crush your head [Gen. 3:15]. What business do I have with you? I have another Lord (alium habeo dominum), in whose camp I am now a soldier; here I will stand, here I will die.”

Such a great-souled Christian, who valiantly fights his own flesh to the death, “makes a great massacre in the devil’s army, and triumphs gloriously,” the Reformer denominates a true St. George—ille gloriosus miles et fortis Georgius—to match the dragon-slaying legend of old. He says with St. Paul: “In all these things we more than conquer through Jesus Christ” (cf. Rom. 8:37). As this battle scene graphically attests, such holy knights cannot but help “feeling (sentire) many sins and desires,” says Luther; “but with the Lord helping we do not permit them to rule (dominari).”

Thus Luther confesses that he sees in his flesh a taste for the same things as the Turk,

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417 WA 39/1.504.6-19 [A], cf. ATD, 150-1. christianum esse verum Thomam Thomistam? Hard at work in his theological task, Luther is clearly enjoying himself; he repeats his little joke at D 3.21.
418 WA 39/1.505.2-3 [A], cf. ATD, 151.
419 WA 39/1.505.3-14 [A], cf. ATD, 151.
420 WA 39/1.505.14-16 [A], cf. ATD, 151.
421 WA 39/1.505.17-19 [A]: Non enim possimus non quisque in sua aetate seu sorte plurima peccata et concupiscentias sentire, sed dominari tamen Domino adiuvante non permettimus. Cf. ATD, 152.
the Pope, and the rest of the world: *sed non acquiesce*! In the same way, the paradigmatic spiritual warrior, St. Paul, “has sin [cf. 1 John 1:8], but conquered and faint (*victum ac languidum*),” whereas the impious have *peccatum vivum, dominans, triumphans*. In short, and in terms of a rich Augustinian constellation of texts from St. John and Paul (especially Rom. 6:12-14), the Christian knight successfully overcomes the residual desires of his flesh by not consenting to them, however fierce the struggle.

Now, apart from the fundamental similarities that unite this passage with the preceding argument, four things stand out. First, the sense of surprise that Luther’s knight experiences when the flesh’s impulses make themselves known indicates their spontaneous and pre-volitional quality. *Haec fiunt*, these motions “happen” because of the indwelling sin’s operations in the renewed Christian; and they happen apart from and prior to any consent to their movements on his part. Indeed, the Christian experiences the onslaught of Lord Sin’s enticements as a kind of spiritual torture. Second, the Christian’s heroic refusal of consent to the evil desires of his flesh is as instantaneous as their arousal in his embattled soul (*ibi ... ibi*). This strong George does not toy with his flesh; he slays it, promptly. Third, the Christian knight fights and takes his stand with confidence and bold defiance, mocking and despising Lord Sin, whom we might otherwise consider a rather formidable opponent. This, I suggest, is due to the fourth striking aspect of this passage, namely, that the Christian fights against Lord Sin with and in the Lord Jesus Christ. He sends evil desires away to the cross and triumphs over them with Christ’s help; and when he does so, he becomes a

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423 WA 39/1.506.1-3 [A], cf. *ATD*, 152.
Gen. 3:15-style serpent-crusher in his own right, beating down Lord Sin’s head beneath his feet. For he is a solider in the camp of the true Serpent-Crusher, Jesus Christ.\(^{424}\)

Thus the battling Christian participates in Christ by faith and enters into \textit{conformitas Christi}: in particular, the flesh-conquering knight assumes the form of a \textit{Christus victor} in miniature.\(^{425}\)

(3) The last battle scene I will present here, from D 3.5, is unique in that it is mainly an expansive exegesis of Rom. 7:14-25. For this reason it is especially illuminating as to the nature of the “\textit{simul}” that characterizes Luther’s flesh-fighting saints, who long for a perfection in holiness which they cannot yet attain.

Thus also the divine Paul, when he was turning the matter up and down and in various parts, finally cried out: “Ach, who will set me free from the body of this death?” [Rom. 7:24] He therefore says that this life [viz., the Christian life of struggle depicted in Rom. 7:14-23] is to be defended, so that we can at last be set free from sins. For before we are buried, we are not able not to sin (\textit{non possumus non peccare}), even the saints. To be sure, we all desire (\textit{Cuperemus}) to live according to God’s law and to obey it in the most holy way possible (\textit{quam sanctissime}), but alas, how often does our flesh interrupt us here? How often is our soul drawn in different directions and seized by that which it does not want (\textit{rapitur eo, quo nolit})? In this way Paul complains about himself, Rom. 7[:19]: “I do not do what I want, but what I do not want (\textit{Non, quod volo, facio, sed quod nolo}),” and many other things in the same sentence—which is a place where one can see that huge battle or wrestling match of God’s Spirit and the flesh in the saints (\textit{ingentem illam pugnam seu luctam spiritus Dei et carnis in sanctis}). Without a doubt, there are many adolescents and youths who with perpetual and assiduous prayers petition and beg for the same thing from God, in order that they might be able to live as holy and piously as they want to (\textit{ut ita sancte et pie possent, quam vellent, vivere}). For what pious person would not wish (\textit{optaret}) to be free from those vexations and difficulties, which he is forced (\textit{cogitur}) to take in here, and never to be seized and solicited by things

\(^{424}\) Cf. Asendorf, \textit{Lectura in Biblia}, 31: Luther’s “\textit{simul}” is “\textit{no einfache Existenzdialektik}, inasmuch as faith isn’t left alone, but stands under the lordship of One who is stronger, who not only is present, but who as such puts the adversary in his place.”

\(^{425}\) A fifth observation is incidental to my argument, but intriguing nonetheless: notice the similarity between Luther’s concluding \textit{hic stabo} and his \textit{Hier stehe ich} at the Diet of Worms in 1521, plus the fact that he passed as “Knight George” during his 1521/2 stay at the Wartburg.
which offend God the Father? But this cannot happen in this life; we are flesh.\footnote{WA 39/1.512.6-513.1 [A], cf. ATD, 155-6.}

We have to be very precise in handling Luther’s \textit{non possumus non peccare}. In the context of exegeting Rom. 7, it refers to the illicit and unwanted movements of the saint’s residual flesh, \textit{not} to the unavoidable necessity of falling into actual sins.\footnote{Luther’s choice of language here is not helpful. As he well knew, in the tradition \textit{non posse non peccare} refers to the second of Augustine’s and Peter’s four \textit{status liberi arbitrii}, that is to say, \textit{post peccatum et ante gratiam}. For the vitiated human being prior to the advent of healing grace, not being able to refrain from sin is in fact the order of the day. In Peter’s third \textit{status gratiae}, the regenerate person is hard-pressed by concupiscence. But empowered by helping grace (\textit{gratia adiuvans}), he is able to resist sin if he wishes (\textit{posse non peccare}); though not yet perfectly, as he will in glory when he receives the gift of no longer being able to sin at all (\textit{Sent. II d. 25 cp. 6 de quatuor statibus liberi arbitrii} [Grott. I/464-5]). Despite his rhetoric, in reality Luther is describing Peter’s third state. But whereas Peter allows that the regenerate \textit{nondum tamen habet posse omnino non peccare vel non posse peccare, propter infirmitatem nondum perfecte absorptam, et propter gratiam nondum perfecte consummatam}, Luther seems rather to relish in this Pauline/Augustinian \textit{datum} as a consoling truth delivered by the Spirit as a special gift for hard-pressed and battle-weary souls. On the consoling power of the “Augustinian simul,” farther in Part II below.}

The saints eagerly desire to obey God’s law perfectly, without the least resistance of the residual sin in their flesh. They beg God in prayer to be given the ability (\textit{posse}) to really live in a way that equals their earnest will (\textit{velle}) for holiness. But Paul himself, read through Luther’s Augustinian spectacles, confesses: “I do not do what I want, that is, I do not yet live in the freedom of holiness for which I long; rather, I do what I do not want, that is, I am still forced to suffer being rapt, seized, solicited, drawn, and vexed by the evil desires of my flesh, which are offensive to my Father and repugnant to my own holy soul.” In Luther’s theology of holiness, the partly renewed but still partly fleshly believer longs for the perfection of the Spirit’s inchoate work with all his heart. For, as we saw above, he delights in the law and loves righteousness and is therefore repulsed by his own residual fleshly impulses, against which he fights incessantly and from which he longs to be set free. This is the huge battle and
wrestling match between the Spirit’s gift, operative in and through the renewed agency of the believer, and the flesh that remains in sanctis. In contrast to valiant knight George in D 3.3, here the plaintive longing of battle-weary Pauline Christians comes to the fore. The saint’s fight with his flesh is hard, trying, and lifelong, and the longer he perseveres in its course the more Rom. 7:24’s quis me liberabit becomes the cry of his own painfully divided heart. Farther on in the same disputation, Luther again quotes Rom. 7:24 (and 7:19), then exhorts his hearers: “Learn to pray in this way for sanctification, and do not be secure.”

2.2.3. Summary

In the disputations, Luther’s theology of regeneration and renewal by the Spirit’s gift co-inheres with a Rom. 7-centered theology of residual indwelling sin, such that Christians are “partly righteous, partly unrighteous,” “partly saint, partly sinner.” In Paul’s terms, they are both spirit and flesh, with the new creature in the ascendancy and the remnants of the old held in subjection to the new; and Luther intends his own terms as explications of the apostle’s. The really but partially renewed Christian delights in the law of God in his inner being or spirit, and therefore battles against the unholy desires that remain lodged within (or simply constitute) his flesh. The heart of this spiritual battle consists in his refusal—in the power of the Spirit’s sanctifying gift—to yield voluntary consent to the sinful desires which afflict and grieve the saint precisely because (a) they are his desires, not some separate subject’s, and (b) they cut

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428 D 3.13, WA 39/1.527.7 [A]: ... ut sic discas orare pro sanctificatione et non securus esse. Cf. ATD, 165.
429 D 3.2.2[29], WA 39/1.561.11 [A]: ... partim sumus iusti, partim iniusti. Cf. ATD, 185.
430 D 3.21, WA 39/1.542.18-19 [A]: ... partim sanctus, partim peccator. Cf. ATD, 174.
painfully against the grain of his own renewed will.\textsuperscript{431} The Lutheran saint no longer 
\textit{wants} to experience the sinful passions he is nonetheless forced to endure: passions to 
which, through the delight-producing renovation of his heart by the Spirit, he is no 
longer bound to consent. This account of the Christian soul as a complex of 
disordered affections inherited from ruined Adam (“flesh”) and holy affections 
produced by the new-creating Spirit (“spirit”), locked in perpetual combat that \textit{only} 
persists so long as the flesh remains subordinate to the spirit through the victory of 
Christ’s spiritual knight in non-consent: this is Luther’s real “\textit{simul}.” Far from being 
inimical to real growth in holiness, it is in Luther’s theology an account of evangelical 
sanctification underway and advancing amidst the vicissitudes and dangers of spiritual 
life lived out and fought for in a deadly combat zone, with due attention paid not only 
to the ongoing reality of the sinful flesh (and the devil, and the world) but also to the 
greater and stronger reality of the Holy Spirit’s—and the holy \textit{spiritus’}!—progressive 
victory over all his foes. Rightly grasped in the context of his theology of the gift, the 
Reformer’s “\textit{simul}” is nothing less than a profile of the Christian advancing in holiness. 
Thus at D 3.25, Luther explains that by “dying to sin” (cf. Rom. 6:2, 11) Paul means 
“fighting against them and not allowing it to rule in us” (cf. Rom. 6:12-14), and adds 
that “this happens, not only in one member, but in all, so that now the heart, eyes, 
hands, tongue, and feet operate differently than before, and serve Christ the Lord—
not sins—and thus become from day to day constantly holier and better (\textit{sic fieri 
\textit{subinde de die in diem sanctior et melior}).”\textsuperscript{432}

\textsuperscript{431} Back of my reference to lumber is Isaiah’s beautiful prophecy comparing the redeemed to “oaks 
of righteousness, the planting of the LORD,” 61:3.
\textsuperscript{432} WA 39/1.551.1-7 [A], cf. \textit{ATD}, 179.
2.3. Totaliter peccatores? Grace, gift, and the “simul”

In his term-setting 1951 study, Joest referred to this (to him, more pedestrian) element in Luther’s theology as the *Partialaspekt* of the “*simul,*” or alternately as the *partim/partim* variation of the same, which he contrasted unfavorably with its *Totalaspekt.* Although Joest’s study moves freely from various texts spanning the length of Luther’s theological career, two passages from the third disputation figure especially prominently in his argument for a “total *simul*” interpreted as an overtly anti-logical, existential, “paradoxical collision of two total realities,” in which total righteousness and total sinfulness are predicated of the same subject at the same time.⁴³³ I will examine them both, and argue (following David Yeago’s suggestive 2004 essay)⁴³⁴ against Joest that Luther’s occasional *totus/totus* remarks fit quite snuggly with his rather more frequent emphases on partial residual sinfulness juxtaposed to real though partial renewal in holiness.

(1) The first comes in the last paragraph of the unusually lengthy D 3.3, an earlier portion of which I studied above—viz., the great battle scene where Luther names the flesh-slaying saint, who refuses to consent to the evil desires that torture his righteous soul, a true St. George. More on this in a moment. Joest’s attention falls on an arresting phrase near the end of the argument: *duo contraria in uno subiecto et in eodem puncto temporis.*⁴³⁵ He then conflates this text with a similar passage at D 3.2.3[30], which I will consider separately below, and asserts that this proves that for

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⁴³³ Wilfried Joest, *Gesetz und Freiheit. Das Problem des tertius usus legis bei Luther und die neutestamentliche Parainese,* 57-60.
⁴³⁴ Yeago, “Martin Luther on Renewal and Sanctification.”
Luther Christians are *Reputative totaliter iusti—revera totaliter peccatores*. For this seemingly impressive Latin summation of Luther’s “total” theology of justification, Joest cites WA 39/1.564.3ff; but as Yeago has pointed out, it isn’t actually there.\textsuperscript{436} I will interpret what Luther does say at this critical text shortly, but for now it suffices to note that Joest reads the *duo contraria* remark at D 3.3 to mean that Christian believers are totally righteous by way of imputation, but in reality totally sinners. Is this what Luther is fact teaching at this point in the disputation? He does claim, a few lines later, that the Christian is a saint “insofar as he is a Christian, viz., to the extent that I am righteous, godly, and Christ’s, but insofar as I look at me and my sin, I am wretched and the greatest sinner” (cf. Rom. 7:24, 1 Tim. 1:15).\textsuperscript{437} I grant that, taken out of the context of D 3.3, Joest’s reading of Luther’s *duo contraria* in light of this sentence is at least possible; but there are two factors that militate strongly against it.

First, consider the phrase itself. Luther speaks of two *contraria* in a single subject at the same time, to wit, righteousness and sin. Joest finds in this cause to celebrate an instance of the Reformer’s “flagrant” disregard for the principle of non-contradiction and, with it, “the foundations of all logic.”\textsuperscript{438} He then explains the simultaneous coexistence of these mutually-excluding predicates in existential terms: they belong to “two wholly distinct planes of being (*völlig verschiedenen Seinsebenen*),” on the one hand one’s extrinsic relation to Christ with his perfect righteousness, on

\textsuperscript{436} Yeago, “Martin Luther on Renewal and Sanctification,” 662-3.

\textsuperscript{437} WA 39/1.508.4-7 [A]: *Attamen es sanctus? Ita, in quantum christianus, eatenus enim sum iustus, pius et Christi, sed quatenus respicio ad me et ad meum peccatum, sum miser et peccator maximus.* Cf. ATD, 153.

\textsuperscript{438} Joest, 58, and 207 n. 162.
the other one’s own qualitative being as a sinner. As I allowed earlier, Luther’s subsequent *eatenus/quatenus* lends a certain plausibility to this reading; but Joest is, I think, being a little too clever for his own good. For he overlooks the most obvious fact about Luther’s remark, namely, that the two *contraria* exist in a single subject. On Joest’s interpretation, one of the predicates is relational and extrinsic to the Christian’s being (i.e., righteousness) while the other is intrinsic, qualitative, and real (i.e., sin). To be sure, Luther can say that the Christian is to be considered *in praedicamento relationis et qualitatis*, as he does in the 1540 *Promotionsdisputation* for Joachim Mörlin, which Joest supplies as a parallel text to D 3.3 and leverages for his interpretation. But Luther does not do so here: the two *contraria* are both “in” a single subject. This does not refer to two kinds of predications, relational versus qualitative, applied to a single subject. Rather, it refers to two contrary qualities predicated of a single subject, precisely because they inhere together within the same subject in their contrariety. In other words, taken in its simplest sense, this is another instance of Luther’s *partim/partim “simul,”* wherein the partially renewed Christian continues to bear within himself the remnants of Adam’s sin. This is why, in the very next line, Luther explains that the saint cries out to God *quia sentio peccatum adhaerens mihi,* and in the last two lines of the paragraph speaks of the *vetus Adam* 

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439 Joest, 58.
440 WA 39/2.141.1-6: *Christianus est dupliciter considerandus, in praedicamento relationis et qualitatis. Si consideratur in relatione, tam sanctus est, quam angelus, id est, imputatione per Christum, quia Deus dicit, se non videre peccatum propter filium suum unigenitum, qui est velamen Mosi, id est, legis [2 Cor. 3:18]. Sed Christianus consideratus in qualitate est plenus peccato.* Note that to be qualitatively “full of sin” does not mean that the Christian is totally sinful, i.e., that he is nothing but sinful. Cf. Luther’s lecture on Gen. 26:9, WA 43.454.37-455.12, LW 5.38.
441 WA 39/1.508.2-3 [A], cf. ATD, 153.
and \textit{natura corrupta} which \textit{manet} in the saints till death.\footnote{WA 39/1.508.8-9 [A], cf. \textit{ATD}, 153.} As Yeago and Theodor Dieter have argued against Joest, the predication of contrary qualities to a single subject only rises to the level of a logical contradiction if they are predicated not only at the same time, but also in the same respect.\footnote{Yeago, “Martin Luther on Renewal and Sanctification,” 664, n. 30; Theodor Dieter, \textit{Der junge Luther und Aristoteles}, 306–7. According to Dieter, Luther is “downright persnickety” about showing that his “\textit{simul}” does not contradict the law of non-contradiction.} This point of logic is just what Luther himself upholds at D 1.8: \textit{contraria non sunt in eodem subiecto in eodem gradu}.\footnote{WA 39/1.376.2 [A], cf. \textit{ATD}, 43.} He explains this, vis-à-vis his theology of progressive growth in holiness, in sanative terms taken from the venerable christological interpretation of Luke 10:25-37:

\begin{quote}
When health is perfect, disease is excluded. But in faith we are not yet perfectly healthy, but we are being healed. The Samaritan began to heal the man who had fallen into the hands of robbers. And therefore the disease is not yet entirely healed, but repeatedly bothers us. In this way, both are in us, sin and righteousness, certainly not in the same degree, but in different ones (\textit{Sic utrumque est in nobis, peccatum et iustitia, non tamen in eodem gradu, sed diverso}).\footnote{WA 39/1.376.5-9 [A], cf. \textit{ATD}, 44.} 
\end{quote}

Faith (the root of all inherent righteousness) battles against the disease of sin, and rules over it. Sin fights back against faith, but though it proves bothersome it does not triumph, for it only exists in the Christian subject \textit{in inferiore gradu}.\footnote{WA 39/1.376.9-13 [A], cf. \textit{ATD}, 44.} The Samaritan’s healing ministrations have effected much, and though his patient in the inn is not yet perfectly sound, he is more healthy than sick. “In this way,” reasons Luther, “in diverse degrees contraries are well able to exist in the same subject.”\footnote{WA 39/1.376.13-14 [A], cf. \textit{ATD}, 44.} I submit that D 1.8’s explanation of how \textit{contraria bene possunt esse in eodem [subiecto]}—viz., diversity in respect of degree—is the far more suitable text to pair with D 3.3’s \textit{duo contraria in...}
uno subiecto. To round off this first argument, I need only add that Joest does indeed engage D 1.8 at some length, and that he does so in his treatment of the Partialaspekt of Luther’s “simul.”

Second, consider the context of Luther’s remark in the course of the overall argument of D 3.3. As I noted above, its first half consists in the Knight George versus Lord Sin “battle scene” examined earlier. From here, Luther presses the point of real holiness maintained and furthered through the saint’s fierce struggle to refuse consent to the desires of his flesh by presenting a second vivid hagiographical story, which Luther (speaking off the cuff in the disputation) mistakenly attributes to Cyprian. A certain martyr was bound and shut up alone by his captors, who then brought beautiful prostitutes into his chamber to entice him to engage in illicit sex, with the promise that if he did so he would be set free. He steadfastly refused their advances, throttled the sexual lusts aroused in his own flesh, and, as a true “soldier of Christ” (militem Christi), preferred to die in faith in Christ rather than to live by offending his Lord.

Luther proceeds to explain the theology (and moral psychology) exemplified in the story of the martyr’s heroic and victorious battle to refuse consent to his fleshly desires for sex and for freedom from torture and death. “The Christian feels that he is moved and inflamed (sentit, se moveri et accendi) by wrath, hatred, that he is burned (uri) by sexual lust, that he is inflamed (ardere se) by love of glory, money, power, etc.” Does the mere fact that he feels and is moved violently by these passions mean

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448 Joest, 66.
449 WA 39/1.506.11-507.4 [A], cf. ATD, 152.
450 WA 39/1.507.5-7 [A], cf. ATD, 153.
he is not a Christian? Luther’s answer to his own question contains an exact statement of his theology of grace, gift, and the “simul.” “In that part” (in hac parte) of him which is comprised by these unruly motions and sinful passions, that is in his residual flesh, the Christian—as flesh—is not a Christian.⁴⁵¹ The law exposes this, not least the encompassing non concupiscere⁴⁵² of the 10th Commandment and Rom. 7:7-8. But the gospel speaks a stronger reality and supplies two reasons for a better judgment of such a person: “He who fights, and neither suffers himself to be conquered by sin nor permits sin to rule [Rom. 6:12], is and is called a Christian on account of faith in Christ, because of which whatever evil is still present in him is not imputed to him.”⁴⁵³ Once again, Luther adjudges the Christian a “sinner” (or in this case, a non-Christian) in the very precise sense that in that “part” of him which is his flesh—quod adhuc adest mali—he continues to feel, suffer, or experience illicit and disordered impulses, desires, or affections. This is the one reason why the Christian is sinful; but for his righteousness there are two. First, he fights against his sinful flesh, refuses its powerful suggestions, and does not permit it to rule over him. Second, because of his faith in Christ, these evil desires—overcome through the refusal of consent, yet intrinsically sinful nonetheless—are not reckoned to his account. Thus gift and grace together, victory over one’s flesh by the Spirit and forgiveness or non-imputation propter fidem Christi of the “sin” that remains in its conquered and depleted form, constitute the Christian’s righteousness. And to be clear, the Christian’s refusal of consent to the desires of his flesh in the power of the Spirit’s gift is the sine qua non of his abiding in

⁴⁵¹ WA 39/1.507-9 [A], cf. ATD, 153.
⁴⁵² WA 39/1.507-8-9 [A], cf. ATD, 153.
⁴⁵³ WA 39/1.507.10-12 [A], cf. ATD, 153.
the grace and forgiveness of Christ. *Qui pugnet*—the sin-fighter, and the sin-fighter alone, is the one to whom the residual sin against which he fights is not imputed for Christ’s sake. Now, this proves that Joest’s “total simul” is, for Luther, theologically (and spiritually) impossibile. The person who consents to his sinful flesh forfeits gift and grace alike, and does indeed become a “total sinner.” But now he is not righteous at all, either in himself or in Christ. For he has lost that faith which alone unites (or relates) him to Christ and grasps hold of his righteousness. Only the Spirit-gifted, sin-fighting, non-consenting knight has that faith in Christ which receives all the riches of his grace. That is to say, only the Christian who is really (though partially) renewed in righteousness by the Spirit obtains the grace in Christ that pardons the vexatious dregs of Adam’s sin which remain for the fight.

The next paragraph’s Augustinian interpretation of Ps. 32 and 1 John 3:9 and 1:8, which immediately precedes the *duo contraria* remark highlighted by Joest, confirms that this is in fact Luther’s real dogmatics of sin, grace, and holiness. He begins with Ps. 32:1: “Blessed are they whose iniquities (*iniquitates*) are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.”454 Interestingly, he does not continue to v. 2, which provides the vital *non imputavit* that he has already alluded to in the preceding paragraph’s summary of his theology of grace and gift. St. Paul cites these verses in Rom. 4:6-8 to establish his doctrine of justification by faith, and they are of great moment for Luther even if his sense of their meaning has sometimes been mistaken. In D 3.3, his interpretation stands out clearly because he passes on strait to v. 6: “for this, viz., iniquity (*iniquitate*), every saint (*omnis sanctus*) will pray to You,” then cites 1 John 3:9

454 WA 39/1.507.16-17 [A], cf. *ATD*, 153.
and 1:8 as parallel and explanatory texts.\textsuperscript{455} The latter two verses, as we have seen, factored decisively in the 1538 addendum to SA III.3, and they are taken in the same sense in this text from the same year. St. John’s \textit{qui natus est ex Deo, non peccat} (1 John 3:9) matches the \textit{sanctus} in Ps. 32:6, while his \textit{si dixerimus, quod peccatum non habemus, nos ipsos fallimus} (1:8) explains why David’s saint prays to God on account of his iniquity and is blessed in the first place because God mercifully forgives and covers his sins. The renewed saint “has sin”—the sinful flesh and its illicit passions—but he does not commit actual sin through voluntarily consenting to the desires he has. He does not boast of his inherent righteousness as though he were already perfect, but humbly prays to God in the fashion of Ps. 32:6. All the while, despite the reality of his “sin” and the imperfection of his renewal in real holiness, he is nonetheless perfectly \textit{beatus} and \textit{sanctus} through God’s merciful non-imputation. Thus when Luther asks,

\textit{What is this? How do these things fit together? How does it agree, to be holy and to pray for sin (sanctum esse et orare pro peccato)? It is truly a marvelous thing. It is truly a fine thing. Reim da, wer reimen kan,}\textsuperscript{456}

—his question is basically rhetorical, for he has already “rhymed” a solution to the apparent contradiction of \textit{duo contraria in uno subiecto} in the body of the argument. I do not mean to imply that Luther, any less than St. Paul or Augustine, is indifferent to the mysteriousness of indwelling sin or, what is far greater, to the marvelousness of the gospel that defeats it. Far from it. But Luther is not in the least at a loss to render a theological explanation of the nature of residual “sin” in the saints, on the one hand, and on the other of the manner in which it is overcome through the grace of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Spirit. That is what he has labored at, over against the

\textsuperscript{455} WA 39/1.507.17-19 [A], cf. \textit{ATD}, 153.

\textsuperscript{456} WA 39/1.507.19-508.1 [A], cf. \textit{ATD}, 153.
antinomian misconstrual of his theology, in D 3.3 and throughout these disputations, as I hope my own exposition of the same is bearing out. In light of the regnant confusion in much of twentieth-century Lutheran theology on this point, the exhortation which the Reformer interposes amidst his explanations in D 3.3 of the interrelation of grace, gift, and indwelling sin takes on a certain prophetic quality: “I implore you to learn this well. Believe me this: when we are dead, not many will teach this and make this distinction.”

(2) The second text from the disputations that Joest claims in defense of his “total simul” comes at D 3.2.3[30]. Although Joest misquotes it, the passage as it actually stands in WA 39/1 does include the statement that *revera sumus et totaliter peccatores,*458 and concludes *dicimur iusti et peccatores simul et semel.*459 As Yeago has already handled this text ably, I can afford to be more brief in my treatment of it here.460 But as a complement to Yeago’s interpretation, which leans heavily on the 1521 *Antilatomus,* I will base my reading exclusively on texts from the third disputation.

In the first place, it is vital to grasp that the thesis to which Luther responds in the body of his argument is itself an explicit argument against the *partim/partim simul.* To wit: since the *beneficium Christi,* namely justification, vivification, and liberation from the law, pertains to the whole person, believers cannot be described as *partim iusti, partim iniusti*; instead, they are either *totaliter iusti vel totaliter peccatores.*461 This thesis did not drop out of thin air: in the preceding D 3.2.2[29],

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457 WA 39/1.507.12-14 [A], cf. ATD, 153.
458 WA 39/1.564.4 [A], cf. ATD, 186.
459 WA 39/1.564.6-7 [A], cf. ATD, 186.
460 David Yeago, “Martin Luther on Renewal and Sanctification,” 662-66.
461 WA 39/1.563.8-12 [A], cf. ATD, 186.
Luther had argued that “it is absolutely certain that we are partly righteous, partly sinners (partim iustos, partim peccatores), since we carry around with us the flesh of our father Adam infected by original sin.”

So, the initial thesis in D 3.2.3[30], in the mode proper to scholastic disputation, is pressing the logical validity of what Luther had just established by directly countering it. In his reply, we should expect Luther to defend his partim/partim by way of further clarification of its meaning. And that—pace Joest’s interpretation but consistent with the theology of grace, gift, and residual sin that Luther upholds throughout the disputations—is precisely what we find.

Luther begins by granting that the “total” thesis is a good one Reputative scilicet, by way of imputation. He goes on: “For this is true, that by divine imputation we are really and totally righteous (reputatione divina sumus revera et totaliter iusti), even if sin is still present.” Now, the question that must be asked here is, What is the nature of the “sin” that is still present (adhoc adsit peccatum) in the saints and requires God’s mercy in order to establish the believer as totally righteous in his sight? In light of the preceding argument’s claim that we are partim peccatores on account of the remnants of Adam’s sin, as well as the whole tenor of Luther’s theology as I have exposited it to this point, the answer is ready to hand; and a few lines farther on, Luther specifies that Christians are sinners “insofar as we regard ourselves and the first birth (prima generatione).” Indeed, says Luther, in this respect revera sumus et totaliter peccatores. This is more or less the line that drew

462 WA 39/1.562.10-12 [A], cf. ATD, 185.
463 WA 39/1.563.13 [A], cf. ATD, 185.
464 WA 39/1.563.13-14 [A], cf. ATD, 185.
465 WA 39/1.564.4-5 [A], cf. ATD, 185.
466 WA 39/1.564.4 [A], cf. ATD, 185.
Joest’s attention, but Luther’s meaning is far more restricted than Joest recognized. In D 3.3, Luther stated that *in hac parte* of the Christian that is his residual “flesh,” the Christian is not a Christian. Here, he states that when the Christian attends to what he is in himself, that is to say, to what he is by virtue of his first generation as a son of ruined Adam, apart from his regeneration in Christ by the Spirit, he is truly and totally a sinner. In both cases, different terms express the same theological judgment: in his residual Adamic “flesh,” apart from Christ’s grace and the Spirit’s gift, the Christian *non est christianus* and the saint is *totaliter peccator*. This kind of language sounds paradoxical, and Joest and his heirs would have it be so, but it actually is not. Rather, Luther is urging what a later English Puritan called “the sinfulness of sin,” precisely in the flesh of the regenerate Christian. By the Spirit’s gift such a one really is reborn and made new. But the remnants of Adam’s sin, manifest in the disordered passions which afflict the saint’s heart against his will, are so utterly repugnant and abhorrent to the holiness of God that their mere presence in the saint—apart from any voluntary consent to their illicit promptings—requires the merciful non-imputation of God, and the covering of Christ’s precious blood, for the flesh-bearing saint to stand righteous and pure in God’s sight. When regarded apart from this gift and grace—which, in addition to being a logical possibility and as such a useful penitential discipline, is also

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467 This is the title of a book by Ralph Venning (1621-74).
468 For an instructive parallel, see D 3, preface, WA 39/1.492.19-493.5 [A]: *Verum vos scitis nos esse quidem iustos, pueros, sanctos, esse etiam peccatores, inustos et damnatos. Sed diverso respectu, sumus enim iusti, quod ad reputationem seu misericordiam Dei in Christo promissam, hoc est propter Christum, in quem credimus, et qui in hunc credit, non peccat, ino non potest peccare, ut ait Ioannes [1 John 3:9], sed secundum formam aut substantiam, seu secundum nos, sumus peccatores inusti et damnati, quia certe nihil est in tota natura hominis, quod opponi possit iudicio Dei. Sed ubi haec misera et damnata natura arripit Christum propitiatorem et mediatorem per fidem, ibi illud ipsum peccatum, quod est adhuc in carne, modo non damnatur, non habetur pro peccato, sed condonatur propter Christum et est quasi nullum. Cf. ATD, 142.*
an immensely fruitful (if intensely painful) spiritual experience, viz., the suspensio gratiae⁴⁶⁹—the greatest saint in via is indeed maximus peccator, revera et totaliter, and confesses himself to be so (1 Tim. 1:15).⁴⁷⁰ But in theological truth and spiritual reality, amidst all the afflictive passions of his sinful flesh—including the despairing paroxysms of the soul’s dark night—the Christian never actually exists apart from the regenerating and renovating gift of the Spirit and the abundant riches of God’s grace in Jesus Christ.

There are two further points to be made in conclusion, the first in confirmation of the fact that the “sin” that requires God’s forgiving grace in Christ and renders Christians “total sinners” apart from that grace is to be understood only as the residual sinful flesh, the second regarding the nature of that grace itself. The first concerns Luther’s appeal, in D 3.2.3[30], to his favorite rhetorical trope: “synecdoche,” that is, taking a part for the whole or vice versa. He sandwiches two examples between his first reference to residual sin (adhuc adsit peccatum) and his last (prima generatione). When a wounded person is healed, we say that “the whole man” (totus homo) was healed, even though only a part of him had been wounded and only that part restored.

See, e.g., Luther’s lectures on Gen. 8:1, when at long last “God remembered Noah” (WA 42.335ff, cf. LW 2.103-6). In the midst of spiritual suffering such as Noah endured amidst the terrifying judgment and destruction of the Flood, we feel as if “the rays of divine grace (radii divinae gratiae) have been taken away, and we find ourselves in the darkness or the forgetfulness of God.” But though in the darkness he saw not one ray of grace (radium gratiae), still Noah “clung only to the promise” (335.25-28, 33-4). Only “the most perfect saints” (Perfectissimi Sancti) understand this “forgetful God” (Deum obliviosum) and are able to endure by faith. Some of the monks experienced this tentatio, and called it “the suspension of grace” (suspensionem gratiae) (336.11-12, 15-16). The expression is found in Thomas à Kempis (Imitatio Christi, bk. 2 cp. 9), the reality in Tauler. See Luther’s marginalia on Tauler’s sermons, WA 9.99.29 (suspensio gratiae et spiritus) and 101.3-4 (derelictione a deo per suspensionem gratiae). I touched on this point above in cp. 1.3, and will explore it further in section 3.3 of this chapter below and in Part III of this book.

If my reader is not inclined to grant Luther’s point, I might suggest reflection (with Anselm) on whether nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum. Cf. Mickey Mattox’s discussion of Thérèse of Lisieux’s cognate spiritual theology in “From Lutheran to Catholic—Justification and Holiness,” in Changing Churches, 63-65.
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Likewise we say that a man is wounded, when in fact “scarcely one of his members” is
actually harmed. Sic etiam, explains Luther, when we have regard to ourselves and our
first birth, we are really and totally sinners: viz., by way of synecdoche, in this case the
second example being the more directly pertinent of the two.471 Its force requires that
the rhetorically impressive totaliter peccatores is on par with saying that a whole man
is wounded even though only one part of him really is. That is, the whole Christian is
said to be a sinner, because part of him still is: his flesh. In other words, Joest’s
apparently strongest candidate for a “total simul” is in fact an intentional rhetorical
variation of the partim.
On the whole, Yeago’s interpretation of this point is quite good. But he goes on
to assert (a little vaguely) that as the totus peccator is really based on the Christian’s
partial residual sinfulness, so the totus iustus is based on the reality of his partial
renewal.472 This, I grant, is a legitimate inference from the first example of a
synecdoche that Luther provides: the whole person is said to be healed (or
“righteous”), whereas really only part of him is. The trouble with this is that in the
text, Luther leaves the first example behind and explains the Christian’s “total”
righteousness another way. Careful attention here will yield deeper insight into the

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WA 39/1.564.1-5 [A], cf. ATD, 186.
See Yeago, “Martin Luther on Renewal and Sanctification,” 664: “Because sin is ‘partially’ present
within them, therefore the faithful, so to speak as concrete human wholes, are rightly called
‘sinners altogether.’ Yet because they have been partly healed, the same human beings are at the
same time equally truly said to be ‘totally righteous persons’ by divine imputation.” Here, Yeago
seems to claim that God reckons total righteousness to the Christian propter his partial renewal—
more or less the position held classically by Karl Holl. Later in the article, however, Yeago more
clearly states that “we are received into God’s favor ‘on account of the gift’ rather because faith is
the human term of a relation of union with Christ” (666). This latter statement is unobjectionable.
For Holl, see “Die Rechtfertigungslehre in Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief mit besonderer
Rücksicht auf die Frage der Heilsgewißheit,” in Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte, vol. 1:
Luther (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1948 [reprint of 1921 original; the essay dates from 1910]).
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ongoing role of “grace” (properly defined) in Luther’s theology of holiness. If, in the present argument, Luther had maintained the kind of symmetry that Yeago suggests is there, he would have followed up his rhetorical reduction of the *totaliter peccator* to the *partim* with a statement of his theology of the Spirit’s gift of real but partial renewal in holiness. But this he does not do. Instead, Luther turns to his theology of grace in Jesus Christ: “Because Christ was given for us, we are totally holy and righteous (*sancti et iusti totaliter*).”\(^ {473}\) In other words, a decisive asymmetry obtains between the theological rationale for calling a Christian a “total sinner” on the one hand and “completely holy and righteous” on the other. He is called *totus peccator* rhetorically by way of synecdoche, though he is actually only partly sinful and is in fact partly renewed in real holiness by the Spirit. But he is called—and really is—*totus iustus* by way of gracious imputation, God in mercy overlooking his fleshly imperfections and reckoning Christ’s self-donation into death on the cross to his account. This, after all, is how Luther had begun his reply: *reputatione divina sumus revera et totaliter iusti, etiamsi adhuc adsit peccatum*. So we have come full circle, with the important clarification that the divine imputation by which believers are found to be entirely righteousness in God’s sight (despite the residual sin in their flesh) is granted on account of the gospel of grace, *quod Christus pro nobis datus est*.\(^ {474}\)

This, then, is Luther’s theology of grace, gift, and the “*simul*” as he expositis it in the three disputationes *gegen die Antinomer* held from December 1537 to the fall of 1538.

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\(^{473}\) WA 39/1.564.5-6 [A], cf. ATD, 186.

\(^{474}\) WA 39/1.564.5-6 [A], cf. ATD, 186.
3. On the Councils and the Church (early 1539)

*On the Councils and the Church* falls in between the third (Sept. 1538) and the fourth (Sept. 1540) of Luther’s disputations *gegen die Antinomer*. So it is not at all surprising that in this his major work on church history, patristic authority, conciliar theory, and ecclesiology, Luther twice engages his ongoing polemics with Agricola. In each case, the result is a rich exposition of his trinitarian theology of grace and gift that emphasizes the real renewal of the Christian in the most robust terms. I shall first examine both loci on grace and gift, and then turn finally to Luther’s teaching on the sanctifying holy cross.

### 3.1. A Pfingst prediger: the dialectics of grace and gift

The first locus on grace and gift comes mid-way through the second part of the work, as Luther interacts in a strikingly sympathetic manner with the christologies of Nestorius and Eutyches vis-à-vis his own deeply held Chalcedonian orthodoxy. In each case, says Luther, well-meaning theologians erred by denying conclusions that logically followed from their own correct premises (e.g., Nestorius denied that God was born of Mary, but he affirmed that Christ was God and Man). This, says Luther, “is what my Antinomians, too, are doing today,” who are

... preaching beautifully and (as I cannot but think) with real sincerity about Christ’s grace (*der gnade Christi*), about the forgiveness of sin and whatever else can be said about the article of redemption. But they flee as if it were the very devil the consequence that they should tell people about the third article,
of sanctification (Heiligung), that is, of the new life in Christ (neuen leben in Christo). 477

The paragraphs that follow are framed entirely by Luther’s theology of grace and gift, and from them three observations especially stand out for the sake of my argument. First, in contrast to Agricola et al. and their exclusive emphasis on “grace,” Luther offers an explicit and full presentation of his own creedal theology of grace and gift. Indeed, the Reformer’s insertion of the Latin gratia/donum at this juncture in this German writing lends them the aura of quasi-technical terminology. Since he basically affirms Agricola’s preaching of grace or redemption through Jesus Christ, 478 the weight of his discussion falls on the gift of sanctification and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ “did not earn for us only gratiam, die gnade, but also donum, die gabe of the Holy Spirit,’ so that we might have not only forgiveness of sins, but also ceasing from sins (auffhoeren von den sunden).” 479 Together with this negative definition of the Spirit’s donum/gabe at work in the sin-ceasing saints, Luther repeatedly couples a positive. With an allusion to 1 Pet. 2:24 in the foreground and Rom. 5—8 in the background, Luther states that Spirit-gifted believers are not only “dead to sin (der sunden tod),” they “live to righteousness (der gerechtigkeit leben), beginning and increasing (anfahren und zunehmen) here on earth and perfecting it beyond.” 480 For the

477 WA 50.599.5-10, cf. LW 41.113.
478 Hence when engaging in anti-Papal polemic vis-à-vis a potential council, Luther too—in this very work—can discuss the “grace” of justification without mention of the sanctifying gift: “The pope should not only abolish his tyranny of human ordinances in the council, but also hold with us that even good works performed in accordance with God’s commandments cannot help to achieve righteousness, to blot out sin, to attain God’s grace—only faith in Christ, who is a King of Righteousness in us, through his precious blood, death, and resurrection, so that he blotted out our sin for us, made satisfaction, reconciled God, and redeemed us from death, wrath, and hell.” WA 50.621.18-24, cf. LW 41.139-40.
480 WA 50.599.30-32, cf. LW 41.114.
Spirit gives life and righteousness to those who are dead in sin, making “new men (neuen menschen) out of the old Adam”\(^{481}\) who “lead a new life (neu leben fueren)”\(^{482}\) precisely because they “have the Holy Spirit.”\(^{482}\) Thus true Pfingst-preaching about the Spirit means speaking *de sanctificatione et vivificatione Spiritus Sancti*,\(^{483}\) that is, of the *Heiligung* and vivification produced by the Spirit and consisting in “the new life in Christ (neuen leben in Christo).”\(^{484}\) In short, the Holy Spirit makes new men and women out of the old Adam, who desist from sin and progressively increase in righteousness as they advance by the Spirit’s gift in the new life in Christ. This ongoing work of sanctification and vivification by the Spirit, set in the context of St. Paul’s contrast between sin and death in the first Adam and righteousness and life in Jesus Christ, Luther here (as elsewhere in the works of his maturity) encapsulates in the single term, *donum*.

Second, I note not merely Luther’s spirited defense of the real holiness of life imparted by the Spirit’s *donum*, but the integral and inseparable nexus of this sanctifying gift with the grace of redemption through Jesus Christ. With polemical verve, Luther insists that it is impossible to have Christ’s grace without the Spirit’s gift, since the mutual relation of the two is not only intimate and organic, but causal and purposeful. For Christ “has purchased redemption from sin and death”—i.e., grace—“so that the Holy Spirit might make us into new men (das uns der Heilige Geist sol zu neuen menschen machen)”\(^{485}\)—i.e., gift (cf. Gal. 3:14, 4:4-6, Acts 2:22-33). In the slight

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\(^{481}\) WA 50.599.29-30, cf. LW 41.114.
\(^{482}\) WA 50.600.11-12, cf. LW 41.115.
\(^{483}\) WA 50.599.26-28, cf. LW 41.114.
\(^{484}\) WA 50.599.5-10, cf. LW 41.113.
\(^{485}\) WA 50.599.28-31, cf. LW 41.114.
variation quoted above, Luther can also simply say that Christ merited both grace and
gift, and not the one without the other.\textsuperscript{486} Either way, his point is clear: Christ’s work
in meriting the grace of forgiveness cannot be separated from the Spirit’s gift of
renewal without imperiling the work of Christ itself. Or, to say the same thing
positively, the redemption of sinners by forgiveness in Christ is not an end in itself,
but is intrinsically ordered to their renewal in righteousness and life through the
Spirit.\textsuperscript{487}

This is the insight that originally prompted Luther to digress from his
discussion of fifth-century christologies to enter the fray against (as he put it) meine
Antinomer. Like Nestorius and Eutyches—\emph{mutatis mutandis}—Agricola \textit{et al.} preach
grace and forgiveness through Christ “beautifully” and even sincerely. But they refuse
to preach holiness through the Spirit’s gift, because they fail to grasp that the Spirit’s
gift of new life in Christ is the theo-logically necessary consequence (\textit{consequens}) of
Christ’s redeeming work. “They may be fine Easter preachers, but they are very poor
Pentecost preachers,” quips Luther.\textsuperscript{488} But his real contention is that in the end the
Antinomians prove to be bad rhetoricians because they were bad logicians first:
granting the premise of redemption through Christ but denying the conclusion of
sanctification by the Spirit.\textsuperscript{489} “They therefore preach Christ beautifully with
\textit{Nestorisch und Eutychische Dialectica, that he is and yet is not Christ.”}\textsuperscript{490} By contrast,

\textsuperscript{486} WA 50.599.32-35, cf. LW 41.114.
\textsuperscript{487} Leonhard Fendt, \textit{Luthers Schule der Heiligung} (Leipzig: H. G. Wallmann, 1929), 7, begins his
little book on Luther’s “school of sanctification” arguing on the basis of \textit{On the Councils and the
Church} that the goal of redemption is holiness.
\textsuperscript{488} WA 50.599.25, LW 41.114.
\textsuperscript{489} WA 50.599.18-19, LW 41.114: “Tell me, my dear man, is that not granting the premise and denying
the conclusion?” (\textit{Lieber, sage mir, heist das nicht antecedens concedirt und consequens negirt?}).
\textsuperscript{490} WA 50.599.23-26, cf. LW 41.114.
in the orthodox “Chalcedonian” dialectics driving Luther’s theology of grace and gift, “there is no such Christ that died for the kind of sinners who do not, after the forgiveness of sins, leave their sin and lead a new life (von den sunden lassen und ein neues leben füeren).” Mark well the vehemence of Luther’s polemic at this point, for it demonstrates just how seriously he regarded the matter of Christian holiness and the threat posed to it by the errant theology and preaching of Agricola. In Luther’s judgment, Agricola’s sincere but flawed theology of grace-sans-gift ends in a heresy no less devastating than the sincere but flawed christologies of the ancient heresiarchs; and heresy, in the Reformer’s still very catholic mind, cuts off its adherents from the salvation that is only to be had through faith in the true Gospel. Because the true Jesus Christ brings the pentecostal gift of holiness through the Spirit as the necessary consequence of his paschal forgiveness and grace, the Christian “should either have the Holy Spirit and lead a new life, or know that he has no Christ.” A sinful, Spirit-less life falsely justified in the name of Christ’s grace is rooted at bottom in christological heresy: “He who does not abstain from sin, but persists in his former evil nature, must have a different Christ, that of the Antinomians; the real Christ is not there, even if all the angels would cry, ‘Christ! Christ!’ He must be damned with this, his new Christ.”

491 WA 50.599.21-23, cf. LW 41.114.
493 WA 50.600.11-12, LW 41.115.
Third and last, a few comments on the “simul” as it pertains to this theology of grace and gift. In Luther’s positive exposition of his position, the res described by the term is nearly as absent as the term itself, which does not appear. The nearest he comes to it is a single, brief qualification of the saints’ renewal in the life of righteousness: it begins and increases in this life, but only reaches perfection in the next.495 This is an unexceptionable statement of traditional Augustinian eschatological reserve, in no way prejudicial to the theology of donum-worked holiness that Luther sets forth and defends in this passage with marked zeal. On the whole, it is the reality and vividness of the new life in Christ that impresses the reader as the real object of Luther’s concern here; even the very specific sense in which his Smalcald Articles and Disputations recognize the ongoing reality of sin in the Christian life is absent from this text. That said, the Antinomian “simul” that animated Luther’s stern disapprobation and summoned his discussion of David’s fall in the 1538 appendix to SA III.3 finds a nearly identical counterpart in this text from the following year. Luther charges that Agricola and his circle

... think one should not frighten or trouble the people, but rather always preach comfortingly about grace and the forgiveness of sins in Christ, and under no circumstances use these or similar words: “Listen! You want to be a Christian and nonetheless (gleichwol) remain an adulterer, a whoremonger, a drunken swine, arrogant, covetous, a usurer, envious, vindictive, malicious, etc.!” Instead they say, “Listen! Though you are an adulterer, a whoremonger, a miser, or other kind of sinner, if you but believe, you are saved, and you need not fear the law. Christ has fulfilled it all!”496

Regardless of whether Luther is fair to Agricola’s actual preaching and theology, his polemics powerfully illuminate his own position; for he charges his erstwhile friend

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495 WA 50.599.31-2, LW 41.114.
496 WA 50.599.10-17, LW 41.113-14.
with the very “simul”-theology he is often thought to have embraced himself. For Luther, it is impossible to be a Christian and remain an adulterer, a whoremonger, a drunken swine, arrogant, covetous, a usurer, envious, vindictive, malicious, “or other kind of sinner” at the same time. To teach and preach otherwise is to reject the Spirit’s gift and deny the gospel of Jesus Christ.

3.2. The Holiness of the Church

The second major locus on grace and gift appears in the compact treatise on evangelical ecclesiology that forms the third part of *On the Councils and the Church*. If in the previous material Luther digressed somewhat from his treatment of conciliar history and theory, here the theology of grace and gift is absolutely central to his exposition, for it is itself constitutive of the Reformer’s ecclesiology. More concretely put, for Luther redemption through Jesus Christ and sanctification by the Spirit are the evangelical realities that together make a gathered people the Church of God.

Luther takes his point of departure from “the Children’s Creed,” that is, the Apostles’ in the form it took in late medieval Germany already prior to the Reformation: “I believe in one holy Christian Church, the Communion of saints (*eine heilige Christliche Kirche, Gemeinschaft der heiligen*).”497 This he glosses with both *ecclesia sancta catholica Christiana* and, more decisively, *ein Christlich heilig Volck*.498 The Church is a Christian, holy people: Christian, because it believes in Christ; holy, because it

497 WA 50.624.15, LW 41.143. *On Christliche* instead of *catholica* in pre-Reformation German Creeds, see *BC*, 22, note 13.
498 WA 50.624.28-9, LW 41.143.
... has the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies it daily (teglich heiligt), not only through the forgiveness of sins that Christ has merited for them (as the Antinomians foolishly believe), but also through the abolition, sweeping out, and mortification of sins, on the basis of which they are called a holy people.\footnote{WA 50.624.29-33, cf. LW 41.143.}

The Church’s holiness cannot be reduced to its reception of forgiveness in Christ by faith, as Agricola contends and as Luther himself had at least suggested in the recent past.\footnote{See, e.g., the 1531/5 Lectures on Galatians (WA 40/1.197.23-7-198.14 [Dr], LW 26.109): “The Church is indeed holy, but it is a sinner at the same time (simul)... Therefore we are not said to be holy formally, as a wall is said to be white because of its inherent whiteness. Inherent holiness is not enough. Therefore Christ is our entire holiness (Christus igitur est tota sanctitas nostra); where that inherent holiness is not enough, Christ is enough.” Note that even in this text, Luther does not deny the reality of formal holiness. Rather, he denies that it is sufficient in itself to make a person truly holy. Only Jesus Christ can do that—and he does. Thus in the handwritten notes (WA 40/1.198.1-2 [Hs]) we find: Inherens sanctitas ist zu infirma. ubi ista non satis inherens, satis est Christus. Cf. David S. Yeago, “ECCLESIA SANCTA, ECCLESIA PECCATRIX: The Holiness of the Church in Martin Luther’s Theology,” Pro Ecclesia 9/3 (2000), 331-54.} Rather, the Church ransomed by God’s blood (Acts 20:28) is ein heilig Volck because it has den Heiligen Geist, who works real holiness in God’s forgiven people by ridding them of sin, which he abolishes, sweeps out, and kills. Amidst the ongoing controversy of the late 1530s, Luther maintains his firm insistence on the “grace” of forgiveness through faith in Christ but now adds a vigorous complementary emphasis on the Spirit’s sanctifying “gift” (described concretely by the Spirit’s works, though not here by the word Gabe).

The Reformer’s culminating summary statement nicely captures his theology of grace and gift in its ecclesiological key:

There is always a holy Christian people on earth, in whom Christ lives, works, and rules per redemptionem, through grace (gnade) and the forgiveness of sin, and the Holy Spirit, per vivificationem et sanctificationem, through daily purging of sin and renewal of life (erneuerung des lebens), so that we do not remain in sin but can and should lead a new life in all kinds of good works, and not in old evil works, as the Ten Commandments or the Two Tables of Moses demand.\footnote{WA 50.625.23-29, LW 41.144, alt.}
In short, for Luther redemption through Christ and renewal by the Spirit, forgiveness and holiness, grace and gift—never one apart from the other—together transform guilty and vitiated sinners into *Gottes volck*, the holy Christian people who are the Church of God. To put this pointedly, Luther is here claiming that the “grace” of forgiveness and justification in Christ cannot bear the whole weight of the Church’s being and life on its own. Only foolish Antinomians believe that forensic justification isolated from the Spirit’s renewal is the article by which the Church stands or falls. In Luther’s considered judgment, it is the trinitarian theology of grace and gift, taken as a creedal whole, that attests the fullness of the Gospel’s saving power and thus comprises the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*. “He who does not believe rightly in Christ is not Christian or a Christian; he who does not have the Holy Spirit against sin is not holy; therefore, they cannot be ‘a Christian holy people,’ that is, *sancta et catholica ecclesia.*”

Luther proceeds to an extensive and rich exposition of the nature of the *Christliche heiligkeit* worked by the Spirit in the Church. Drawing on Acts 15:9 as he had at SA III.13, Luther first establishes a basic proposition: Christian holiness is found

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502 WA 50.625.2, LW 41.144.
503 This famous phrase is not quite Luther’s own, though in high polemical pitch vis-à-vis Roman Catholic legalism (as opposed to Agricola’s antinomianism) he said it in substance again and again. Take, e.g., his preface to the third Antinomian Disputation (WA 39/1.489.4-6, ATD, 139): “As you have already frequently heard, and still hear today in lectures, as well as in sermons, so we now also say, that the article of justification (*locum iustificationis*) is without doubt the head and summary of Christian doctrine”; or the preface he wrote in 1538 to his great 1531 *Lectures on Galatians* (WA 40/1.33.7-9, LW 27.145): “In my heart there rules this one article (*iste unus regnat articulus*), namely, faith in Christ. From it, through it, and to it all my theological thought flows and returns, day and night.” For the history of the formula, see Theodor Mahlmann, “Zur Geschichte der Formel ‘Articulus Stantis et Cadentis Ecclesiae,” *Lutherische Theologie und Kirche* 17/4 (1993): 187-94.
504 WA 50.625.12-15, cf. LW 41.144.
505 WA 50.626.15, LW 41.145.
“when the Holy Spirit gives (gibt) people faith in Christ and through it sanctifies them, Acts 15:9, that is, he makes a new heart, soul, body, work, and nature (er macht neu hertz, seel, leib, werck und wesen), and writes the commandment of God not on stone tables but in hearts of flesh, II Cor. 3:3.” Although Luther refers expressly to 2 Cor. 3:3, he draws the imagery of the new heart inscribed by the Spirit with God’s law from Ezek. 36:26-7 and Jer. 31:33. This collation of texts affords Luther the occasion to unfold the Spirit’s regenerating and sanctifying operations in the concrete terms of the Decalogue’s Two Tables: the First pertaining to the life of the soul in relation to God, the Second to the renewed person’s bodily existence in human society.

To write the First Table’s commands in the human heart, the Spirit-vivificator “gives (gibt), effects, and works” faith, hope, and love in the inmost parts of a spiritually dead son of Adam. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, Luther calls these gifts the “tres virtutes theologicas, the three heubt tugent of Christians,” and explains that the “new holy life in the soul (neue heilig leben in der seele)” created by the Spirit consists in them. Is this the traditional language of infused supernatural virtue? As Eero Huovinen has rightly argued—against Joest’s personalist interpretation—Luther’s staunch anti-Pelagian contention that the Spirit’s gift comes to the undeserving gratis sine nobis ab extra does not at all require that it does not really enter in nobis to renew and transform vitiated human nature. The Finnish scholar rested his case mainly on

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506 WA 50.626.15-19, LW 41.145, alt.
507 Alluding to John 6:63, Luther states that the Spirit as Sanctificator oder vivificator must do this, since “the old Adam is dead and cannot do it, and in addition has to learn from the law that he is unable to do it and that he is dead; he would not know this of himself.” WA 50.626.33-36, LW 41.146.
508 WA 50.626.30-34, LW 41.146, alt.
509 Eero Huovinen, “Der infusio-Gedanke als Problem der Lutherforschung,” in Oswald Bayer, Robert W. Jenson and Simo Knuuttila, eds., Caritas Dei. Beiträge zum Verständnis Luthers und der
the basis of Luther’s relatively early 1520 disputation de fide infusa et acquisita, in which Luther defines and approves the former while energetically rejecting the latter.\textsuperscript{510} In our text from 1539, the mature Luther is still plainly describing the real inner renewal of man’s vitiated nature by the Holy Spirit, who makes a new heart by fashioning a “new holy life in the soul” through the gifts of faith, hope, and love. Though he does not use the term \textit{gratia infusa}, the ease with which he speaks the traditional language of the theological virtues and his clear assertion that the \textit{neue heilig leben} consisting therein really exists \textit{in der seele} argues for the enduring and profound affinity of Luthers’ theology of the \textit{gabe/donum} with the transformational concerns of the broad Augustinian tradition.

That said, the Spirit-worked “gift” of new holy life in the soul is intrinsically ordered to the believer’s restored relationship with God. This is clear from the way Luther describes the Spirit’s renewing operations by aligning each of the virtues with a faculty and/or activity of the soul. Thus the Spirit gives (\textit{gibt}) true knowledge of God by illumining (\textit{erleucht}) the soul with true faith.\textsuperscript{511} He gives (\textit{gibt}) strength and comfort to the conscience through hope.\textsuperscript{512} He gives (\textit{gibt}) true fear and love toward God, so that we “love, praise, thank, and honor him for all that occurs, good or evil.”\textsuperscript{513} In short, the soul’s new and holy life of faith, hope, and love is life together with the God whom the renewed soul trusts, hopes in, and loves. All of which, as we know from

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{WA} WA 50.626.19-20, LW 41.146.
\bibitem{510} WA 6.85-98; e.g., 85.7, 20-1: 2. \textit{Fides acquisita sine infusa nihil est, infusa sine acquisita est omnia... 11. Fides... infusa est spiritus vitae. 12. Etiam sola fides infusa satis est ad iustificationem impii.}
\bibitem{511} WA 50.626.19-20, LW 41.146.
\bibitem{512} WA 50.626.22-27, LW 41.146.
\bibitem{513} WA 50.627.27-30, LW 41.146.
\end{thebibliography}
chapter 1, is redolent of Luther’s protological anthropology: Adam had the divine image “in his substance,” that is, in the natural perfections of his psychological faculties; but the true glory of the image shined forth in the fact that by means of these faculties he was naturally capable of receiving (and in fact did originally enjoy) the gift of communion with God. To be sure, in On the Councils and the Church the verba have shifted somewhat from Luther’s lectures on Gen. 1-3; but I submit that the res is in essence the same.

As for the Second Table, Luther adds that the Holy Spirit “also sanctifies the Christians in the body.” This too pertains to the material content of the sanctifying gift. The Spirit who restores communion with God through the soul’s new holy life effects renewal in Christian character as it takes shape in one’s relationships with other people “in the body.” Thus the Spirit gives (gibt) to God’s holy Christian people

... that they are willingly obedient to parents and rulers; that they behave in a friendly, humble way, and are not wrathful, vindictive, or malicious but patient, friendly, obliging, brotherly, loving; not unchaste, adulterous, lewd but chaste and modest, with wife, child, and servants or without wife and child. And on and on: they do not steal, are not usurious, avaricious, do not cheat, etc., but work honorably, support themselves honestly, lend willingly, and give and help whenever they can. Thus they do not lie, deceive, and backbite, but are kind, truthful, faithful, and trustworthy, and do whatever else God’s commandments demand.

Such is the concrete shape of the “new life” which the Holy Spirit works in the body, in accord with the commands of the Second Table. Together with the new holy life in the soul, this is die Christliche heiligkeit, “the Christian holiness,” to be found in the Church of God. Rarely understated, Luther adds bluntly: “People who are not like

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514 WA 50.627.1, LW 41.146.
515 WA 50.627.2-9, cf. LW 41.146.
516 WA 50.627.10-12, LW 41.146.
this should not count themselves Christians, nor should one comfort them (as if they were Christians) with much babbling about the forgiveness of sins and Christ’s grace—as die Antinomer do.”\footnote{WA 50.627.14-17, cf. LW 41.147.} In dogmatic terms, Christ’s Gnade only avails amongst the people made holy by the Spirit’s Gabe.

That might sound a little jarring, or at least perplexing. But Luther’s adamant stance against lawlessness and his robust account of Christian holiness is not just the product of his polemical context in the late 1530s. Rather, it is the result of his carefully measured and deeply held theology of grace and gift brought to bear upon the pressing pastoral/theological demands of that context. Farther on in the third part of On the Councils and the Church, Luther returns to his theology of grace and gift, reinforcing the reality of holiness in the Christian life and at the same time putting it in proper relation to the Christian’s ongoing need for the grace of forgiveness. The Holy Spirit

... effects in us a daily sanctification and vivification in Christ, and that according to the First Table of Moses, which we thereby fulfill (Die erfüllen wir hie durch), although not as abundantly (reichlich) as Christ has done. But we always follow after him (Wir Folgen aber jmer nach), under his redemption or the forgiveness of sins, until we too shall one day become completely holy (gantz heilig) and no longer need forgiveness. Everything is directed toward that goal.\footnote{WA 50.642.33-643.2, cf. LW 41.166.}

The Spirit’s sanctifying and vivifying gift empowers believers to fulfill the Law, not as richly as Christ himself kept it but in earnest imitation of him in discipleship (Folgen nach) and with hearts set on the eschatological goal of perfection in holiness. On that great day, forgiveness will no longer be needed. But in the meantime, those who follow Christ by the Spirit’s “gift” stand under his forgiveness—“grace”—so that what
is lacking in their real but imperfect fulfillment of the Law is covered by his redeeming blood. There is, however, no “grace” for the impenitent rebel against the Law, the false disciple who despises the Spirit’s gift and sins boldly in the name Christ’s grace.

Forgiveness covers the true disciple of Jesus Christ, who remains a sinner not because he breaks the law willfully but because he does not yet keep it perfectly. The hidden premise, and the key to Luther’s real “simul”—as in the Smalcald Articles and the Disputations—is the lex peccati that the Christian has and feels, but which he fights against by the Spirit’s might and which God pardons for the sake of Christ. The unwanted companion of his “flesh” keeps the disciple back from the abundant law-keeping which the law requires and which Christ alone performed. But despite this, it does not keep the disciple from peace with God. Christ’s abundant grace in redemption sees to that, so long as by the Spirit’s gift he continues and makes progress in the Nachfolge Christi that is Christian sanctification. “Thus we constantly grow in sanctification (jmer fort wachsen in der Heiligung) and always become the more a new creature (stets je mehr ein neue Creatur werden) in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). This means ‘grow’ and ‘do so more and more’ (2 Pet. 3:8).”

3.3. The Relic of the Holy Cross

The heart of On the Councils and the Church’s third part consists in a highly creative (and in ways bitterly ironic) explanation of how the Gospel of forgiveness in Christ and holiness by the Spirit becomes visible in history as God creates, sustains in being,

59 WA 50.643.24-6, cf. LW 41.166. In a brief but revealing appeal to what Melanchthon called the law’s “third use,” Luther here states: “We need the Decalogue not only to apprise us of our lawful obligations, but we also need it to discern how far the Holy Spirit has advanced us in his work of sanctification and by how much we still fall short of the goal, lest we become secure and imagine that we have now done all that is required.”
and sanctifies his Church through the seven “relics” or “sacraments” bestowed upon it: the Word of God, Baptism, Eucharist, the Keys, the Pastoral Office, Prayer/Praise, and the Holy Cross. These “marks” of the true or evangelical Church are—tellingly—at once the “principal parts of Christian sanctification” (heubtstueck Christlicher heiligung). For, as Reinhard Hütter has argued, Luther holds that it is by means of these seven sanctifying parts, relics, or sacraments in the Church that “the Holy Spirit effects in us a daily sanctification and vivification in Christ.” In section 3.2, I attended directly to the Spirit’s sanctifying operations and bypassed Luther’s treatment of the means employed by the Spirit in this work. Because of its special relation to his mystical theology of holiness, not least as it is displayed in the lives of the saints in the Lectures on Genesis, I now turn briefly to Luther’s remarks on the seventh and last of the relics, dem Heilthum des heiligen Creutzes.

The holy cross stands out somewhat from the other relics: unlike the Word, Baptism, Eucharist, etc., where the emphasis lies on the externality and objectivity of the Spirit’s sanctifying means, the holy cross refers primarily to subjective experiences of suffering in the way of Christ (Matt. 16:24-27, John 12:24-26), indeed, to sharing in Christ’s sufferings (cf. Rom. 8:17-18, 2 Cor. 1:5, Phil. 3:10, Col. 1:24, 1 Pet. 4:13). For this

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520 WA 50.643.2-3, LW 41.166: “I would even call these seven parts the seven sacraments,” but Luther prefers “the seven principal parts of Christian sanctification or the seven relics” because the word “sacrament” has been misused. Unlike the word Heilthumb? Luther’s irony is thick throughout the third part of this work.
522 WA 50.643.5, LW 41.166.
524 WA 50.642.1, LW 41.164.
very reason, it is in discussing the last relic that Luther engages what I refer to in this study as his “mystical theology” (or spirituality) of holiness. In such contexts, Luther steps beyond bare dogmatic description of the Spirit’s operations to speak from within these operations themselves, attesting the spiritual or experiential reality of conformity to Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection. In so doing, however, Luther’s spiritual teaching fills out his dogmatics of the “gift” by specifying its course in the lives of the saints with greater precision and depth. It is one thing to affirm broadly that the Holy Spirit sanctifies a soul by mortifying and vivifying it, and quite another to narrate the hard and narrow ways and means of the donum’s progress through “every misfortune and persecution, all kinds of trials (allerley anfechtung) and evil (as the our Father prays) from the devil, world, and flesh, inward sadness, timidity, fear, outward poverty, contempt, illness, weakness, suffering.” Such is a sample of the pieces of the holy cross which Christians must endure, “in order to become like their head, Christ.”

Hence the dogmatic and creedal skeletal structure of the Reformer’s theology of sanctification through the Spirit is filled with the mystical marrow of the holy cross. “When you are condemned, cursed, reviled, slandered, and plagued because of Christ, that makes you holy (das macht dich heilig), because it kills the old Adam and teaches him patience, humility, meekness, praise and thanks, and joy in suffering.” Sharing experientially in the holy cross is the means used by the Spirit to mortify the remnants of Adam’s sinful flesh in the saints; in the midst of this suffering with and for Christ,

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525 WA 50.642.1-4, LW 41.164.
526 WA 50.642.4, LW 41.164.
527 WA 50.642.27-30, cf. LW 41.165.
the new creature—who is patient, humble, meek, glad, etc.—comes to life. As I noted in chapter 1, Rom. 5:3-5 figures prominently in this connection, and Luther cites it compactly here: *wie Ro. 5, ‘Tribulatio spem &c.,’ it is in and through suffering that the Christian “learns to believe, trust, hope in, and love God.”*\(^{528}\) That is to say, it is by means of the holy cross that the “new holy life in the soul”—born anew of the Spirit and consisting in faith, hope, and love—comes more and more into its own. The dregs of the old life inherited from Adam progressively die by partaking in Christ’s death on the cross, and the new life in the risen Christ revives, increases, and grows precisely through the mystical experience of this death.\(^{529}\) “That,” says Luther, “is what it means to be sanctified (*geheiliget*) through the Holy Spirit and renewed to the new life in Christ (*erneuet zum neuen leben in Christo*).”\(^{530}\) Thus the mystical theology of the holy cross comprises the inner spiritual content of Luther’s dogmatics of the gift.

4. Grace, Gift, and the “simul” in select lectures on Genesis (1540—44)

In chapter 1, I introduced Luther’s theology of grace and gift by examining texts from his 1535 lectures on Gen. 1 and 3. This theology of forgiveness in Christ and restoration to holiness by the Spirit, which we have now seen displayed in three prominent texts from the late 1530s, pervades Luther’s sprawling lectures on Genesis. Rather than attempting an exhaustive study of Luther’s theology of grace and holiness as it stands in the lectures, which might end up exhausting me instead,\(^{531}\) I will examine here two

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\(^{528}\) WA 50.643.31-2, LW 41.165, alt.

\(^{529}\) As Mannermaa has it (*Der im Glauben gegenwärtige Christus*, 134), “the cross of Christ and the Christian’s cross belong together organically.”

\(^{530}\) WA 50.643.30-1, cf. LW 41.165.

\(^{531}\) In addition to the texts studied in chapter 1 and presently, see, e.g., WA 42.194.17-18, LW 1.262; WA 42.199.12-39, LW 1.269-70; WA 42.201.37-202.8, LW 1.273; WA 42.248.14-27, LW 1.338; WA 42.9-24, LW 1.349-50; WA 42.289.32-291.21, LW 2.39-41; WA 42.347.1-9, LW 2.120; WA 42.352.1-11, LW
select loci dating from the 1540s where the interrelation of grace, gift, and the “simul” is especially vivid and clear.


In Gen. 24:1-4, Abraham commissions his senior servant to secure a wife for his son, Isaac, from among his kindred in Mesopotamia. For Luther, this occasions a long discussion of a burning issue in Wittenberg at the time: parental authority over the marriages of their children, and the legitimacy of secret betrothals entered into without parental consent. This, in turn, leads to a more general consideration of the nature of marriage, procreation, and sexual desire or concupiscentia that unfolds along traditional Augustinian lines. The fact that Abraham, being like a Luther a good Augustinian on the matter at hand, “did not deny that concupiscence is a sin” which requires “the medicine of marriage” (medicinam coniugii) thus forms the immediate

2.127; WA 42.406.32-4, LW 2.204-5; WA 42.440.9-11, LW 2.250; WA 42.448.3-10, LW 2.261; WA 42.452.14-25, LW 2.266-67; WA 42.454.9-10, LW 2.269; WA 42.477.13-14, LW 2.301; WA 42.483.7-29, LW 2.309; WA 42.491.1-4, LW 2.320; WA 42.533.32-6, LW 2.378-9; WA 42.539.8-10, LW 2.386; WA 42.550.28-554.11, LW 3.4-8; WA 42.666.35, LW 3.165; WA 43.34.5-36.31, LW 3.222-25; WA 43.65.7-17, LW 3.265-66; WA 43.67.34-68.4, LW 3.269; WA 43.97.39-98.22, LW 3.311-12; WA 43.114.4-116.26, LW 3.333-36; WA 43.118.36-40, LW 3.339; WA 43.130.18-131.1, LW 3.355; WA 43.167.7-9, LW 4.44; WA 43.258.7-8, 35-40, LW 4.169-70; WA 43.316.12-17, LW 4.252; WA 43.358.9, LW 4.310; WA 43.443.19-445.18, LW 5.22-24; WA 43.454.37-455.12, LW 5.38; WA 43.471.38-472.19, LW 5.62-3; WA 43.572.12-19, LW 5.208; WA 43.575.18-576.35, LW 5.212-14; WA 43.588.26-589.37, LW 5.232-33; WA 43.606.25-608.9, LW 5.257-60; WA 43.612.12-28, LW 5.266; WA 43.617.16-35, LW 5.273-4; WA 43.649.33-650.8, LW 5.320; WA 44.13.6-8, LW 6.18; WA 44.53.1-5, LW 6.72; WA 44.71.39-72.12, LW 6.97; WA 44.128.11-25, LW 6.171-2; WA 44.142.37-41, LW 6.193; WA 44.187.10-12, LW 6.252; WA 44.191.32-39, LW 6.258; WA 44.300.39-301.13, LW 6.402; WA 44.310.29-41, LW 7.12; WA 44.356.5, LW 7.75; WA 44.374.5-12, LW 7.100-1; WA 44.392.8-26, LW 7.126; WA 44.400.13-25, LW 7.137; WA 44.402.1-6, LW 7.139; WA 44.430.23-33, LW 7.177; WA 44.490.33-491.15, LW 7.258; WA 44.493.3-494.34, LW 7.261-3; WA 44.505.37-508.30, LW 7.278-82; WA 44.525.11-526.6, LW 7.304-5; WA 44.531.31-40, LW 7.313; WA 44.552.27-33, LW 7.340; WA 44.567.25-568.3, LW 7.360; WA 44.585.6-11, LW 8.8; WA 44.591.4-10, LW 8.16; WA 44.593.42-594.9, LW 8.20; WA 44.602.12-24, LW 8.31-2; WA 44.608.38-40, LW 8.40; WA 44.612.11-18, LW 8.45; WA 44.701.1-21, LW 8.67; WA 44.737.10-11, LW 8.216; WA 44.739.9-10, LW 8.219; WA 44.740.6-11, LW 8.220; WA 44.748.39-749.6, LW 8.232; WA 44.766.15-22, LW 8.255; WA 44.769.7-14, LW 8.259; WA 44.774.35-775.11, LW 8.266-7; WA 44.775.35-776.20, LW 8.268-9; WA 44.822.9-19, LW 8.329-30.

context for two concise and typical expositions of the Reformer’s theology of grace, gift, and residual sin in the Christian.533

(1) In the first, Luther begins by deploring the indecency of the male and female sexual organs and the vileness of their act, which together evince the harsh reality that “human nature has been terribly corrupted” by the fall.534 The ignominia and summa impuritas of fallen sexuality is an evil “implanted” (insitum) in human nature “by the vice of the origin” (vicio originis), and cannot be entirely emended or avoided in this life even in the married state.535 This is cause for grief and lamentation in the saints.536 Like St. Paul at Rom. 7:18, they therefore confess that they find no good in their flesh; but like the same apostle at 1 Cor. 9:27, they resolve to pummel their body and reduce it to servitude.537 The inexorability of fallen sexuality’s malum insitum does not, for Luther, justify passive acquiescence on the Christian’s part in the lasciviousness of his residual flesh. To the contrary, it summons the saint to battle for sexual purity: “with all zeal” he is to “throttle libidines, repress and detest concupiscentia, and strive for purity and chastity (pudicitia et castitas).”538

Although Luther does not mention the Holy Spirit in this passage, his exhortation to sexual holiness embodies the familiar Pauline struggle of the saint’s spiritus with his flesh that stands at the center of the Reformer’s theology of the “gift.” On the heels of his citation of Rom. 7:18, Luther proceeds immediately to the complementary theology of “grace” in Jesus Christ, the promised “Seed” of Gen. 3:15.

533 WA 43.306.16-8, LW 4.238.
534 WA 43.306.28-9, 34-5, LW 4.238.
535 WA 43.306.21, 34, LW 4.238.
536 WA 43.306.21, 36-8, LW 4.238.
538 WA 43.306.35-6, LW 4.238.
“But afterwards”—that is, after one has zealously throttled, repressed, detested, and lamented his sexual desire, and striven no less zealously for purity and chastity—

... one must apprehend and invoke the Seed on whose account God has blessed us, in order that the remnants of sin are not imputed (ut reliquiae peccati non imputentur). For there is no condemnation (nihil damnationis) for those who are in Christ Jesus [Rom. 8:1].

The libido- and concupiscence-battling believer has the reliquiae peccati, for they are the antagonists against which he fights in his spiritual struggle for chastity. But because the sin-fighting saint grasps hold of the evangelical Seed promised to Eve and Abraham (Gen. 22:18), God’s blessing undoes Adam’s curse; and the dregs of Adam’s original sin left over in the saint—in this case, repressed, hated, and subdued sexual desires—are not reckoned to his account propter Christum. After quoting Rom. 8:1, Luther further explains that Paul “does not say nihil peccati, but nihil damnationis.”

The “sin” is there, in its residual form as the saint’s flesh; and the fragmentary and overruled remnants of Adam’s sin which constitute the saint’s flesh are intrinsically evil, sinful, and damnable. But so long as (a) the saint fights against the Rom. 6-7 styled peccatum that afflicts and grieves him, and (b) apprehends Jesus Christ the sin-bearer by faith—and indeed is found by faith to be in Christ Jesus—the sin that remains in his flesh is pardoned, and the condemnation it deserves by right is clear taken away by God’s grace in Christ. Here, then, is another case of Luther’s real “simul” as an account of the faithful Christian in a state of grace and gift. “Sin” is there as an unruly (and intrinsically guilty) affective force to be reckoned with. But through the Spirit’s battle-empowering “gift,” the sin that thus remains in the saint is overruled as

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539 WA 43.306.40-307.1, LW 4.239.
540 WA 43.307.2, LW 4.239.
he or she advances in purity and holiness; and, so long as he stays in the fight against it, the sinful *libidines* and *concupiscentia* that remain in this repressed state are forgiven by God’s “grace” in and for the sake of Jesus Christ. That the saint’s “gift”-empowered battle against his flesh is the real spiritual condition *sine qua non* for his remaining in a state of “grace” becomes quite clear in the immediately succeeding lines of the lecture:

Otherwise we will pursue (*sectabimur*) the work of the flesh, fornication, and adultery, and relax the reins (*laxabimus frenum*) for libido, and thus apprehend (*apprehendemus*) the matter while excluding the blessing (*exclusa benedictione*).\(^541\)

In this grim presentation of the alternative to holiness, Luther employs the same terms as before but carefully reverses them to set forth the logic of the forfeited “blessing” of grace in Christ through consent to sinful desire. Instead of reining in (*frenandae*) his *libidines*, striving for (*sectanda*) purity and chastity, and apprehending (*apprehendendum*) Christ the blessed Seed,\(^542\) the “gift”-forfeiting, sin-consenting erstwhile Christian relaxes the reins, strives after the realization of his evil desire, and apprehends his object. In so doing, and because he so does, he loses the blessing or “grace” of condemnation’s removal in Christ. In the apt example of 2 Sam. 11 taken up in the 1538 addendum to SA III.3, when David lies with Bathsheba, faith and the Spirit depart, and the “simul” breaks down.

(2) On the very next page, Luther leaves behind these considerations specific to sexual sin and broadens his scope to engage the conflict with the *Antinomi*, still dragging on at this point in mid 1540. He explains Agricola’s position as a

\(^{541}\) WA 43.307.2-4, cf. LW 4.239.

\(^{542}\) WA 43.306.35-40.
misinterpretation of Rom. 8:1, the very verse that factored so critically just above in
the course of Luther’s exposition of his own theology of “grace”: *non dicit [Paulus] nihil
peccati, sed nihil damnationis.* By contrast, the Antinomians wrongly assert “that sin
has been forgiven, that *nihil est damnationis,* and that therefore *peccatum est nihil,* or
has been completely done away with (*sublatum*), Rom. 8[:1].” Luther continues:
“They do not understand that righteousness and the forgiveness of sins is in the midst
of sins (*in mediis peccatis*), but think that sins are completely done away with
(*sublata*).” Now, extracted from its context, this is just the sort of *Lutherrede* that
proponents of a “radical” or “paradoxical” theology of justification might make much
of: in the midst of his sins, the total sinner is nonetheless righteous. But this,
ironically, amounts to asserting a brand of antinomian theology the likes of which
Luther everywhere opposes in the 1530s and 40s—including this very text—by failing
to account for the highly specific nature of the *peccata* that encompass the Christian
graciously possessed of the *iustitia fidei.* Once more, for Luther these “sins” are the
remnants of sin adhering in (or simply comprising) the saint’s flesh, that is, the
disordered desires to which he does not yield consent so long as he remains—by the
Spirit’s gift—in Christ.

Luther’s ensuing counter-exposition of St. Paul’s meaning at Rom. 8:1, in which
he cites Rom. 7:19, 24, and 25, leaves no room for doubt on this score. When the
Apostle admits that he serves “the law of sin” (v. 25) and that he cannot do the good
he wants to do (v. 19), this does not mean that he commits actual sin, or that he is

543 WA 43.307.2, LW 4.239.
544 WA 43.308.10-12, LW 4.240.
545 WA 43.308.15-6, LW 4.241.
powerless to do the good in any sense at all, but is nonetheless forgiven and righteous simul. Rather, on Luther’s reading, Paul’s real meaning comes to this:

“I serve the law of sin.” Likewise: “I do not do the good I want,” that is, many vicious affections and motions adhere to me (haerent in me multi viciosi affectus et motus), [for example,] security, doubt, impatience in adversities.546

The “good” that Paul “wants” is to be set perfectly free from the vicious affections, emotions, impulses, etc., which comprise the lex peccati, which he “serves” by the very fact that he still experiences and suffers these sinful passions against his own spiritually regenerate and holy will (7:22). In aggregate, these vicious and vexatious affections are the “sin” that St. Paul has in his flesh, yet which cannot bring him into condemnation so long as he remains in Christ by not consenting to them. Luther concludes the substance of his reply with another striking “simul”-type claim which, on further examination of his own explanation of the same, bears out the Augustinian interpretation of Rom. 7 that the Reformer has been upholding all along:

Therefore those who have been justified and have the forgiveness of sins are sinners (sunt peccatores), because they complain that they cannot do what they want [Rom. 7:19]. They fight, they resist concupiscence and the inhering disease (inhaerenti morbo), they crucify the flesh [Gal. 5:24], and nevertheless they are not able to be completely set free (non possunt penitus liberari), as Paul exclaims: “Wretched man, who will set me free from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24)547

The justified are proved to be sinners, not because they commit sin, but because amidst their struggle to crucify the flesh they complain (conqueruntur) about the fact that they are not yet fully liberated from the sinful desires against which they fight. In other words, the justified are shown to be sinners precisely because they are really (though inchoately) holy, fighting against “sin,” lamenting its ongoing presence, and

546 WA 43.308.28-31, LW 4.241.
547 WA 43.308.35-39, LW 4.241.
greatly desiring the day when they will at last obtain what they already want (Rom. 7:19), to wit, to be completely set free from sin, and to enjoy the eschatological peace of uncontested and incontestable holiness.

Tying his polemics against Agricola back to the question of marriage and sexual desire raised by the text of Gen. 24:1-4, Luther summarizes the matter thus: “marriage is holy, and Paul says 1 Tim. 2:15: ‘child-bearing women are holy, but if they remain in faith,’ that is, if they believe in Christ and fight with the Serpent, that is, if they are chaste and fight against the vicious motions of the flesh (vicious motibus carnis).” In short, married Christians are “holy” if (a) they believe in Christ for the “grace” of forgiveness and justification that is found in him, and (b) battle against the vicious (and vexatious) operations of their residual flesh, and for chastity and purity, in the strength of the Spirit’s “gift.”

4.2. On Gen. 42:7 (mid 1544)

“Just as there is nothing more beautiful in Holy Scripture than Genesis as a whole,” effused Luther in 1543 as he began to exposit the hagiography of St. Joseph, “so also this example is outstanding and memorable among the rest of the stories of the patriarchs.” Luther’s high esteem for the Joseph saga in Gen. 37—50 is due in large part to his profound admiration for the real holiness of life evinced in the patriarch amidst the great vicissitudes he first endured and then enjoyed. When the reader finds him in Gen. 42, Joseph has just been raised up from the Sheol-Schul (“hell-school”) of

549 On Gen. 37:1. WA 44.234.2-4, LW 6.313.
his sanctifying sufferings and exalted to the vice-regency of Egypt. His impoverished brothers bow unwittingly (and in fulfillment of young Joseph’s dreams) before the man they murdered in intention and banished to exile in fact. Joseph holds their fate in his hands, and resolves to show them mercy. But first, he must labor to ensure that they have been suitably humbled, and brought to a true knowledge of the depth of their sin. So he toys with them, hiding his identity and stringing them along till Gen. 45:1, when the fratricidal brothers—crushed by guilt and remorse, and at their wits’ end—at last hear the evangelical words: “I am Joseph!”

In the wise, powerful, and merciful exercise of this “game,” playful to Joseph but sheer death and hell to his brothers, Luther finds not only an example of true holiness, but a pattern of God’s “marvelous” dealings with his saints (cf. Ps. 4:4 and 67:37 Vg; farther on this theme in cp. 4.1 below). Indeed, as Luther introduced his lengthy and for our purposes rather rich comments on Gen. 42:7 sometime in mid 1544, he stated at the outset that it is “the Holy Spirit’s principal design in this history”

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552 WA 44.466.9-13: *Hic enim videmus Joseph fratres suos mirabiliter tractare et ludere cum iis ludum quendam mirificum, sed talem tamen qui ipos vehementer humilitat, et exercet, ac res magnas et serias secum trahit. Ea enim ratione perducuntur ad agnitionem peccati et periculo mortis et inferni obiiciumt.*
to display through Joseph’s manner of handling his brothers “the wonderful spectacle and certain and faithful example of God’s way of governing in the saints (administrationis Dei in sanctis).”\textsuperscript{553} Thus in the old Luther’s still keen and active exegetical imagination, the brothers kneel before Joseph as fallen but impenitent men kneel before the holy God, who, in his mercy, intends to cause in them a contrition and exact from them a confession suitable to the gravity of their hidden wickedness, not to destroy but to save them in Christ. To do this, Joseph must “pretend that he is alien toward them (alienum se simulabat erga ipsos), and speak roughly with them,” as Gen. 42:7 reads in WA 44.\textsuperscript{554} Rather like a Tauler, a Gerson, or a Staupitz, Luther the mystical Seelsorger would have his students know that “in trials (in tentationibus) God conducts himself toward his saints just as Joseph conducts himself toward his brothers,” namely, with an apparent harshness that masks his true intention “to search out their repentance and thus drive them to an acknowledgment of their sin and to the mercy of God.”\textsuperscript{555} Here is the well-known movement in Luther’s theology from God’s legal and wrathful opus alienum—itself already a token of grace hidden sub contrario—to the gracious and evangelical opus proprium, long based on Isa. 28:21 Vg. but now embedded within the text of Gen. 42:7 and exemplified in the divine comportment of Joseph with his brothers.

\textsuperscript{553} WA 44.466.5-7, cf. LW 7.224.
\textsuperscript{554} WA 44.465.31, cf. LW 7.224. The translation of v. 7 given here is puzzling. In the 1529 Wittenberg revision of the Vulgate, we find (WA DB 5.62.33): agnovisset eos, quasi ad alienos durius loquebatur. The 1532/45 German translation of the Pentateuch reads (WA DB 8.168.7): er sahe sie an vnd kand sie, vnd stellet sich frembd gegen sie, vnd redet hart mit yhn, vnd sprach zu yhn, wo her kompt yhr? The translation in WA 44, as well as the interpretation Luther bases upon it, seems to follow the German Bible rather than the Vulgate revision.
\textsuperscript{555} WA 44.466.13-21, cf. LW 7.225.
This, then, is the exegetical and spiritual context that shapes Luther’s elaboration of his theology of grace and gift in the lecture on Gen. 42:7. Two further prefatory remarks are required, however, to clear up an ambiguity in the text. In light of my argument thus far, the impenitent fratricides would presumably stand before Joseph/God as “total” sinners, like fallen David before the renewal of his repentance and faith. Yet it is the ongoing presence of residual sin in the baptized, faithful, and “graced” Christian, and the need for God’s fatherly chastisements to progressively remove it through the Spirit’s “gift,” that dominates Luther’s lecture. That is, the theology Luther draws out of his exegesis assumes that the brothers are already in a state of grace and gift. What are we to make of this?

First, I draw attention to the way Luther’s theology of predestination lies just beneath the surface of some critical remarks in the lecture. The theme of God’s fatherly affection for his afflicted but chosen children fills the lecture on Gen. 42:7, primarily on the basis of Heb. 12:3-11 (also Jas. 1:12) and the Staupitzian pastoral theology that Luther builds upon it:

Thus the Epistle to the Hebrews (12:5-7) teaches: “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him. For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives [Prov. 3:11-12]. If you endure punishment as sons, God offers himself to you (vobis offert se Deus)... When you are exercised by various difficulties and hardships of every kind, consider that God is playing with you, and that this game is wonderful for you and delightful to God. For if he did not embrace you with his fatherly heart (paterno animo vos complecteretur), he would not play with you this way. Therefore this is proof of ineffable mercy (ineffabilis

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556 See, e.g., WA 44.474.17-21, LW 7.236: “They are smug, and they are not mindful of the atrocious sin of which they were conscious, as though they had never committed a sin against their decrepit father or their innocent brother... These coarse fellows have not done penance (die groben gesellen non agunt poenitentiam.).”

557 WA 44.467.5-10, LW 7.226.
misericordiae) toward you, that you are in the number of those in whom God delights (delectatur), with whom they are his delights (deliciae). This is the scriptural and traditional language of the Augustinian doctrine of election by free grace: God’s affection and delight for the numeros electorum results in the grant of mercy to the same; embraced by God’s fatherly heart, his adopted children endure the disciplines he knows will best fit them to “share his holiness” (Heb. 12:10); and in the process, the very chastisements that seem to manifest his anger and wrath testify rather of his ineffable mercy and strong love for the adopted child in whom he delights. This election by the Father’s love is the eternal spring from which both Christ’s grace and the Spirit’s gift flow to God’s chosen ones. So, God knows what the impenitent but predestined fratricides do not, namely, that he has chosen them as his own sons and therefore purposed to forgive and cleanse them from their sins. And whereas Luther, in keeping with the Augustinian tradition, typically disavows the possibility of knowing one’s election with certainty—with Staupitz, this is to be sought in Christ’s wounds by faith, and confirmed experientially by one’s own heart-wounds endured in Anfechtungen—as hagiographic interpreter of Genesis, he has

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558 WA 44.467.1-4, 21-25, cf. LW 7.226.
559 The grace of adoption is implicit in Heb. 12’s language of “sonship” (cf. Heb. 2:11-12, 2:16-17, 6:12, 6:17, 9:15, 11:7, 13:1), but in that passage it is not linked to election as it is in Rom. 8:14-30 and Eph. 1:4-5. When Luther goes on to say that God “gives you his promise, Word, and sacrament as most certain symbols and testimonies of grace, that he has adopted you as his son” (WA 44.467.25-7, LW 7.226), he probably has these and other texts, e.g. Gal. 3:25-4:7, in mind.
560 de servo arbitrio 7.8, WA 18.772.39, Packer, 297: gratia ex proposito seu praedestinatione venit. Cf. praed. sanct. 10.19: Inter gratiam porro et praedestinationem hoc tantum interest, quod praedestinatio est gratiae praeparatio, gratia vero iam ipsa donatio.
561 See, e.g., civ. dei 11.12 (CCSL 48.333, Bett. 444): “Can any man be sure that he will persevere to the end in the practice of righteousness, making progress in it? No one can, unless he is assured by some revelation from him who, according to his just but secret decision, instructs only a few, but deceives no one.”
562 In addition to the above-cited excerpt, in the lecture on Gen. 42:7 Luther also states that “the sense of divine wrath is a sure sign of life” (WA 44.472.14-5, LW 7.233) and that “one must carefully impress on those who are afflicted that God is not angry with them and that what they interpret as
certain knowledge of the patriarchs’ election to grace and gift, adoption and glory. In every respect—in their election by grace; in the grievousness of their sin; in the consequent renewal of their repentance and faith through the gratuitous bestowal of God’s free grace and gift; in the interpreter’s scripturally revealed knowledge of their true situation *sub specie aeternae praedestinationis*—the brothers’ case closely follows St. David’s, which Luther cites as a spiritual parallel.\(^{563}\) I submit that this functions as something of a (for the most part) hidden premise in the lecture on Gen. 42:7, freeing Luther to blur the distinction between God’s operation in bringing a “total” sinner to repentance and faith, and his similar but distinct operation in purging away the sin that remains in the saints.

Second, in Luther’s eyes the fact that the brothers have smugly ignored or even forgotten their past actual sins strongly evokes the surreptitious nature of the remnants of original sin in the saints, which lurk in secret until God brings them out into the open through his fatherly chastisements. The loving Father takes no pleasure in his rod, “but the sin that adheres in nature (*peccatum haerens in natura*) is hidden from our eyes, and he brings it to light” through the gift of affliction.\(^{564}\) In the saints, all sins, actual and residual, have been forgiven and covered by grace; but the residual sin has not yet been completely cleansed away. This is a sobering reality that the flesh-bearing saints are exceedingly prone—like Joseph’s brothers—to forget. “Although we don’t care about these [dregs] and do not groan (*gemimus*) because of such a

desertion is acceptance and the surest proof of divine grace, since he chastises every son whom he receives” (WA 44.474.10-3, LW 7.235). This is a wise and ever-present theme in Luther’s pastoral theology.

\(^{563}\) WA 44.468.39-469.11, LW 7.228-9.

\(^{564}\) WA 44.468.22-8, cf. LW 7.228.
disgraceful fall, yet God sees. Therefore he tries to purge our impure nature.”\(^{565}\) It is this parallel between the brothers’ smug forgetfulness of their actual sin on the one hand, and the furtive and self-deceiving quality of original sin’s “dregs” (fex) on the other, that makes the circumstances of Gen. 42:7 such fertile ground for Luther to set out his theology of grace and gift, in the spiritual context of the saints’ ongoing purgation through the endurance of Joseph-like *opera aliena*.

I turn now to the two foremost presentations of Luther’s dogmatics of grace and gift in the lecture on Gen. 42:7. Rather tellingly, they bookend a concise summary of the Reformer’s objections to the Roman Catholic doctrine of penance, which comes complete with a reminiscence of the 1517 *Ablaßthesen* and a quotation of the first: “When at the beginning of the theses which I published I taught that the whole life of believers is repentance (*totam vitam fidelium esse poenitentiam*), the papists were driven almost to madness.”\(^{566}\) In 1544, Luther’s objections are in essence unchanged. But in the intervening twenty-seven years, his formal presentation of Rome’s twofold error in *doctrina poenitentiae* has arguably gained clarity by its correlation to his theology of grace and gift. In the first place, Rome errs by teaching that original sin is not only forgiven (*remissum*), but also taken away (*ablatum*) in baptism. Nothing intrinsically sinful is left over in the baptized, only the morally neutral “tinder” (*fomitem*) or “a certain natural weakness” (*naturalem quandam infirmitatem*).\(^{567}\) Rome

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\(^{565}\) For *gemimus*, cf. Rom. 8:26. WA 44.469.28-35: *Remissa quidem et tecta sunt peccata omnia, sed nondum expurgata, ac haeret in nobis non tantum libidinis, superbiae, odii, iracundiae et aliarum cupiditatum crassior fex, sed etiam interiiora illa mala, et occultae maculae, dubitatio de Deo, diffidentia, impacientia, murmuratio, quae tum demum se aperiunt, quando vexatur conscientia lege et terroribus peccati. Ac nos quidem ea non curamus, nec gemimus propter tam faedam labem, Deus autem videt, ideo conatur naturam immundam purgare.* Cf. LW 7.229.

\(^{566}\) WA 44.473.11-2, LW 7.234.

\(^{567}\) WA 44.473.13-4, LW 7.234.
therefore focuses exclusively on the removal of actual sins through sacramental penance, and says nothing “about purging out sin” (de expurgando peccato) in lifelong, daily, Thesis 1-styled repentance. 568 This will be met with his theology (and mystical spirituality) of the “gift.” In the second place, Rome teaches that actual postbaptismal sins confessed to and absolved by a priest must be expiated “by good works and satisfactions, vigils, prayers, monastic vows, etc.” 569 In fact, “a far greater expiation and satisfaction is required, viz., the Son of God.” 570 This is the evangelical theology of “grace.” In short, as he saw the matter, Luther’s opponents (a) derogated the glory of redemption and justification in Christ to their own penitential works, thus obscuring “grace,” and (b) “were too little concerned about purging out sin,” 571 thus reducing the heart-transforming, nature-renewing power of the Spirit’s “gift” to the mere externalism of virtue and piety.

(i) The first of the two bookends is the more colloquial, as Luther imagines our Lord God’s own explanation of the matter:

Then the Lord says: “I pardon you freely, without any merits on your part, neither on account of contrition, nor on account of satisfaction. For there is no sin that can be expiated or, if I may so say, satisfied for by us, but only through the Son of God. But this I will do: when I forgive you your sin, I will make you an heir and son of the kingdom of God, that I may declare my love toward you. But in this way: I will first wash away your filth. I must first wipe and wash you (Ich muß dich vor wischen und waschen)!" Thus a mother does not place her baby into a cradle without first washing and cleaning it. Nor does the baby’s wailing and weeping prevent her from washing it. 572

568 WA 44.473.15, cf. LW 7.234.
569 WA 44.473.15-20, cf. LW 7.234.
571 WA 44.473.22, LW 7.234.
572 WA 44.472.39-473.5, cf. LW 7.234.
The riches of God’s “grace” of forgiveness are free, lavished upon the undeserving for the sake of the expiation and satisfaction that are through the cross of God’s Son. But the Father’s saving purpose does not terminate in even this great grace. For he intends not only to forgive but to wash away our filth, cleansing his adopted children from the pollution of their sins—in spite of their foolish cries, amidst the unrecognized gift of purifying suffering, that he stop doing this—with all the loving care of a diligent mother, and in this way preparing and fitting his children to inherit the kingdom he has promised them.\(^{573}\) This is the work of God’s “gift,” ordered to the glory of his coming kingdom. In short, concludes Luther, we have been called to God’s kingdom, we have the forgiveness of sins, we are sons and heirs of God—now, in the present, by God’s “grace” in Christ; but there still adheres (\textit{haeret adhuc}) in us the indolence and sloth of body and soul alike, “a plague which God determines to remove in our whole life.”\(^{574}\)

(2) The second of the two bookends expressly employs the quasi-technical terms \textit{gratia} and \textit{donum} and integrates Luther’s mystical theology of affliction into the overarching theology of grace, gift, and residual sin:

We have been received into grace (\textit{gratiam}) through baptism, not only for the forgiveness of sins but also for purging them out. Forgiveness is free, which takes place on account of God’s Son alone, without any worthiness, merit, or contrition on our part. Vexation, distress, tribulation, mortification follow this forgiveness; they all pertain to this end, that sin may be abolished (\textit{aboleatur peccatum}), so that it has not only been forgiven and pardoned by divine grace (\textit{gratia}) and mercy, but may also be purged out by the gift of the Holy Spirit.

\(^{573}\) See the similar text at WA 44.469.34-8, with its allusion to Rev. 21:27: \textit{Deus autem videt, ideo conatur naturam immundam purgare, sic cogitans: Tu quidem illuminatus et baptisatus es, sed adhuc foetes et multis magnis vicis plena est caro tua, ideo mundare eam me oportet: Nam quod immundum et inquinatum est, non intrabit regnum coelorum}. Cf. LW 7.229.

\(^{574}\) WA 44.473.6-9: \textit{Sic nos vocati sumus ad regnum Dei, habemus remissionem peccatorum, sumus filii et haeredes Dei, sed haeret adhuc in nobis ignavia et veternus corporis et animi, quam luem cogitat Deus tollere in universa vita nostra}. Cf. LW 7.234.
in order that you may learn to understand how great is the malice and perversion of human nature. For that darkness and blindness is innate in us, and permits us to recognize neither our misery nor the immense mercy of God; but it is a certain stupor, which completely oppresses our body and soul. To take this away, the fiercest upheavals are needed, which shake out this sloth and indolence. For this a sharp bur reed is needed, to arouse in us, with the Holy Spirit co-operating (cooperante spiritu sancto), acknowledgment and admiration of God’s infinite kindness and of the immense love with which he has embraced us.\footnote{WA 44.473.35-474.7: \textit{Sumus enim recepti in gratiam per Baptismum non solum ad remissionem peccatorum, sed etiam ad expurgationem. Remissio est gratu\textit{a}, quae contingit propter solum filium Dei, sine u\textit{ll}a dignitate, merito et contritio\textit{ne} nostra. Hanc remissionem sequitur vexatio, angustia, tribulatio, mortificatio, quae omnia eo pertinent, ut aboleatur peccatum, ita ut non solum sit remissum et condonatum divina gratia et misericordia, sed etiam dono spiritus sancti expurgetur et ut discas intelligere, quanta sit malicia et depravatio humanae naturae. Caligo enim et caecitas illa \textit{n}obis innata nec miseria\textit{m} nostram nec misericordiam Dei immensam nos sinit agnoscere, sed est stupor quidam, qui penitus oppressit corpus et animam nostram. Ad hunc tollendum opus est vexationibus vehementioribus, quae excutiant veterum et ignaviam hanc, Es gehort ein scharpffer ygels kolk dazu ut excitent in nobis cooperante spiritu sancto agnitionem et admirationem infinitae Dei benignitatis et immensi quo nos complexus est amoris. Cf. LW 7.235.}

Free forgiveness, flowing from God’s mercy and secured through and for the sake of God’s Son—this is “grace,” as Luther twice calls it here. But the sinner’s reception into God’s grace by baptism is ordered to the abolition of sin by the Spirit’s “gift.” The trouble is, the remnants of original sin, innate in fallen human nature and not yet entirely removed by baptism, blind the saints from realizing either the sinfulness of sin or the immensity of God’s merciful love in Christ. The Father has embraced them in love through the death of his Son, but residual sin’s operations are so stealthy and soporific that the completely forgiven but only partly renewed saints need to be shaken out of their stupor by the “fierce upheavals” which their wise and good Father sends to further their sanctification. As in the third part of the \textit{On the Councils and the Church}, so here, suffering in its various forms is the experiential means employed by the Holy Spirit to co-operatively advance the progress of the “gift” in the lives of the saints.
I conclude my reading of the lecture on Gen. 42:7 with three observations. First, the only “simul” that fits what Luther says here about grace, gift, and afflictive but fatherly chastisements is that of the partial or Augustinian variety, which centers on the progressive abolition of residual sin. Peccatum haerens in natura absconditum est ab oculis nostris. This is why Luther cites Ps. 90:8 prominently (cf. Ps. 19:12-13). God sees the secret or hidden sins of the flesh that the graced and gifted saints cannot see, precisely because they are advancing in real holiness through habitually refusing consent to the fleshly desires that they are aware of. Take an example: with the Spirit’s help, an adolescent saint kills sexual lust. But without realizing it, he becomes proud of his victory, and forgets both the abiding sinfulness manifested in this very boasting and the immensity of God’s grace and love toward him, who embraces the proud little saint as his dear child nonetheless, and knows full well how he will cure the boy of his pride. Hence it is people who are really growing in holiness who need the gift of purgative afflictions. “To us,” teaches Luther as he explains Ps. 90:8, “the deformity and foulness of vicious nature is unknown. Therefore, in order to manifest it and purge it, God uses violent and bitter remedies. If he is to sweep out the evil, he must take a broom and sharp sand and scrub until the blood flows.”

Second, for all the forcefulness of the Father’s agency in purging his adopted children through the Spirit’s gift, we must not lose sight of Luther’s cooperante spiritu

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576 WA 44.468.26-7, LW 7.228.
577 WA 44.468.28-31, LW 7.228.
578 WA 44.468.31-34: Nobis vero deformitas et foeditas naturae viciosae ignota est. Itaque ad manifestandum et purgandum eam utitur Deus remedis violentis et acerbis. Soll er das malum außfegen, so muß er nemen ein Strowisch, und ein scharpffen sand, und schewren, das blut hernach gehet. Cf. LW 7.228.
sancto. By the operation of the gift, the Spirit does not secure progress in holiness through abolishing or overriding the saint’s own agency. Rather, the Spirit quickens and sustains in being the renewed spiritual agency by which the believer undergoing purgatorial afflictions mortifies his flesh and clings by faith and hope to the God who—contrary to the saint’s present sense of abandonment—has given himself to the believer in the Promise. In the depths of hellish spiritual suffering, it is God’s vivifying Spirit who sees to it that the “faintly burning wick” (Isa. 42:3) of faith does not go out, to be sure; but the Spirit-gifted believer himself exercises this faith, in co-operation with the Spirit. This spiritual cooperatio is the occasion for the graced deepening of that most Lutheran of virtues, to wit, defiant hope in the promise of the gospel heroically exercised amidst extreme Anfechtungen.

Third, this restoration to spiritual agency, which entails both a deepening grasp of the sheer wickedness of sin and a growing astonishment at the goodness of God, brings us back from Gen. 42 to Gen. 1-3. The “sin” exposed in the saints through affliction is Adam’s, which became their own by natural inheritance but which, after their regeneration by the Spirit in the Last Adam, remains operative in their residual flesh (the “old Adam”) contrary to their own renewed and holy will. In affliction, the Spirit brings the saint face to face with the dreadful consequences of Adam’s

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579 Even amidst the heated polemics of de servo arbitrio, when Luther stresses the Spirit’s sovereign work emphatically, he does not abolish Spirit-empowered human cooperation. WA 18.754.8-15 (Packer, 268): Homo antequam renovetur in novam creaturam regni spiritus, nihil facit, nihil conatur, quo paretur ad eam renovationem et regnum; Deinde recreatus, nihil facit nihil conatur, quo perseveret in eo regno, Sed utrunque facit solus spiritus in nobis, nos sine nobis recreans et conservans recreatos, ut et Iacobus dicit: Voluntarie genuit nos verbo virtutis suae, ut essemus initium creaturae eius; loquitur de renovata creatura. Sed non operatur sine nobis, ut quos in hoc ipsum recreavit et conservat, ut operaretur in nobis et nos ei cooperaremur. Cf. WA 18.634.37-9 (Packer, 102): si Deus in nobis operetur, mutata et blande assibilata per spiritum Dei voluntas iterum mera lubentia et pronitate ac sponte sua vult et facit, non coacte.
ruination, and of his own share in them all. But in and through this painful and mortifying humiliation, the Spirit quickens the saint into deepened trust in the gospel of grace in Christ; and in so doing, he leads him from the fall in Gen. 3:1ff through the first promise at Gen. 3:15 back to the gladdening and intoxicating experience of God’s kindness and goodness that unfallen Adam enjoyed in Gen. 1-2. He had
“acknowledged God’s goodness, rejoiced in God, and felt safe in God’s goodness,” taught Luther back in 1535; here in 1544, the Spirit’s restorative operations sub contrario lead the affliction-awoken saint to “an acknowledgment and admiration of God’s infinite kindness and of the immense love with which he has embraced us.” In light of his protological anthropology, Luther’s lecture on Gen. 42:7 thus sets forth a theology of the saints’ progressive restoration (by the Spirit’s gift) to the unfallen glory of faithful and holy human persons, men and women who are alive because they live in intimate fellowship with the God whose infinite love embraces them in Jesus Christ.

This, I submit, is Luther’s mature dogmatics of holiness. In the next part of this book, we shall have to see whether my assertions of its deeply Augustinian character hold water.

580 On Gen. 3:1. WA 42.107.16-7: agnoscebat Dei bonitatem, laetabatur in Deo, securus erat in bonitate Dei. LW 1.142-3.
581 WA 44.474.5-7: ut excitent in nobis cooperante spiritu sancto agnationem et admirationem infinitae Dei benignitatis et immensi quo nos complexus est amoris. Cf. LW 7.235.
PART II

ON THE PLACE OF THE “420S AUGUSTINE” IN LUTHER’S EMBRYONIC DOGMATICS OF HOLINESS (WINTER 1515/16)
INTRODUCTION TO PART II
AUGUSTINE AND LUTHER, LUTHER AND AUGUSTINE

The nature of Luther’s debt to—and grasp of—Augustine’s theology of sin and grace has been in dispute since the first days of the Reformation. I have no illusions about settling the matter here. That said, as it has already cropped up plentifully in chapter 2, and as the res ipsa demands, some account must be given of how the Reformer’s mature theology relates to that of the Church’s illustrious doctor gratiae. That is the burden of the second and third Parts of this book. To put it in hugely understated terms, assessing the extent, depth, precision, and appropriateness of Luther’s appropriations of Augustinian theology is a rather difficult and disputatious problem. Augustin bei Luther, Luther und Augustinus, Luther’s Augustinianism: however one frames the issue, this is a hard nut to crack; for in it, historical complexity and confessional conviction are perhaps inextricably intertwined.

This has been so from the initium evangelii, as Luther, probably in imitation of St. Paul (cf. Phil. 4:15), 582 sometimes styled the period of the Ablaßstreit. 583 By 1521, both the Reformer and insightful opponents such as John Eck of Ingolstadt 584 and

583 E.g., the 1545 lecture on Gen. 48:20 (WA 44.711.15-20, cf. LW 8.181): “Toward the beginning of the rebirth of the Gospel (initium renascentis Euangelii), I heard a certain monk—after he’d cast off the papal superstition and heard and clearly understood the purer doctrine—say this: ‘Good God! I never heard anything about the promises in my whole life.’ And he congratulated himself from the heart because he was permitted to hear and understand this word, ‘promise.’”
584 See Eck’s position in the 1519 Leipzig Disputation, in Otto Seitz, ed., Der authentische Text der Leipziger Disputation (Berlin, 1903), e.g. p. 242: Accipio posteriorum sententia Augustini, qui aliquando fuit in sententia Paulini, et tunc dico concupiscentiam illam legem membrorum, quamvis fuerit peccatum ante baptismum, tamen post baptismum non est peccatum... In summa dico concupiscentiam inimicitatem illam et malam valetudinem, legem membrorum, legem carnis, non esse peccatum nec mortale nec veniale, et post baptismum non originale.
Jacobus Latomus of Louvain had come to see that at the heart of the dogmatic controversy provoked by Luther’s theology lay competing evaluations of the nature of evil desire (concupiscencia) in the baptized. Does evil desire in the faithful retain an intrinsically sinful and guilt-bearing quality, as Luther asserted on scriptural but also on Augustinian grounds? Or, as his opponents countered—perplexingly, also on Augustinian grounds—has the power of infused grace denuded concupiscencia of its sinfulness and guilt and rendered it a bothersome and potentially dangerous weakness instead?

Springing up from this central issue were competing theological explanations of why the presence of evil desire in a regenerate person does not separate him or her from the grace of God in Christ. The traditionalists held an uncomplicated position: since postbaptismal concupiscence is no longer “sin” in the proper sense of the word, it does not pose an intrinsic threat to the regenerate person’s fellowship with the holy God. The baptized person only falls away from God’s grace in the event that his free and responsible consent to evil desire ignites the “tinder” of concupiscence into the fire of actual sin and consequently, guilt. Luther’s doctrine, while less straightforward, claimed an equally Augustinian pedigree; and it will be noted that Luther arrived at

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585 J.E. Vercruysse, “Die Stellung Augustins in Jacobus Latomus’ Auseinandersetzung mit Luther,” in M. Lamberigts, ed., L’Augustinisme à l’Ancienne Faculté de Théologie de Louvain (Leuven: University Press, 1994), 7-18, esp. 12-13. Luther’s June 1521 Rationis Latomianae Confutatio or Antilatomus replies to Latomus’ Articulorum doctrinae fratris M. Lutheri per theologos Lovaniensis damnatorum ratio ex sacris literis et verteribus tractoribus of the previous month. In 1533 at table, Luther spoke highly of this worthy opponent: “Latomus has been the one excellent writer against me. Mark this well: Latomus is the one man wrote against Luther; all the rest, even Erasmus, are croaking frogs.” WA Tr 1.202.5-7, #463, cf. LW 54.77. Of course, no one needed to twist Luther’s arm to move him to criticize Erasmus after 1524.

his position, complete with proof-texts from Augustine, several years prior to the outbreak of the Ablaßstreit, as a 1514 sermon\footnote{“On the Feast of the Conception of Blessed Mary the Virgin, and about Congenital Sin,” WA 4.691.30-692.2: Cum dicitur in baptismo originale peccatum dimitti, quamodo ergo tu dicis, quod remaneat et cum eo pugnandum esse? Respondet Divus Augustinus: ‘Dimittitur quidem peccatum gentilium in baptismo, non ut non sit, sed ut non imputetur’. Sicut Samaritanus ille apud Lucam c. decimo, quando infudit oleum et vinum in vulnera semivivi, non statim eum sanavit, sed in stabulum eum posuit. Ita per baptismum omnia peccata tolluntur, sic tamen, quod Deus non imputat: sed non ideo non sunt, immo sananda sunt et coepta sanari. Verum in morte sanantur absolute omnia. See chapter 5.2 below.} and especially the 1515/16 Lectures on Romans amply demonstrate. Luther argued that evil desire in the regenerate is itself sinful and guilty per se, but that it is not imputed or reckoned to the baptized person’s account—on one condition: the mercy of non-imputation only obtains so long as the believer refuses to consent to the sinful desire which puts him in need of this mercy in the first place. Now, as Risto Saarinen has observed, this means that as to the necessity of refusing consent to residual evil desire, the two parties came much nearer to one another than has sometimes been appreciated.\footnote{Risto Saarinen, “Klostertheologie auf dem Weg der Ökumene,” 269-90, on this point esp. 281-8; idem, ‘Desire, Consent, and Sin: The Earliest Free Will Debates of the Reformation,’ in Kent Emery, Jr., Russell L. Friedman, and Andreas Speer, eds., Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages: A Tribute to Stephen F. Brown (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 471-83, esp. 482.} On this point at least, both sides of the Reformation controversy upheld received Christian teaching in the definite shape which Augustine had impressed upon it and bequeathed to the medieval Church.

The real quarrel centered rather in the dispute over the nature of this residual evil desire itself: and, therefore, in the necessity, nature, and role of the non-imputation of this unique kind of “sin” (so Rom. 6:12-14, Rom. 7:7ff, Heb. 12:1, 1 John 1:8) as it is set forth in the teaching of St. David (“the Prophet,” in Luther’s judgment\footnote{Spring 1532 lecture on Ps. 2:12, WA 40/2.297.33-4 [Dr], LW 12.82: Sic Apostolum intelligimus: Paulum, Prophetam: Davidem, Philosophum: Aristotelem.}) and St. Paul (Ps. 32:1-2, Rom. 4:6-8). Being catholic theologians on all
sides, neither Luther nor his sparring partners rested their case on Scripture alone. Each side appealed to various patristic and medieval authorities in defense of their cause, the peerless Augustine being at once the most desirable of all possible patrons and, as it happens, perhaps the most vexingly difficult to claim unreservedly as *totus noster*.590

For what modern Augustine scholars (and not a few Luther scholars) have recognized is that a certain fluidity characterizes Augustine’s position on the nature of evil desire in the baptized and, *eo ipso*, its doctrinal correlate, the non-imputation of evil desire as sin.591 Augustine’s thought on this crucial point developed over the course of his nearly two-decade long battle with “Pelagianism,” prior to 418 facing Pelagius and Coelestius and then till his death in 430 the more resourceful Julian of Eclanum. In general it can be said that in anti-Pelagian writings prior to 418, Augustine’s position seems to favor Eck and Latomus as the better interpreters of the great church father: concupiscence comes from sin and leads to sin in turn, but it is not sin *stricto sensu* apart from the grant of consent (see, *e.g.*, *pecc. mer.* 1.39.70, 2.4.4, 2.22.36, *nupt. conc.* 1.23.25). But in the writings against Julian in the 420s, Augustine’s

increasingly negative evaluations of evil desire as “sin,” and the increasingly high profile of non-imitation (or simply forgiveness) as an ongoing necessity for the saints of God during this fragile life of exile, pilgrimage, and hope, seem rather to favor Luther.\footnote{594} Take this example from c. Iul. op. imp. 3.210, noting that in the context of the preceding §209 it is clear that Augustine has evil desire in the regenerate in mind:

Why is it, I ask, that you say that “concupiscence is not sin”? Do you not see that you thus argue against the apostle? For he demonstrated quite clearly that sin is evil desire (peccatum esse concupiscientiam), where says, “I would not have known sin except through the law; for I would not have known evil desire if the law had not said, ‘Do not desire evilly’ [Exod. 20:17]” (Rom. 7:7). What could be said more clearly than this testimony? what more vainly than your opinion?\footnote{593}

Now, it is not altogether certain whether Luther read c. Iul. op. imp.,\footnote{594} which Augustine wrote through sleepless nights c. 427—30. But it is beyond question that the earlier writings against Julian c. 418/19—421 (nupt. conc. bk. 1 in 418 or 419; nupt.

\footnote{594 So Markschies, “Taufe und Concupiscientia bei Augustinus,” 103: “He can, in some places and above all in his writings against Julian of Eclanum, hold that concupiscence is even true and real sin.” With Markschies, I wish to be clear that the general shift in the “420s Augustine” toward identifying evil desire and “sin” is not uniform. The older usage of the “410s Augustine” persists as well, and the underlying reason why Augustine can shift between the two positions is that amor sui as the universal root of all sin is conceptually quite close to concupiscientia as evil desire (103-4). With a nod to Hamel (II/18-9), Markschies concludes (108) that Luther’s doctrine of evil desire as “sin” is “an attempt to transfer the terminological vacillation of Augustine before the background of a radical conception of ‘sin’ into a consistent theory.” Cf. Risto Saarinen’s rewarding article on Luther’s “Klostertheologie.” Saarinen draws on Markschies’ article, Simo Knuuttila’s Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, and his own expertise in medieval theories of volition and argues that the ambiguity in Augustine’s texts gave rise to two variant traditions: (1) the “Stoic,” which upholds the moral neutrality of the initial pro-passio, and found expression in Johannes Buridan, Bartholomäus Arnoldi von Usingen, and the Council of Trent; (2) the “Gregorian,” which held that the pro-passio already constituted a venial sin prior to volitional consent, and passed through Gregory the Great, Peter Lombard, and no little Klostertheologie to the young Luther. My typology matches up nicely with Saarinen’s: Eck and Latomus fall in the first category predominant in the “410s Augustine,” while Luther falls in the second characteristic of the “420s Augustine.”

\footnote{593 CSEL 85/1.503.11-17 (cf. WSA I/25.381): Quid est, rogo, quod dicis “nec concupiscientiam peccatum esse”? Itane contra apostolum te disputare non vides? Ille namque peccatum esse concupiscientiam satis omnino monstravit, ubi ait, Peccatum non cognovi nisi per legem; nam concupiscientiam nesciebam, nisi lex diceret: Non concupiscis. Quid hoc testimonio clarius, quid tua sententia vanius dici potest? On the significance of Exod. 20:17 for Paul’s argument in Rom. 7:7-25, see sp. litt. 4.6.

\footnote{594 Cf. Hans-Ulrich Delius, Augustin als Quelle Luthers: Eine Materialsammlung (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1984), 189, who notes three possible references.}
conc. bk. 2 in 420 or 421; c. ep. Pel. and c. Iul. in 421) exercised immense influence on the formation of Luther's theology. In the event, a few lines from Augustine's initial sortie against Julian played a large part in setting in motion the series of attacks and counter-attacks that comprise the dogmatic tennis match of the 420s:

... dimitti concupiscentiam carnis in baptismo, non ut non sit, sed ut in peccatum non imputetur. Quamuis autem reatu suo iam soluto, manet tamen, donec sanetur omnis infirmitas nostra.

... the evil desire of the flesh is forgiven in baptism, not so that it no longer exists, but so that it is no longer imputed as sin. Although its guilt has already been unshackled, it nevertheless remains until our whole weakness will be healed.595

Eleven centuries later, these controversial lines from nupt. conc. 1.25.28—together with Augustine's subsequent defenses and explanations thereof in c. Iul.—played a massive role in the Reformation-era struggle for Augustine.596 Present and possessed of decisive dogmatic force already in the 1514 sermon I mentioned above, we shall meet with Luther's idiosyncratic citation of this passage throughout Parts II and III of this book.

595 BA 23.116-8; cf. WSA I/24.46. Peter Lombard cites this text when discussing quomodo originale peccatum dimittatur in baptismo, cum et post sit illa concupiscencia quae dicitur originale peccatum at Sent. II d. 32 cp. 1.6 (Grott. I/513), but he already hinted at it earlier in the same chapter, §2: Nec post baptismum remanet ad reatum, quia non imputatur in peccatum, sed tantum poena peccati est; ante baptismum vero poena est et culpa (Grott. I/511).

596 Grane (Modus loquendi, 35) recognized the disproportional weight of nupt. conc. 1.25.28 in Luther's theology: though Luther only cites it directly in the Romans lectures twice, “aber dafür ist das eine Zitat davon vielleicht das wichtigste überhaupt, das Luther bei Augustin gefunden hat.” Delius (Augustin als Quelle, 182 n. 1568) notes its appearance at WA 2.414.11f; 4.691.32f; 7.110.5f and 345.10-12; 8.93.7f; 17/2.285.16-18; 39/1.95.23f, 121.26f, 125.1-3; 44.508.18f; 56.273.10-274.1; WA Tr 1.140.8f/25f; 5.406.8/14-16. This list is not exhaustive. NB that at WA Tr 1.140.17-27 (#347, Rörer, Summer/Fall 1532), Luther first praises Augustine for having taught truly “about the grace of God,” then explains how his ardor for Augustine cooled after having learned from St. Paul “what the righteousness of faith was.” But then, he states that there are “two principle and best sayings in Augustine” of abiding significance. The first is Luther’s standard rendition of the contentious lines from nupt. conc. 1.25.28: “Die Sünde wird vergeben, nicht, daß sie nicht mehr da sey, sondern, daß sie nicht zugerechnet wird.” In Veit Dietrich’s hand (ll. 8-10): Peccatum dimittitur, non ut non sit, sed ut non damnet et dominetur. (The second is from Retr. 1.19: “Das Gesetz wird als denn erfüllt, wenn das verzogen wird, das nicht geschicht noch gethan wird.”)
From what I can gather, nineteenth-century Luther scholars grasped the fundamental dogmatic issues at stake here, if not always the precise contours of Augustine’s shifting positions in the 410s and 20s. For this reason, the older presentations of Luther’s theology of sin and salvation by Julius Köstlin and Reinhold Seeberg are not far from the position I have argued for in Part I. Much changed with the fortuitous discovery of Luther’s previously unpublished 1515/16 Romans lectures in the Vatican library in 1899. Heinrich Denifle, O.P., the learned medievalist and Vatican archivist, drew core elements of his polemic against Luther der Halbwisser from these lectures, and published his interpretation of the Reformer’s ignorant and heretical theology in his multivolume Luther und Luthertum beginning in 1904. In essence, Denifle picked up the “410s Augustine” championed by Eck and Latomus—and by then, of course, the Council of Trent as well—and argued forcefully that

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599 Session 5 (17 June 1546), the Decree on Original Sin §5: "If anyone says that the guilt (reatum) of original sin is not remitted through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which is conferred in baptism, or even asserts that the whole of that which pertains to the true and proper definition of sin is not taken away (non tolli totum id, quod veram et propriam peccati rationem habet), but says that it is only shaved off or not imputed (tantum radi aut non imputari): let him be anathema. For God hates nothing in the reborn, because there is nothing of condemnation [Rom. 8:1a Vg.] for those who are truly buried together with Christ through baptism into death [Rom. 6:4], who do not walk according to the flesh [Rom. 8:1b Vg.] but, putting off the old man and putting on the new who is created according to God [cf. Eph. 4:24], are made innocent, immaculate, pure, blameless and beloved children of God, heirs indeed of God and coheirs of Christ [Rom. 8:17], so that nothing at all might delay their entrance into heaven. The holy synod confesses and senses that in the baptized, concupiscence or the tinder (fomitem) remains; which, since it is left for the struggle, is not able to harm those who do not consent (consentientibus) and manfully fight back against it through the grace of Christ Jesus. In fact, he who competes legitimately will be crowned [2 Tim. 2:5]. This concupiscence (concupiscentiam), which the Apostle sometimes calls sin (peccatum), the holy synod declares the church catholic has never understood to be called sin because it is truly and properly sin in the reborn (vere et proprie in renatis peccatum sit), but because it is from sin and it inclines to sin (ex peccato est et ad peccatum inclinat). If anyone however holds the contrary:
Luther’s theology from 1515 on perniciously celebrates the invincibility of concupiscence in the baptized: “Die Concupiszenz ist völlig unbesiegbar.”600 This being so, Denifle asserts that Luther’s theology upholds the necessity of consent on the part of the regenerate person to his residual sinful desire. For invincible concupiscence does not merely attract, but defines and determines the will of the justified human being:

Die Concupiszenz kann dann nicht mehr bloß als ein Gewicht oder als eine Lüsternheit erscheinen, durch die der Wille zur Sünde angelockt, nicht aber bestimmt wird, im Gegenteil, sie muß sich als das Grundübel im Menschen aufdrängen, da der Wille unwiderruflich in den Versuchungen zur Sünde in dieselbe einwilligt.601

Concupiscence, then, can no longer appear merely as a weight or a lasciviousness, through which the will is attracted to sin but not determined by it. On the contrary, concupiscence must impose itself as the fundamental evil in the human being, since in temptations to sin the will irrevocably consents to the same.

This sets the stage for an interpretation of Luther’s theology of justification which—in comparison to such benchmarks as the theologies of Chemnitz, Gerhard, or Sartorius,

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a. s.” DEC II/667, my translation. The background to radi is in Julian’s polemics, who charged Augustine with teaching that in baptism the roots of original sin were left intact, as when hair is shaved off one’s head. See c. ep. Pel. 1.13.26 (CSEL 60.445.8-15, cf. WSA I/24.129): “They even say,” says [Julian], ‘that baptism does not give the full forgiveness of sins or take away crimes, but shaves them off (rarare), so that the roots (radices) of all sins are retained in the evil flesh.’ Who but an unbeliever would maintain this against the Pelagians? We therefore say that baptism gives the forgiveness of all sins and takes away crimes; it does not shave them off, neither are the roots of all sins retained in the evil flesh, quasi shavings of hair from the head, whence they grow back again, sins that need to be trimmed.”600

Denifle, I/2.441-2 (original emphasis). Notably, Denifle does not cite a text from Luther’s works to justify this stark claim. The real proof, both for Luther in the construction of his own theology and for Denifle in his interpretation thereof, lies in the fact that Luther himself was overcome by concupiscence in his own experience (442); he was a proud, self-righteous man who culpably failed to seek grace (450-64); und so weiter. Denifle often leaves little for the imagination in his explanations of how Luther’s wickedness and his forensic theology of justification intertwined, e.g., I/2.519: ‘Luther began with the sentence, ‘it is impossible to fulfill the command, You shall not desire’; he ended in the arms of a runaway consecrated virgin with the confession: ‘continence is an impossible thing’; he ended by throwing overboard everything that imposes self-denial or self-overcoming upon us.”

or the *Lutherdeutungen* of Köstlin and Seeberg—was unprecedented at the time
Denifle wrote his big book. (That is, unprecedented amongst modern scholars aspiring
to engage in substantive *Lutherforschung*,\(^\text{602}\) for early polemicists like John Fisher,
Henry VIII, and John Cochlaeus anticipated Denifle’s Luther interpretation in many
respects.\(^\text{603}\)) The “*simul*”-statements that Denifle found peppering Luther’s scholia on
Rom. 4:7 stand at the center of this radical theology of justification.\(^\text{604}\) Since invincible
concupiscence and irreversible consent to sin necessarily rule out the possibility of
real renewal in holiness, justification by faith becomes a purely forensic or “external”
affair. “In reality sinners, but righteous by the imputation of the merciful God,” as
Luther put it in 1515.\(^\text{605}\) Or, as Denifle summarized in 1904:

... die Rechtfertigung sich in ein bloßes äußeres Zudecken des Elendes auflösen
mußte. Von einem *innerlich* gerecht werden, von einer Durchdringung der
Seele durch die Gnade, kurz, wie früher bereits bemerkt wurde, von einer
*Rechtfertigung* konnte keine Rede mehr sein. Luthers Innere ließ keine
ingegossene, heilig machende *Gnade* als eine Wirkung Gottes zu, die uns
*reinigt*, heilt, erhebt, kurz, die ein neues Lebens- und Tätigkeitsprinzip in der
Seele wird.\(^\text{606}\)

... justification had to disintegrate into a mere external covering up of misery.
Of an *inner* becoming righteous, of a penetration of the soul by grace, in short

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\(^\text{602}\) Denifle, who wrote extensive books on John Tauler, medieval universities, and the welfare of the
Church in France during the Hundred Years War (1337-1453), clearly intends to be doing the same
kind of critical historical work in *Luther und Luthertum*. At *e.g.* I/2.447, he states that the recently
discovered Romans lectures are of great importance “für die Lutherforschung.” At I/2.515, Denifle
takes (1) Seeberg to task for his “untenable” account of Luther’s critique of *gratia infusa* (*viz.*, that
Luther rejected it because it attributed not too much but too little to God’s transforming power),
and likewise (2) Dieckhoff for his baseless claim that in the *Ablaßstreit* Luther protested against the
overly lax—not overly rigorous—demand for contrition then regnant in the Church’s penitential
teaching and practice. In hindsight, it is clear that Denifle’s criticisms were wrong on both counts.
But the very fact that he engaged in criticism of major late nineteenth-century Luther scholars
shows that he regarded his own work as part of the ongoing scholarly conversation.

\(^\text{603}\) Bagchi, *Luther’s Earliest Opponents*, 127-8, 159-63, 168-73.

\(^\text{604}\) Denifle, I/2.443-5.

\(^\text{605}\) WA 56.269.29, cf. LW 25.258.

\(^\text{606}\) Denifle, I/2.514-5 (original emphasis). Cf. p. 443: “Von einem innerlichen Gerechtwerden kann
da keine Rede mehr sein; weder die Eingießung der heilig machenden Gnade, noch die Austreibung
der Sünde im Akte der Rechtfertigung haben hier mehr einen Sinn.”
(as has been noted earlier already) of a justification, there could no longer be any talk. Luther’s inner life did not allow for infused, sanctifying grace as an effect of God that purifies, heals, and elevates us, in short, for a new principle of life and action in the soul.

My reader will perhaps recall Luther’s warm treatment in 1539 of “der neue heilig leben in der seele,” which is comprised of the three theological virtues, faith, hope, and love (cp. 2.3.2); but I digress. For now what matters is this: according to Denifle’s interpretation, invincible concupiscence and inexorable consent vitiate any pretended claims that Luther might make to a doctrine of the soul’s real renewal by grace into spiritual life and action; the justified person is a sinner—Punkt—whose “justification” is exclusively external to his being, life, and action, which remain sinful through and through. To illustrate this radical Lutheran simul,” Denifle refers to the sixteenth-century mura spagnole surrounding Milan:

“Christ’s righteousness covered those who are to be justified” (“Die Gerechtigkeit Christi bedeckt die zu Rechtfertigenden”). When God sees the sinner and wants to enter into judgment with him, he does not see him as such. Rather, God sees the wall upon which—as necessity may require—another picture or coloring appears: quickly Christ appears, as he sheds his blood for all and bears the sins of the world; quickly he appears who alone fulfills the law, etc. Behind the wall, the scoundrel may have sinned just as much as it was possible for him to do, he may pursue what he wishes: if only he has confidence that he is well protected and concealed by the wall, and God’s glance is deflected from his inner life and his pursuits by the pictorial representations on the wall, then none of this harms him at all; God forgives him, but the rogue remains! That is the Lutheran justification!

607 Citing Luther in n. 2, Christi iustitia eos tegit, et eis imputatur. The closest match to this that I can find in the Romans lectures is from the scholia on Rom. 7, WA 56.347.9-14: simul Sancti, dum sunt Iusti, sunt peccatores; Iusti, quia credunt in Christum, cuius Iustitia eos tegit et eis imputatur, peccatores autem, quia non implent legem, non sunt sine concupiscencia, Sed sicut egrotantes sub cura medici, qui sunt re vera egroti, Sed inchoative et in spe sani seu potius sanificati i. e. sani fientes, quibus nocentissima est sanitatis presumptio, quia peius recidiant. Cf. LW 25.336 and see below, cp. 3.1.6.

608 Denifle, I/2.516.
Das ist die Luthersche Rechtfertigung! In the end, “the whole thing boils down to the proposition: God declares righteous the person who remains unrighteous; God sees the person who remains immoral as moral.” In short, on Denifle’s reading, there is no “Wiederherstellung (reparatio, restauratio)” in Luther’s theology: no healing grace, no sanctifying gift, no inner renovatio, no real renewal in holiness.

One last matter in regards to Denifle. Having derided Luther for not having read the theological texts of the high middles ages, Denifle was not one to miss the fact that this “modern” (i.e., Ockhamist) Augustinian attempted to anchor his theology in Augustine’s own writings. Indeed, it is one of Denifle’s foremost concerns to show that Luther had no right to claim Augustine as an ally for Reformation theology. In particular, Denifle observes that nupt. conc. 1.25.28 and c. Iul. 2.4.8, 2.5.12, and 6.17.51 were extraordinarily important passages for Luther’s theology; and he devotes some thirty-four pages to proving that Luther was wrong (and mischievous) to claim them in every case. If Denifle does not always go about his work with the care and nuance of a modern Augustine scholar, he does so with great confidence (and such “confidence,” as Owen knew, “is the only relief which enraged impotency adheres unto and expects supplies from”). For example, after dispatching Luther’s interpretation of nupt. conc. 1.25.28 in the scholia on Rom. 4:7, Denifle declares: “St. Augustine therefore says just the opposite of what Luther puts in his mouth.”

Indeed, upon close examination Luther’s erroneous gloss of Augustine’s original
“concupiscentiam carnis” as “peccatum” appears for what it really is: “eine Fälschung,” and an “intentional” falsification at that.\textsuperscript{641} Later on, vis-à-vis c. \textit{Iul.} 2.5.12 as it factors in the Rom. 7:17 scholia, Denifle states that Luther has either “misunderstood” Augustine’s meaning or else “willed to misunderstand” it; and the result is that “an author has probably never been so falsely construed by his pupil as St. Augustine is here.”\textsuperscript{645} Further instances could be multiplied. But for the purpose of my argument, what counts is the insight that protecting heilige Augustinus from being tarred with Luther’s brush was not at all tangential to Denifle’s project. Rather, Saint Augustine—to be precise, the “410s Augustine” of Eck, Latomus, and Tridentine orthodoxy—stands at the heart of \textit{Luther und Luthertum} as the star witness for the prosecution in its historical and dogmatic case against Luther and Lutheranism.\textsuperscript{646}

Denifle wrote before the era of polite ecumenically-sensitive theology had begun, and his unprovoked salvo had the effect of marshaling the deeply offended Lutherans to defend their sainted hero.\textsuperscript{647} With an eye to its long-term impact, the most significant of the replies \textit{contra Denifle} was probably Rudolph Hermann’s 1930 monograph \textit{Luthers These “Gerecht und Sünder zugleich.”}\textsuperscript{648} Engaging his Dominican provocateur often text by text, Hermann’s book necessarily invests great attention in

\textsuperscript{641} Denifle, I/2.483. In n. 1, Denifle cites Domingo de Soto’s like judgment in his 1547 \textit{de natura et gratia} 1.11.48: \textit{Hunc locum praevericatus est Lutherus.}

\textsuperscript{645} Denifle, I/2.487.

\textsuperscript{646} For this very reason, I find reading Denifle an oddly refreshing exercise: dismissive, tendentious, and mean as he often is, the formidable Dominican grasped that dogmatic truth and the catholicity of Church doctrine are invariably at stake in historical evaluations of Luther’s appeals to Augustine. He therefore polemicized against Luther’s would-be Augustinianism with all the commitment and zeal that one could hope to find in a catholic and ecclesial theologian, if not with all the sobriety, generosity, historical nuance, scriptural attentiveness, and evangelical joy one hopes for too.

\textsuperscript{647} Cf. Robert Kolb, \textit{Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher, and Hero.}

Luther’s appropriation of the anti-Pelagian Augustine. But whereas his Reformation-era Lutheran forbearers—including Luther himself—had fought to claim Augustine for their side, Hermann granted no little ground to Denifle’s reading of Augustine’s theology in general in light of the “410s Augustine” in particular. In addition, he labored—like Denifle—to distance Luther from Augustine on the decisive question of the role of consent in the Christian life. (And it will be remembered that in regards to the non consentire concupiscentiis, Augustine’s position did not shift at all during the last decade of his life; accordingly, as Saarinen has seen, the later heirs of either “Augustine” do not disagree on this point.)

The momentous turning-point in Hermann’s argument comes in the course of an interpretation of Luther’s scholia on Rom. 7:17-18. The brooding Augustinian’s explanation of St. Paul revolves around the concept of consent, and he quotes Augustine repeatedly and at length, appealing to his authority to defend an exegesis of Paul that Luther knew cut against the grain of the recentiores doctores. After citing an especially important discussion of the relation between residual sin, non-consent, and non-imputation, which will occupy our attention below, Hermann comments:

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619 Not that the effort to claim Augustine was limited to the Lutherans. Arnoud Visser, Reading Augustine in the Reformation: The Flexibility of Intellectual Authority in Europe, 1500-1620, narrates how Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed theologians, and even Erasmian humanists, all managed to lay claim to Augustine’s authority. The struggle for Augustine continued well into the seventeenth century, Robert Bellarmine being the foremost defender of Trent (and of Augustine’s Tridentine orthodoxy) and numerous evangelical theologians arguing for the Augustinian credentials of the Reformation confessions, e.g., Martin Chemnitz, John Gerhard, John Davenant, and John Owen. I will return to Davenant’s 1631 Disputatio de justitia habituali et actuali in the conclusion of this book.

620 This is the burden of chapters 6-8 in Hermann’s book.

621 Following a lengthy excerpt from c. lul. 3.26.62, which effectively concludes his exegesis of Rom. 7, Luther allows that he takes great comfort in the agreement of his exegesis with Augustine’s, despite what the “more recent doctors” say. WA 56.354.14-26, LW 25.343.

622 WA 56.351.11-17: Concupiscencia sit ipsa infirmitas nostra ad bonum, que in se quidem rea est, Sed tamen reos nos non facit nisi consentientes et operantes. Ex quo tamen mirabile sequitur, Quod rei
“Grave words, which sound just like Augustine!”623 “Really,” he continues, “should Heil und Unheil now again be shifted to the absence or occurrence of our consensus voluntatis?”624 That is just not a possible option for the liberating theology of the Reformation. If Luther means what he seems to mean, it would only lead to the confessional and its casuistry,625 i.e., to Roman Catholicism. Therefore, Luther cannot mean what he seems to mean. Some other explanation of the grave, Augustinisch-sounding texts (and their moral-psychological theory of consent) must be posited; and in the heady days of the Luther Renaissance, nearly thirty years before the publication of Bizer’s *Fides ex auditu* and forty-one before Bayer’s *Promissio*, dismissing Luther’s Römerbrief as vorreformatorisch is not yet on the table.

So Hermann proposes a solution to the problem that he has discovered in the scholia on Rom. 7. The sinfulness of the reliquiae peccati, and the identity of the justified with this sin (infirmitas illa nos ipsi sumus), must mean that there is a kind of incessant consent to sin even in the justified:

Das bedeutet, wenn man so will, *einem immer noch—auch im Gerechten—vorhandenen consensus mit der Sünde*.626

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623 Hermann, 192.
624 Hermann, 192–3.
626 Hermann, 192, continued through 195; the emphasis is Hermann’s. Hamel (II/23), having approached the threshold of a sound interpretation of Luther on this point, pulls back at just the last moment: “Luther in Gegensatz zu Augustin keine Konkupiszenz kennt, die nicht irgendwie, und sei es so verborgen, Willensakt und darum Schuld wäre.” What does Hamel mean by “an act of will”? If, following Hermann, he means consensus voluntatis, I believe he is wrong. But if Hamel means that the regenerate will is itself divided between flesh and spirit, and that in this true but restricted sense the renewed person who is the flesh he bears really does “will” his sinful desires against his holy will—then his Willensakt claim is sound enough. But in that case, Hamel is wrong to differentiate between Luther and Augustine, for they hold the same theory of the affectively divided will. On the face of it, Hamel seems to favor Hermann; but his very good analysis of
“Luther does not of course say that,” Hermann promptly admits. But this is the only sense he is able to make of how Luther’s eerily Augustinian claims about consent square with his radical doctrines of sin, justification, and the “simul.” And, as Hermann had declared when discussing the consent-concept earlier in the book, “Should we find no inner transformation of the Augustinian doctrine in Luther”—which is just the problem facing Hermann in the scholia on Rom. 7:17-18—“then we will have to try to refute Luther by Luther.”628 In taking the crucial step of positing a kind of consent within the residual sin that comprises the saint’s flesh, I grant that Hermann has opposed Luther, but he has fallen short of refuting him; and whether he has come by his opposition to Luther durch Luther is another question entirely.629

Luther’s appropriation of the Augustinian facere/perficere distinction (II/69-71) seems to argue the other way.

627 Hermann, 192.
628 Hermann, 140. At another point (p. 159), when discussing Luther’s appropriation of the facere/perficere distinction, Hermann asks whether this isn’t just the same old Augustinian and ascetic theory, and then declares: “We know ja, that that can’t be the case!”
629 To my surprise, Saarinen (“Klostertheologie,” 282 n. 41) writes that “Trotz vieler neuer Arbeiten bleibt Hermanns Analyse m.E. bei vielen Luther-Stellen die meist nuancierte Interpretation.” His note attends the following, more or less accurate comments on Luther’s interpretation of Rom. 7: “Paulus will mit dem ganzen Willen das Gute, aber wegen des fleischlichen Widerstands kann er nicht mit derselben Leichtigkeit und Spontaneität das Gute verwirklichen, wie er es in seinem inneren Willen wünscht. So kann der Apostel zwar Gutes tun, aber nicht auf vollendete Weise. Diesen Gedankengang Luthers hat Rudolf Hermann exemplarisch herausgearbeitet. Hermann betont [p. 189]: ‘Es fehlt also offenbar nicht an Werken. Sie kommen auch aus einem gereinigten Herzen. Es fehlt innehin nur das eine, dass der gute Wille nicht zur Vollendung gediehen ist.'” I grant that Hermann reads some aspects of Luther’s theology with real insight, the passage Saarinen cites on the reality of good works flowing from a pure heart (despite the resistance of the flesh) being a case in point. That said, on the real issues at stake for the interpretation of the “simul,” I dissent from Saarinen’s general approbation; indeed, his high praise for Hermann puzzles me, since Saarinen’s reading of Luther clashes with Hermann’s at just the same neuralgic points that I will engage in my own argument. At e.g. p. 285, Saarinen observes the complexity of the consent-concept in Luther, credits Hermann for bringing it into the scholarly conversation, then states “dass auch nach der Radikalisierung der augustinischen Harmartiologie die menschliche Zustimmung zur Sünde ein wichtiger Gedanke bei Luther bleibt.” This gives the impression that Hermann and Saarinen hold the same position. But the way in which Hermann reads the “radicalization” of the doctrines of sin and consent in Luther stands at odds with Saarinen’s interpretation, for the German’s assertion of a kind of constant consensus peccato within the saint’s
Prima facie, it would seem more like that he came to his opposition to Luther durch Denifle.

The result of Hermann’s decisive move is therefore rather ironic. For despite his taking up cudgels against Denifle, his interpretation of Luther’s theology of sin and justification is fundamentally akin to Denifle’s own (if not simply derivative therefrom). Denifle insisted that Luther misunderstood—and misrepresented—Augustine; Hermann argued that Luther, despite superficial similarities, had profoundly transformed Augustine’s theology. Denifle argued that Luther viewed concupiscence as invincible, even in the saints, and that the justified irrevocably consent to sin; Hermann, that residual sin presupposes the presence of a kind of consent to sin, auch im Gerechten. Denifle argued that the justification of the concupiscence-conquered sinner must, for Luther, come about by the sheer imputation of Christ’s alien righteousness to his account; Hermann agreed, the difference, of course, being that the modern Lutheran championed what the Tridentine Dominican abhorred.

In a thorough 2001 article, Wolf-Dieter Hauschild argues that Hermann’s book proved to be a watershed in Luther research, and documents how—with few exceptions—its thesis of a radical “simul” comprised of inevitable and incessant consensual sin (semper peccator) and forensic justification sans real inner renewal (et iustus) eventually became a communis opinio in modern Lutheran theology, an agreed

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flesh is deeply corrosive to the robust non consentire peccato which the Finn rightly urges in his article. Perhaps part of the problem lies in the fact that Saarinen seems to assume that the Radikalisierung in question is a post-Augustinian development in the tradition that is not already present in Augustine’s own works: for if this is indeed the case, then Hermann’s efforts to distance Luther from Augustine on this point might not appear to be as problematic as in fact they are.
Charakteristikum of genuinely reformational theologies of justification. As Hermann himself put it in the first sentence of his paradigm-setting book:

The formula “righteous and sinner at the same time” embodies the whole of Lutheran theology.

Indeed:

The concepts themselves with which the formula is concerned, even its very terms, stand so close to the Mittelpunkt of all Lutheran thinking that without reference to them no theological statement of Luther’s can be understood.

—including “Luthers Gottesanschauung.”

Now, if I may borrow a magnificent turn of phrase from Lewis’ The Weight of Glory: as history, Hermann’s exaggerations are self-evidently false, or at least ought to be; but they are true as prophecy. Take, for example, Luther’s view of God: must the “simul” have a say in our interpretation of the theological statement “unus sit Deus in essentia et trinitas in personis” if we are to understand its meaning? But if Hermann’s hyperbolic claims are false as history, Hauschild skillfully narrates how they have had their fulfillment in the subsequent course of twentieth-century historical and dogmatic theology. Hauschild does not quite grasp, however, that what this really amounts to is the startling insight that Heinrich Denifle’s truculent Lutherdeutung has set the terms for much of what modern Lutherforschung and Lutheran dogmatics have taken for granted about the Reformer’s theology of justification vis-à-vis both the sinfulness of the saints and their renewal—or rather,
their lack thereof. For at bottom of Hermann’s Luther is Denifle’s; and at bottom of Denifle’s Luther, and so twentieth-century Lutheranism’s Luther, is a Luther who departed drastically (whether to his eternal shame or his great credit) from the theology of Augustine.634

In the course of expositing the Reformer’s dogmatics of holiness in its maturity, I have asserted (and on a few occasions, proved by textual comparison) that it continues to assume a fundamentally Augustinian form. The old Luther sometimes maintains this himself. For example, in his 1544 lecture on Gen. 42:29-34, he sets out a basic statement of his theology of grace, gift, and “the simul”—viz., sin is forgiven perfectly in baptism but not yet completely taken away—then adds simply, ut inquit Augustinus,635 most likely intending a reference to nupt. conc. 1.25.28. He then proceeds to sketch a christological, soteriological, and in its patristic roots eminently Augustinian interpretation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan636 that is virtually

635 WA 44.508.17-9: “Nature is vitiated. But the papists interpose that it has been healed (sanatam) through baptism and that sins have been forgiven. True enough, but they have not yet been taken away (ablata), as Augustine says.” Cf. LW 7.281.
636 WA 44.508.21-30, cf. LW 7.281-2: “To be sure, the wounds of the half-dead man have been bound up, as the parable in Luke 10:[25-37] has it. Wine and oil have been poured in (infusum), the gift (donum) of the Holy Spirit has begun. Nevertheless, the wounds are still deadly. He has been taken up into care (in curam), that he may be healed (sanetur). But he has not yet been completely restored (restitutus). If you want to say that there is no wound, that there is no danger, find out whether a half-dead man is able to walk, labor, and do the duty of a healthy man. He is carried by the beast on which he has been placed. He does not labor. He does not walk. Thus through baptism, we have been taken upon God’s beast, that is, the most precious sacrifice for us or the humanity of Christ, by which we are carried and accepted once indeed (semel quidem recepti), but we are being cured and healed from day to day (de die vero in diem curamur et sanamur).” For its roots in Augustine, see En. Ps. 30/2.1.128 and 125.15, Io. Tr. 43.2, Sermo 171.2, Trin. 15.27, Nat. grat. 52.60, c. Iul. 1.3.10 and 1.7.32 (referring in both cases to Ambrose, In. Luc. 7.73). Cf. Hamel, I/115-9, II/75-85.
identical to the ones the young theologian had set forth in the very same doctrinal context both in the 1514 sermon\textsuperscript{637} and while exegeting Rom. 4:7 and 7:17 in the winter semester of 1515/16.\textsuperscript{638}

However, for complex reasons that need not detain us here, in general it can be said of the older Luther that he is less invested in citing Augustine chapter and verse than he had been as a young man.\textsuperscript{639} Often enough, the positions he arrived at as a young theologian (through the intricate interplay of scriptural exegesis, patristic study, readings in German mysticism, his own spiritual experiences as an afflicted soul and as a pastor to the same, and dogmatic controversy) carry over into the works of his maturity with little more than a broken trail of bread crumbs indicating the path that led him there. Put differently, the Weimar Ausgabe and Luther's Works are often missing footnotes to (say) Tauler but especially to Augustine, thus giving the impression of a novelty that masks a deeper dependence and therefore obscures the true originality that arose through Luther's fresh engagement with tradition in light of Holy Scripture, philosophical shifts, \textit{experientia spiritualis}, etc.\textsuperscript{640} A good example of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{637} “On the Feast of the Conception of Blessed Mary the Virgin, and about Congenital Sin,” WA 4.691.30-692.2. See note 6 above, and chapter 5.2 below.
  \item \textsuperscript{638} WA 56.272.3-273.2, LW 25.260 (on Rom. 4:7), WA 56.351.11-22, LW 25.340 (on Rom. 7:17).
  \item \textsuperscript{639} For example, 1. in the wake of the 1519 Leipzig Disputation, \textit{sola scriptura} as an operating principle grows in importance and, to the extent that it does so, the \textit{auctoritas patrum} diminishes (though for Luther, as for the other catholic or magisterial Reformers, it never disappears); 2. Luther recognizes and accepts the differences \textit{de imputatione} that distinguish his mature theology of justification from Augustine; 3. as with most all theologians, once Luther has digested a doctrinal truth from the tradition he often simply reiterates it without further comment; 4. this is not merely a matter of practice, but of conviction: for truth, and theological truth above all, is "public" and no one person's private possession (see trin. 3.2 and Paul J. Griffiths, \textit{Intellectual Appetite: A Theological Grammar} [Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009]); 5. particularly in sermons, I think Luther realizes that brandishing patristic erudition sometimes distracts his hearers from the real matter at hand.
  \item \textsuperscript{640} Thus Volker Leppin (\textit{Martin Luther}, 133) argues that it is Luther's ability to connect otherwise previously disparate strains of thought—Augustine, German mysticism, and humanism—that makes for “die besondere Originalität Luthers.”
\end{itemize}
this phenomenon is Luther’s final sermon at Wittenberg on 17 Jan. 1546, where his
trade theology of grace, gift, and residual sin is presented via the medium of
Christus Samaritanus just as it had been in the 1510s and 1544, but now without any
mention on the preacher’s part (or in the critical apparatus) to its roots in
Augustine.641

One great exception to this overall pattern is the role Augustine’s sp. litt. plays
in the famous preface Luther wrote for the 1545 edition of his Latin works. In narrating
his reformational “Durchbruch” to God’s gift of righteousness as the real meaning of
Rom. 1:17, Luther recalls the joy he experienced in finding praeter spem that his
apparently novel—and if novel, heretical—exegesis agreed with Augustine’s own
affirmation of the free gift of iustitia passiva, “with which God clothes us when he
justifies us.”642 Since Denifle’s initial provocations, whole library shelves have been
filled with volumes devoted to explaining the relation between the old Luther’s
memory of his progress to the actual events of the 1510s.643 I am not so foolhardy as to
enter into this fray here, except for two brief observations. First, Luther’s mention of

641 WA 51.125.1-14 [A], LW 51.373.
642 WA 54.186.16-8, cf. LW 34.337, referring to sp. litt. 9.15 (CSEL 60.167.7-8, WSA 1/23.152): iustitia
dei, non qua deus iustus est, sed qua induit hominem, cum iustificat impium. In the context,
Augustine is exegeting Rom. 3:20-24, and here he uses Rom. 4:5 to that end. At sp. litt. 11.18 (CSEL
60.171.5-6, WSA 1/23.154), Augustine cites Rom. 1:17 and explains: iustitia dei dicitur, quod
643 To begin, see Otto Hermann Pesch, “Zur Frage nach Luthers reformatorische Wende: Ergebnisse
iedem, “Neuere Beiträge zur Frage nach Luthers Reformatorische Wende,” Catholica 37 (1983), 259-
87 and 38 (1984), 66-133; Martin Brecht, Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation (1483-1521), trans.
James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985), 221-37; Volker Leppin, Martin Luther, esp. 107-117;
Berndt Hamm, The Early Luther: Stages in a Reformation Reorientation, trans. Martin J. Lohrmann
(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014). I favor Leppin’s argument for a gradual, piecemeal development
rather than the sudden break-through sought for by “early-daters” like Holl and Vogelsang and
“late-daters” like Bizer and Bayer. For my present purposes, it is Leppin’s argument for Luther’s full
acceptance of Augustinian gratia by 1516/17 that counts most, a point that Bayer (Promissio, 140)
fully agrees with despite his contention for a Reformation breakthrough in 1518.
sp. litt. has, I think, had the effect of over-focusing scholarly attention on the role of this single text in the Reformer’s development.644 As I argued in chapter 2, I believe Luther does indeed carry insights gleaned from this comparatively early (412 or 413) anti-Pelagian writing into his mature theology of the Spirit’s gift of inner renewal through the bestowal of spiritual delight. Thus while I in no way mean to underestimate its importance, I do want to suggest that its prominence in the 1545 preface has sometimes distracted scholars from the greater debt Luther owes to Augustine’s works against Julian. Which leads to my second point. In the 1545 preface, Luther follows his happy recollection of finding his theology of justification by grace confirmed in sp. litt. with this major qualification: “Although this was still said imperfectly, and he did not explain everything about imputation clearly, it was nevertheless pleasing that the righteousness of God by which we are justified was taught.”645 To say the least, to teach less than clearly de imputatione was not a small matter for Martin Luther. Is he not taking away with one hand the credit he had just given to Augustine with the other?

Luther is quite right to think that his theology of imputed righteousness is not to found in sp. litt.,646 the whole focus of which is Augustine’s classically

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644 Bernhard Lohse, e.g., argued in 1965 that sp. litt. is the real “hub” for the question of the Augustine/Luther relationship, “since no other writing of the bishop of Hippo stands so close to Luther’s reformation theology as this.” See his “Die Bedeutung Augustins für den jungen Luther,” 15. Leif Grane (Modus Loquendi, 35) likewise asserts that sp. litt. is the most important Augustinian text in terms of its influence on Luther’s theology, and that other anti-Pelagian writings, while by no means inessential, are “subordinate” to it. This, despite the fact that on the same page, Grane notes that Luther cites c. Iul. more than any other work, esp. in the Rom. 7 scholia, and rightly observes the disproportionate significance of nupt. conc. 1.25.28.
645 WA 54.186.18-20: Et quamquam imperfecte hoc adhuc sit dictum, ac de imputatione non clare omnia explicit, placuit tamen iustitiam Dei doceri, qua nos iustificemur. Cf. LW 34.337.
646 As Lohse puts it, Luther “over-interprets” Augustine on iustitia dei in his own Lutheran or “declarative” way. “Zum Wittenberger Augustinismus. Augustins Schrift De Spiritu et Littera in der
“Augustinian,” 2 Cor. 3:6- and Rom. 5:5-centered account of the Christian’s ongoing inner renovation through the grace of the Holy Spirit over against the Pelagian theory of self-cultivated virtue. For this reason, to the extent that the modern student of Luther first identifies the Reformer’s theology of justification with imputed righteousness, and then secondly equates Augustine’s theology of justification with real inner renewal, he or she will conclude—on the basis of Luther’s own authority in the 1545 preface—that despite his eager protestations to the contrary, Luther’s theology really is of a basically different kind than Augustine’s. Now, if due attention is paid to what I have argued is the Reformer’s mature theology of the “gift,” the speciousness of this conclusion appears readily enough: for Luther’s dogmatics of holiness does comprise an Augustinian theology of real spiritual renewal. On the other hand, if the nature of Augustine’s mature position against Julian in the 420s and its role in Luther’s theology from 1514/5 on is fully appreciated, the gap between the Church’s late ancient doctor gratiae and late medieval doctor iustificationis closes further.

To begin to prove this decisively would require, first, a comprehensive study of Augustine’s theology of sin and grace in the 420s, which of course I cannot attempt here; and secondly, an equally comprehensive examination of the texts from Augustine’s oeuvre that shaped the young Luther and left a permanent stamp on his

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Auslegung bei Staupitz, Luther und Karlstadt,” in Kenneth Hagen, ed., Augustine, the Harvest, and Theology (1300-1650) (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 89-109, here 99-100.
theology. In lieu of such a great project, I propose here something of a more modest shortcut.

A handful of Augustinian excerpts figure prominently in Luther’s early scholia on Rom. 4:7 and 7:17-18. On this point, Denifle, Hermann, Adolf Hamel, and Leif Grane are all agreed. In essence, these scholars have—from their different perspectives and to differing degrees, Hamel being the most insightful and sympathetic—argued that Luther’s interpretation of these Augustinian texts was flawed at certain decisive points, and that his appropriation thereof to buttress his in reality highly innovative theology with the much-desired auctoritas patris Augustini was therefore mistaken. My aim in the next two chapters is to closely examine how these excerpts factor in the early scholia, and to argue just the reverse: Luther’s

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647 For all their real strengths, both Hamel’s (Der junge Luther und Augustin, 1934/5) and Pereira’s (Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther on Original Sin and Justification of the Sinner, 2013) studies of Augustine and Luther fall short in this regard. (1) Hamel depends heavily on Reinhold Seeberg’s account of Augustine’s theology in his Lehrbuch (II/53-67), and Seeberg’s one-sided interpretation of Augustine’s theology of justification as inner Gerechtmachung sets up Hamel for over-stated contrasts between the church father and the Reformer (II/85-102). Hamel is also clearly influenced by Hermann’s monograph on the “simul,” which was published in 1930 just a few years before Hamel’s own work, such that at times Hamel’s position approaches the interpretation I will argue for in this book only to hesitate due to the authority of Hermann’s thesis (II/84-5, 132). (2) In his Helsinki dissertation, Pereira states that he intends to focus on the “mature/old Augustine,” i.e., the anti-Julian Augustine (p. 24), and his argument is informed by Timo Nisula’s insightful work on Augustine and concupiscencia. This is a step in the right direction. Still, I think Pereira is hampered by his operating assumption that there is no real development in Augustine’s position after 418 (p. 25); relatedly, Pereira takes for granted the validity of the scholarly prioritization of sp. litt. which I am challenging in this book (see, e.g., pp. 35, 225-43, 294-8). This, I am afraid, means that to some extent Pereira has tied his own hands as an interpreter of Luther, for it is just those refinements which the old Augustine achieves while writing contra Iulianum that animate the young Luther and inspire his theology of sin, grace, and holiness. Further progress is therefore needed in terms of locating the roots of Luther’s dogmatics in the “420s Augustine.” These criticisms aside, I have learned much from both Hamel and Pereira and am in deep sympathy with many of their judgments.

648 Leif Grane, Modus Loquendi, 32-6.

649 With Hamel, Lohse, Grane, Steinmetz, Wriedt, Leppin, Saarinen, and Pereira—pace one of Heiko Oberman’s biggest theories—it is not necessary to posit the existence and influence of a late medieval Augustinian school in order to explain Luther’s Augustinianism, above all because we know that by 1514 or 1515 Luther had read Augustine himself in the 1506 Amerbach edition of his
interpretation of texts from the “420s Augustine” contra Iulianum in 1515/16 is intelligent and sound, and his appropriation thereof therefore carries real weight and force for theologians who practice their art within the Augustinian tradition.\footnote{Ad mentem Augustini, it is a matter of course that any derivative or ministerial authority which Augustine may enjoy as a doctor of the Church stands underneath the magisterial authority of the Word of God. Even so, dogmatic arguments drawn from “proper” and “probable” authorities within the catholic tradition of the Church are nothing to sneeze at. See, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa theologiae} I q. 1 a. 8 ad. 2: \ldots etiam auctoritatibus philosophorum sacra doctrina utitur, ubi per rationem naturalem veritatem cognoscere potuerunt; sicut Paulus, actuum XVII, inducit verbum Arati, dicens, sicut et quidam poetarum vestrorum dixierunt, genus Dei sumus. Sed tamen sacra doctrina huiusmodi auctoritatibus utitur quasi extraneis argumentis, et probabilibus. Auctoritatibus autem canonicae Scripturae utitur propriæ, ex necessitate argumentando. Auctoritatibus autem aliorum doctorum Ecclesiae, quasi arguendo ex propriis, sed probabiliter. Innuitur enim fides nostra revelationi apostolis et prophetis factae, qui canonicos libros scripsierunt, non autem revelationi, si qua fuit alius doctoribus facta. Unde dicit Augustinus, in epistola ad Hieronymum, solis eis Scripturarum libris qui canonici appellantur, didici hunc honorem deferre, ut nullum auctorem eorum in scribendo errasse aliquid firmissime credam. Aios autem ita lego, ut, quantalibet sanctitate doctrinaque praepolJeant, non ideo verum putem, quod ipsi ita senserunt vel scripsierunt. Note Thomas’ appeal to Augustine’s ep. 82.1.3 (PL 33.277), an apt illustration of the Augustinian principles articulated in this reply. Though I doubt Augustine would have credited the philosophers \textit{per se} with any authority at all, as Thomas at least seems to do here: for authority belongs to the Truth, not to the one who perceives and attests him only because he is illumined by him (cf. John 19, 14:6).}

In effect, I am arguing that the young medieval Augustinian picked up in 1515/16 where the old and battle-weary church father left off when he died in 430, and that he intended to do this.\footnote{Thus seconding Pereira’s judgment (p. 38): “When it comes to soteriological and anthropological insights, Luther understood Augustine very well and was much more faithful to him than modern scholars tend to assume he was.”} It will then remain to compare the young Augustinian’s theology of sin and grace with the old and battle-weary Reformer’s dogmatics of works and cites extensively therefrom. The same cannot be said, \textit{e.g.}, of Luther vis-à-vis Gregory of Rimini, who does not seem to have been much noticed by the Reformer until the 1519 Leipzig Disputation. See Hamel, I/9-10, I/1-2; Lohse, “Die Bedeutung Augustins für den jungen Luther,” 15; Grane, \textit{Modus Loquendi}, 24-31; David C. Steinmetz, \textit{Luther and Staupitz: An Essay in the Intellectual Origins of the Protestant Reformation} (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1980), 17, 23-30; Wriedt, “Via Augustini,” esp. 35-9; idem, “Produktives Mißverständnis?” esp. 214-5; Leppin, \textit{Martin Luther}, 65, 93-5; Saarinen’s foreword to Pereira’s book, p. 11; Pereira, \textit{Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther}. But note Oberman’s partial adjustment at \textit{Masters of the Reformation: The Emergence of a New Intellectual Climate in Europe}, trans. Dennis Martin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 71: “Now that the Amerbach edition was being sold at the book fairs in Leipzig and Frankfurt, the coming generation had no desire to travel the detour through Gregory’s writings in order to make Augustine’s acquaintance.”
holiness, as I have set forth the latter in Part I, to see whether my contention for the persistence of these Augustinian appropriations in shaping his theology of grace, gift, and the “simul” right up to his death in 1546 is in fact justifiable. That endeavor I reserve for the third part of this book.
I begin with the scholion on Rom. 7, because Luther’s exegesis of Rom. 4:7 presupposes (and at key moments exhibits) convictions rooted in Augustine’s final interpretation of Rom. 7:14-25 as St. Paul’s autobiographical confession. For Luther’s exegesis of Paul, and indeed for his entire dogmatic and spiritual theology of holiness, it is of paramount importance that the Apostle speaks here “in his own person and in the person of all the saints.” In the marginal gloss on Rom. 7:10, Luther names Nicholas of Lyra et alii as representatives of the alternate interpretation, viz., “that the Apostle is speaking in the person of some befuddled man (hominis obfuscati) and not in his own person,” in effect citing Lyra’s loquitur apostolus in persona generis humani sic obfuscati. In his note in WA 56, Johannes Ficker suggests that at this stage in the young exegete’s development et alii often refers to the great French humanist Faber Stapulensis. This may well be the case; but behind them both lies the influence of Jerome’s interpretation of Paul. Berndt Hamm has shown that Jerome was much...
preferred to Augustine by modish humanists prior to at least 1521. Furthermore, beyond the elite circles of humanism it was not Augustine, but Jerome, who best suited “the performance mentality and merit-orientation of late medieval piety and Frömmigkeitstheologie.” In 1524/5, the looming conflict between Erasmus’ “Jerome” and Luther’s “Augustine” finally broke out into the open. But already in October 1516, shortly after completing his lectures on Romans, Luther had confided his growing concerns with Jerome and Erasmus alike to Georg Spalatin. This being said, it is just as likely that Gabriel Biel (and the medieval theologians whose insights he “harvested” in his Collectorium) as well as the Erfurt philosophers Jodocus Trutfetter and Bartholomäus Arnoldi von Usingen are the real inimici gratiae whom Luther, as of 1515 a voracious reader of Augustine’s anti-Pelagian writings, has in his sights as he sets his hand to explain Rom. 7.

1. The excursus at Rom. 7:7

excellent fathers Cyprian, Nazianzus, Rheticus, Irenaeus, Hilary, Olympus, Innocent, and Ambrose; then perhaps he would not only correctly understand the Apostle, but he would also hold Augustine in higher esteem than he has so far done. Plainly in this I do not hesitate to dissent from Erasmus, because in interpreting the scriptures I esteem Jerome after Augustine, just as much as Erasmus esteem Augustine after Jerome in everything.”

Berndt Hamm, “Hieronymus-Begeisterung und Augustinismus vor der Reformation. Beobachtungen zur Beziehung zwischen Humanismus und Frömmigkeitstheologie (am Beispiel Nürnberg),” in Kenneth Hagen, ed., Augustine, the Harvest, and Theology (1300-1650) (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 127-235, here 156. On p. 157, Hamm adds: “Jerome, the doctor of ascetic virtue, faithfulness to the law, and judgment according to works, displaced in substance (not as a cited authority) Augustine, the doctor of grace and mercy,” and explains that when Augustine is cited as an authority, he is inserted into and interpreted within the popular hieronymianischen virtue, perfection, merit, and reward-oriented framework. Cf. Hamel, II/133-5; Oberman, Masters of the Reformation, 72-4.

Letter #27, 19 Okt. 1516, WA Br 1.70-1, LW 48.23-6. Cf. Letter #57b to Spalatin, 18 Jan. 1518, WA Br 1.133-34, LW 48.52-55, where Luther reiterates the same concerns and directs Spalatin to three of the four works he had listed in the letter from 1516: sp. litt., c. Iul., and c. ep. Pel. See too Luther’s exegesis of Gal. 5:16-17 in early 1517, WA 2.583.27-588.20, where he ominously notes Jerome’s dependence on Origen and cites Augustine contra Iulianum repeatedly.
The long scholion on Rom. 7:7 actually ranges over the entire chapter, as Luther marshals no less than twelve arguments to prove that Paul speaks here in his own person and in the present as “Saint” Paul, a *homo spiritualis*. In v. 7 Vg., Paul writes that he would not have known *peccatum* apart from the law, then argues for this general principle from the particular instance of the 10th Commandment: *nam concupiscentiam nesciebam, nisi lex diceret: non concupisces*. The identification of sin with concupiscence disappears after v. 8 (cf. Eph. 5:5, Col. 3:5), but in the broad Augustinian tradition “evil desire” becomes the key concept for interpreting the *peccatum, malum, lex peccati*, and *caro* that dominate the rest of the chapter (as well as Rom. 6:12-14 and 8:1-14). Luther signals his firm standing in this tradition and his basic concern in the scholion by heading off this section with the three words from St. Paul, *Nam Concupiscentiam nesciebam*. In what follows I will forgo detailed study of each of the many references and allusions to Augustine in the scholion on v. 7 in favor of a few observations that get to the heart of the matter.

(1) First, Luther begins his exegesis not with a thesis of his own, but with a lengthy paragraph comprised of excerpts from *Retr.* 1.23 and c. *Iul.* 2.5.13-14 that aims to establish the genuinely Augustinian provenance of his interpretation of Paul. The paragraph itself begins thus: “That the apostle from this text [v. 7] to the end speaks in his own person and as a spiritual man, and not at all in the person of a merely carnal man, blessed Augustine first asserted richly and firmly in the book against the

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657 WA 56.339.4-6, LW 25.327; the twelve arguments continue to WA 56.347, LW 25.336. Grane (*Modus Loquendi*, 53-6) correctly notes that whereas Augustine locates the beginning of Paul’s present-tense confession at v. 14, Luther reads v. 7 already in this sense and, what’s more, mistakenly thinks that in this respect he follows Augustine. But Grane uses this point as a wedge to drive apart Luther from Augustine with respect to the chapter as a whole, a *non sequitur* both logically and exegetically.

658 WA 56.339.4, LW 25.327.
Pelagians.\(^{659}\) Luther probably has in mind Augustine’s single work in four books *c. ep. Pel.* (c. 420/1). Though he had toyed with the idea earlier, modern scholarship recognizes that this is in fact roughly the time that Augustine began to assert it with real confidence.\(^{660}\) That Luther saw this suggests a certain subtlety on his part as a humanistic and historical interpreter of Augustine, which other scholars have pointed to in his ability to discriminate between genuine and spurious Augustinian works bound up together in the Amerbach edition\(^{661}\) and which Adolar Zumkeller argues had been a distinguishing mark of the O.E.S.A. since Rimini’s day.\(^{662}\) Regardless, what really stands out here is the fact that Luther demurs from staking out a position of his own and presents his exegesis of Rom. 7 as, in literally the first place, an interpretation that stands in intentional continuity with Augustine’s. This is clear from the first sentence right on through the Augustinian excerpts that form the first paragraph, which concludes with Luther pointing to the second half of *c. Iul.* 6 as “the clearest interpretation of all.”\(^{663}\) Only at this point does Luther continue, “But let us elicit these same things from the very words of the apostle.”\(^{664}\) Even then, as we shall see

\(^{659}\) WA 56.339.5-8, cf. LW 25.327.

\(^{660}\) See, e.g., Frederick Van Fleteren, “Augustine’s Evolving Exegesis of Romans 7:22-23 in its Pauline Context,” esp. 109-13, who rightly points to the 417 s. 151-7 as a major advance which is then completed in *nupt. conc.* and *c. ep. Pel.* Van Fleteren’s article depends on M.-F. Berrouard, “l’exégèse augustinienne de Rom. 7:7-25 entre 396-418 avec remarques sur les deux premières périodes de la crise pélagienne,” *Recherches Augustiniennes* 16 (1981): 101-96. Van Fleteren’s excursus on Luther and Augustine vis-à-vis Rom. 7 leaves much to be desired (113-14), and perhaps suggests why he seems so keen to emphasize the more “optimistic” stance that Augustine held in the early to mid 390s (113).

\(^{661}\) Oberman, *Masters of the Reformation*, 74 n. 56, pointing to Luther’s rejection of the *De vera et falsa poenitentia* in Oct. 1516, WA Br 1.65.24-6: Est enim... nihil ab Augustini eruditione et sensu remotius; cf. Brecht, *Road to Reformation*, 96.


\(^{663}\) WA 56.340.3-4, LW 25.328.

presently, the ensuing exegesis is shot-through with express citations of Augustine’s works and implicit allusions to his mature theology. As Hermann, Hamel, and Grane have recognized, Luther’s evident and eager intention in the Rom. 7 scholion is to follow in the exegetical, theological, and spiritual footsteps of *b. Augustinus*. What remains to be seen is whether this intention was well-meant but mistaken, as Hermann and Grane argued, or in fact successfully executed.

(2) We can begin with Luther’s fourth argument, which starts out with v. 16b

\[15\] Quod enim operor, non intelligo: non enim quod volo bonum, hoc ago: sed quod odi malum, illud facio. \[16\] Si autem quod nolo, illud facio: Consentio legi Dei, quoniam Bona est. \[17\] Nunc autem iam non ego operor illud, sed quod habitat in me peccatum. \[18\] Scio enim quia non habitat in me, hoc est in carne mea, bonum. Nam velle, adiacet mihi: perficere autem bonum, non invenio.

Luther’s first concern is to avoid taking Paul to mean that he does the evil he hates and does not do the good he wants—i.e., just what v. 15 says—*moraliter et metaphysice*, “as if he did nothing good but all evil; for taken in a human sense, his words sound that way.” But Paul’s apostolic “way of speaking” (*modus loquendi*) must be carefully attended to. He is not, as Grane rightly emphasizes, speaking as an Aristotelian moral philosopher. But neither is Paul—nor Luther—speaking as a kind of modern existential Lutheran theologian born before his time. Rather, to explain Paul,

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666 WA 56.341.20, LW 25.330.
Luther turns to the very *augustinischer Redeweise* that Grane warns us not to be fooled by,\(^\text{668}\) at the heart of which stands the *facere/perficere* distinction that Luther explains *b. Augustinus li. 3 in fine contra Iulianum copioso docet.*\(^\text{669}\) The reference is to *c. Iul.* 3.26.62, which Luther cites in full as the conclusion to his scholion on Rom. 7, and to which we shall return below. “One must note,” explains Luther, “that the Apostle distinguishes between ‘to do’ (*facere*) and ‘to complete’ (*perficere*), as blessed Augustine teaches.”\(^\text{670}\) In other words, Paul’s meaning is rightly grasped only when the apparent human sense of his words is overcome by the proper “Augustinian” sense that Paul actually had in mind, that Augustine explained copiously at the end of *c. Iul.* 3, and that Luther purposes to carry forward in his own interpretation. And in point of fact, when Luther explains Rom. 7:15-18 he displays a full command of Paul’s *modus loquendi augustinianus*. Paul means

... that he does not do the good as often and as much and with as much ease as he wants. For he wants to act in the purest, freest, and most joyful way, without the vexations of the flesh fighting back. This he cannot do. It is as with a man who proposes to be chaste: he would want not to be assailed by any titillations, and to have chastity with the greatest ease. But this is not permitted by the flesh, which by its movements and thoughts makes chastity most bothersome and acts by its own impure desires, even though the spirit is unwilling (*Inuito spiritu*). He who proposes to keep vigil, to pray, to work for his neighbor will always find rebellious flesh devising and desiring other things. Hence one must singularly note here that the Apostle distinguishes between “doing” and “completing” (*facere et perficere*), as blessed Augustine copiously teaches at the end of *contra Iulianum* book 3. Here, “to do” (*facere*) is taken to mean to try, to devise, to experience desires, to will, etc., such things as without intermission the flesh works against the spirit and the spirit works against the flesh [Gal. 5:17]. For if “to do” meant “to fulfill by a work,” the Apostle would not have said: “I do the evil I do not want, the good I want I do

\(^{668}\) Grane, 80.

\(^{669}\) WA 56.342.6-7, cf. LW 25.330. On the distinction, cf. Hamel (II/69-71) and Pereira (373-80), who rightly observes that it is “one of the cornerstones of Luther’s doctrine of *simul iustus et peccator*” (p. 373) and that “in the righteous sinner there is no consent” (p. 380).

\(^{670}\) WA 56.342.6-7, cf. LW 25.330.
not do,” by which words he most evidently expresses the battle between flesh and spirit. For he wants something other than what he does. That is, he has good pleasure and will (voluntatem) through spiritum, by outpoured charity, prompt toward the good and to hatred toward evil; and nevertheless, with the flesh and adverse concupiscence resisting, he is not able to fulfill and complete this will (voluntatem). For if he would complete and fulfill it, he would work the good without resistance, delightfully; for this is what his will (voluntas) wants. Now, however, he does not work in this way; therefore, what he wants, he does not do, but what he does not want, he does. He, however, who is without a fight and follows the flesh and obeys concupiscences certainly does not resist. He does not say, “I do what I do not want.” He does not delight in what is contrary to what he does, but he delights in what he works. But “to complete” (perficere) is to fulfill what one wants or desires. Thus the Spiritus completes the good it wants when without rebellion it works according to God’s law, which is not of this life, because “to complete I do not find” [v. 18]. But flesh completes when, with delight and without repugnance and difficulty, it works according to concupiscences. And this is of this life, rather of death and the perdition of the world; for it is easy to work evil. Therefore I have said that this word proves that Paul speaks here not as a carnal but as a most spiritual man.671

This, as Luther correctly indicates, is stock-in-trade exegesis of Rom. 7:15-18 (and Gal. 5:17) for the mature Augustine writing contra Iulianum. St. Paul fights against himself,

671 WA 56.341.30-342.29: ... non tot et tantum bonum nec tanta faciliterate faciat, quantum et quanta vult. Vult enim purissime, liberrime et letissime, sine molestiis repugnantis carnis agere, quod non potest, Vt qui castus esse proponit, Vellet nullis titillationibus impugnari, Sed cum omni facilitate castitatem habere. Sed non sinitur a carne, quæ sui motibus et cogitationibus facit molestissimam castitatem et ægiz sua immunda desideria, etiam Inuito spiritu. Qui Vigiliare, orare, operari proximo proponit, semper Inueniet rebellem carnem et alia machinantem atque cupientem. Vnde singulariter hic Notandum est, Quod ‘facere’ et ‘perficere’ Apostolus distinguit, Vt b. Augustinus li. 3. in fine contra Iulianum copioso docet. ‘Facere’ enim hic pro conari, machinari, desideria mouere, velle etc. accipitur, Qualia sine intermissione caro contra spiritum et spiritus contra carnem operatur. Si enim pro ‘opere implere’ acciperetur, Non debetur Apostolus dicere: ‘Quod nolo malum, facio, quod volo bonum, non facio’, quibus verbis eudentissime expressit pugnam inter carnem et spiritum. Quia ‘vult aliud quam facit’, hoc est, habet beneplacitum et voluntatem per spiritum diffusa charitate promptam ad bonum et odium ad malum, et tamen resistente carne et aduersa concupiscentia non potest hanc voluntatem implere et perficerre. Si enim perferceret et impleret, sine resistentia bonum operaretur et detectabiler; hoc enim vult voluntas eius. Nunc autem non ata operatur; ideo quod vult, non facit, Sed quod non vult, facit. Is autem, qui sine pugna est et carnem sequitur et concupiscentiis obedit, vtique non resistit, non dicit: ‘Quod nolo, hoc facio’, non detectatur in contrario quam facit, Sed in eo, quod operatur. ‘Perficere’ autem est implere, quod vult vel concupiscit. Vt Spiritus perficit, quod vult bonum, quando sine rebellione operatur secundum legem Dei, quod non est huius vitæ, quia ‘perficere non Inuenio’. Caro autem perficit, quando cum detectatione sine repugnanti et difficultate operatur secundum concupiscientias. Et hoc est huius vitæ, immo mortis et perditi muni; facile est enim malum operari. Ideo dixi hoc verbum probare non carnalem, Sed spiritualissimum hominem Paulum hic loqui. Cf. LW 25.330-1.
because his being is divided between the competing desires that comprise his “spirit” and his “flesh.” He is a most spiritual man because his renewed self, his *spiritus*, does not permit his flesh to gain the upper hand. To be sure, the flesh “does” things (*facere*): it titillates, vexes, rebels, etc. But because Paul fights back against it, his flesh is not able to bring its evil desires (*concupiscentiae*) to the completion in act that it longs for (*perficere*). Contrariwise, Paul’s *spiritus* does things too (*facere*): it resists the impulses of the flesh it is forced to suffer unwillingly; it heartily and promptly wills the good, through out-poured love (Rom. 5:5); and it longs to act in the purest, freest, and most joyful manner, in accord with the divine law in which it delights. But in this life, prior to the eschatological completion of the resurrection, St. Paul must contend against his flesh, and is not able to complete (*perficere*) his holy *voluntas* for the freedom and delight that marks the unchecked obedience and love of the saints in glory. This is the mature Augustine’s spirit/flesh “simul,” and by both his express statement of intention and his skillful exposition of its content, Luther shows that he adopts it in toto.

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672 Cf. the interlinear gloss on Rom. 7:18, WA 56.70.14-20: *Scio enim per spiritum et experientiam repugnantie eius quia non habitat in me: vt carnali, vnde sequitur: hoc est in carne mea in exteriori homine bonum. i.e. inconcupiscientia seu puritas Nam uelle adiacet mihi: i.e. quod volo non concupiscere, e spiritu sancto est per charitatem perficere autem vt non sit in me amplius bonum i.e. non-concupiscentiam non inuenio. in hac vita, sed erit in futura.* Cf. LW 25.63.

673 Note as well that in the first marginal gloss on Rom. 7:18 (WA 56.70.22-3), Luther adds: *Deus in Christo regenerat hominem generatum sanatque vitiatum a reatu statim, ab infirmitate paulatim.* Luther does not draw attention to, nor does Ficker recognize, the fact that this is an exact quote of c. *Iul.* 2.4.8 (NBA I/18.524, PL 44.679): God in Christ regenerat hominem generatum, sanatque vitiatum, a reatu statim, ab infirmitate paulatim. Hamel, however, observed the citation and commented (II/83): “Völlig mit Augustin übereinstimmend sagt Luther, daß Gott durch Christus den Menschen in der Taufe sofort von der Schuld und Erbsünde, dagegen allmählich von der noch verbleibenden Schwäche heilt. Ganz wie Augustin redet er von einem Wachsen der Gnade.” In the second marginal gloss, Luther adds two further apt but brief (and slightly altered) excerpts from c. *Iul.* 2.3.7 and 2.4.8. From 2.3.7 (WA 56.70.24-71.3): *B. Aug. li. 2. contra Iul: “Christianorum est ista pugna fidelium. In Baptismate fit remissio omnium peccatorum. Et cum baptisatis quasi ciule bellum remanet vitiorum.”* At the corresponding place in NBA I/18.522, we find: *Christianorum est ista*
In this light, the several *totus homo* statements that appear in fifth the through the twelfth arguments gain considerably in clarity.

(3) The fifth begins with Rom. 7:20: *Non ego operor illud, Sed quod habitat in me peccatum.* This proves that Paul is a spiritual man who does not sin, “because the flesh desires evilly while he dissent, yes indeed properly he himself does not desire evilly, because he dissent from the evil desires of the flesh.” The flesh *concupiscit,* but spiritual Paul is properly differentiated from the concupiscences of his flesh because he does not consent to them and, therefore, does not sin. Still, v. 19 stands: “I do not do the good I want,” etc., because Paul’s flesh with its evil desires—despite his battle against them—is still Paul’s flesh.

For the same person is spirit and flesh; therefore, what he does by flesh, the whole man (*totus*) is said to do. Nevertheless, because he resists, the whole man (*totus*) does not do it (*facere*), but a part of him (*pars eius*) is rightly said to do so.

In other words, in v. 19 Paul speaks improperly the same truth that he speaks properly in the next v. 20. It is said of the whole Paul that he does not do the good he wants, and that he does evil instead. But properly, rightly, this ought only to be said of that “part” of him which is his flesh—i.e., v. 20’s indwelling sin—because the Paul who unwillingly suffers the flesh’s impulses resists them and refuses to consent to them.

Because spirit and flesh together constitute *eadem persona,* it is truthful to say both

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*pugna fidelium, non infidelium Iudaeorum. Crede, si non pugnas; agnosce, si pugnas, et ista pugna rebellem quoque superbiam Pelagiani erroris expugna. Iamne discernis, iamne perspicis, et cum baptizatis quasi civile bellum interiorum remanere vitiorem? Luther adds, from 2.4.8 (WA 56.71.3-5): Et iterum: “Lex peccati repugnans legi mentis, que in tanti quoque Apostoli membris erat, remittitur in baptismate, non finitur. Cf. NBA I/18.524—just a few lines prior to the above-noted citation from the same place: Lex itaque peccati repugnans legi mentis, quae in tanti quoque apostoli membris erat, remittitur in Baptismate, non finitur.*

675 WA 56.342.31-3, cf. LW 25.331.
that Paul operatur (because his flesh is part of him) and that he himself does not do so, but only the “sin that dwells in me” (because his spirit resists and triumphs), v. 20. In all this, Luther anticipates the famous christological analogy we will see him develop further in a moment. But already, in classic Augustinian fashion, Luther clarifies the point where the analogy breaks down. Paul is not upholding that spirit and flesh are two substances that together make up a single person, as a Manichean might think: “for mind and flesh are not only of one person, but even of one will (vnius voluntatis).” For Luther, following Augustine, “spirit” (or in this case, “mind,” from Rom. 7:23 and 25) and “flesh” denominate contrary desires, delights, loves, or affections that divide the renewed person’s will (or heart)—and only the renewed person’s will. For the one who consents to his flesh becomes flesh pure and simple, whereas the flesh-fighting homo spiritualis experiences the inner division of his affections.

(4) The christological analogy comes into its own in the sixth and seventh arguments, both handling Rom. 7:18. In the sixth, Luther first observes how Paul attributes flesh to himself quasi he himself were flesh, whereas in fact it is but a part of him. This is the import of v. 18, and it also explains why and in what sense Paul confesses carnalis sum in v. 14. He confesses that he is evil, because he “does” evil—in his flesh. But propter spiritum he is spiritual and good, and does good. “Thus it must be noted,” explains Luther, “that this word ‘I will’ and ‘I hate’ [vv. 15, 19-20] refer to the

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677 WA 56.343.2, cf. LW 25.331.
678 WA 56.343.6-7: quia iam non tantum vnius sunt personæ mens et caro, Sed etiam vnius voluntatis. Cf. LW 25.331.
spiritual man or spirit, 'I do' however and 'I work' [vv. 15-17, 19-20] to the carnal or ad
carnem." To make better sense of this, he sets out his analogy:

But because the same one total man consists of flesh and spirit, therefore
[Paul] attributes both contraria to the whole man, which come from his
contrary parts. For in this way a communio Ideomatum takes place, because the
same man is spiritual and carnal, righteous and sinner, good and evil. Just as
the same person of Christ is dead and alive simul, suffering and blessed simul,
at work and at rest simul, etc., because of the communio Ideomatum,
although what is proper to one of the natures does not agree with what is
proper to the other, but they dissent with the greatest contrariety, as is known.
But these things have no place at all in the carnal man, where the whole man is
completely flesh, because God's Spirit does not remain in him. Therefore, the
carnal man is not able to say: “in me, that is in my flesh” [v. 18], as if he himself
were something different from the flesh per voluntatem. But he is the same
with the flesh per consensum to his evil desires.680

To understand Luther’s Augustinian anthropology of the spiritual human person, we
must grasp (as David Luy has cogently argued) the traditional orthodoxy of his
christology.681 In the one Lord Jesus Christ, what is proprium to his divine nature
disagrees contrariissime with what is proprium to the human nature he assumes into
the unity of his person. Yet because of this real union of the two natures (with their
diverse properties) in his person, what is stricto sensu proper to only one or the other
of the natures may be truthfully predicated of the one person as a whole. This is the
traditional catholic doctrine of the communicatio idiomatum, which Luther gladly
appropriates in his own christology; but here, he puts it to work to explain Rom. 7.

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680 WA 56.343.16-27: Sed quia ex carne et spiritu idem vnus homo constat totalis, ideo toti homini
tribuit vtraque contraria, que ex contrariis sui partibus veniunt. Sic enim fit communio Ideomatum,
Quod idem homo est spiritualis et carnalis, iustus et peccator, Bonus et malus. Sicut eadem persona
Christi simul mortua et viua, simul passa et beata, simul operata et quieta etc. propter communionem
Ideomatum, licet neutri naturarum alterius proprium conueniat, Sed contrariissime dissentiat, vt
notum est. Hec autem in Carnali homine nequaquam habent locum, Vbi omnino totus homo caro est,
quia non permanet in eo spiritus Dei. Ideo carnalis non potest dicere: 'in me id est in carne mea',
quasi ipse alius a carne per voluntatem sit, Sed est idem cum carne per consensum in concupiscencias
681 David J. Luy, Dominus Mortis: Martin Luther on the Incorruptibility of God in Christ.
There is only one person, St. Paul, but the apostle is comprised of diverse affections. These retain their respective properties and apply properly only to the “parts” of him that they name, viz., either spirit or flesh, righteous man or sinner, etc. But both can be truly predicated of Paul as a concrete whole, on account of the communio of competing and contrary desires that he empirically is. He is not actually either wholly saint or wholly sinner, wholly spirit or wholly flesh, but by virtue of the communio idiomatum he may be named as either or as both simul. But, Luther insists, the analogy only applies to the spiritual person, not the carnal. The “carnal man” is so-called because by consenting to his evil desires he has become nothing but flesh, omnino totus homo caro est. Because the spiritual man retains a voluntas contrary to the evil desires he still experiences, he is like the orthodox Jesus in being a person made up of two “parts”: in Christ’s case, two natures or substances in one person; in Paul’s, contrary affections in one will. But the carnal man is like the heretical Jesus preferred by some theologians both ancient and modern: pure flesh in the one matching pure humanity in the other, with nothing divine about either.

It is probably not an accident that the totus/totus dialectical “simul” favored by some modern scholars (e.g., Theobald Beer) matches the dialectical christologies championed by the same.682 I do not mean to assert a necessary logical connection between rejecting Chalcedonian orthodoxy and rejecting an Augustinian account of embattled holiness. But when the careful distinctions of Luther’s robustly catholic christology are abandoned, and in its place an alien modern christology is then read into his analogy, the anthropological result is an ambiguously (or dialectically, or

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682 Theobald Beer, Der fröhliche Wechsel und Streit: Grundzüge der Theologie Luthers (Leipzig: St. Benno, 1974). I am thankful to my friend David Luy for pointing me to Beer in this regard.
imputationally) “holy” saint who is a sinner simul et totaliter. And as we have seen, this is quite mistaken as an interpretation of what Luther actually sets forth in the text. Only when the orthodoxy of Luther’s christology is fully appreciated can the basic Augustinianism of its analogical anthropological application be so as well.

(5) The seventh argument starts out from Rom. 7:18b (Velle mihi adiacet, perficere autem non Inuenio). Alluding to Rom. 5:5, Luther explains that this “willing” is the “readiness of the spirit” (promptitudo spiritus) which comes from charity. Its completion is the bonum that Paul confesses he wants but cannot yet attain in v. 19. Even in its present imperfection, Paul’s spiritual readiness for the good corresponds to David’s description of the blessed man at Ps. 1:2 Vg., viz., in lege Domini Voluntas eius. Luther then takes up Ps. 1:2’s Voluntas as the key to interpret Rom. 7:18’s velle, and explains that both refer to “the pleasure and delight in the good (beneplacitum et delectatio boni) that the law commands.” This brings Luther to Rom. 7:22, and the second major totus passage:

“I delight in the law of God according to the interior man” [Rom. 7:22], but “to complete” (perficere), viz., this good of the law, he is not able to do with the flesh resisting. Because he wills to not desire evilly (Vult non concupiscere) and judges that it is good to not desire evilly; and yet, he desires evilly, and he does not complete this willing of his (non perficit hoc velle suum). And so he fights with himself. But because spirit and flesh are so intimately connected as one (coniunctissime sunt unum)—even though they feel diversely (diverse sentiant)—he therefore attributes the work of both to himself as a whole, as if he were totally flesh and totally spirit at the same time (quasi simul sit totus caro et totus spiritus). Nevertheless, by these words he declares his position and responds to the objection that one might raise: “If you do not do what the law commands, but do what you do not want, and do not do what you want to do, how then do you not sin (non peccas)?” Paul responds: “Because he does (facit) the good, but does not complete (perficit) it, since he does not extinguish the evil desire of the flesh.” Therefore this willing (Velle) and this will (voluntatem), which Ps. 1[:2] attributes to the blessed man and the Spirit

683 WA 56.344.23-7, cf. LW 25.333.
alone gives through charity [Rom. 5:5]—how is a merely carnal man able to have this, who has rather a not-willingness (noluntatem)?\footnote{WA 56.344.27-345.9: ‘Condelector legi Dei secundum interiorem hominem’, Sed ‘perficere’, scil. hoc bonum legis, resistente carne non potest. Quia Vult non concupiscere et bonum Iudicat non concupiscere, et tamen concupiscit et non perficit hoc velle suum Et ita secum ipse pugnat, Sed quia spiritus et caro coniunctissime sunt vnum, licet diuerse sentiant, ideo vtriusque opus sibi toti tribuit, quasi simul sit totus caro et totus spiritus. Veruntamen istis verbis declarat se et obiectioni respondet, si dicetur: Si non facis, que lex Iubet, Sed facis, que non vis, et non facis, que vis, quomodo ergo non peccas? Respondet, Quod facit, Sed non perficit bonum, quia non extinguit concupiscientiam carnis. Hoc itaque Velle et hanc voluntatem, quam beato viro tribuit psalmus 1. et solus spiritus donat per charitatem, quomodo potest mere carnis habere, qui noluntatem potius habet? Cf. LW 25.333-4.} Once again, a deeply Augustinian vision emerges: the Holy Spirit gives (donat) the charity that produces delight in and desire for the completion of holiness commanded by the law,\footnote{Cf. WA 56.346.5-7 (argument #9): Ista delectatio est ex spiritu sancto per Charitatem, vt sepe dictum est, sine qua Impossible est diligi legem et Iustitiam. Cf. LW 25.334.} and St. Paul thus delighting, willing, and loving is “spirit.” But “flesh” remains for the fight, with desires of its own. He wants to be free from concupiscientia, yet continues to desire evilly against his own holy voluntas. He does the good but cannot yet complete it, fighting against the flesh which resists his holy desire and yet—at the same time—remains part of his divided self. \textit{ita secum ipse pugnat} or, in Jon Foreman’s words, “I am the war I fight.”\footnote{Switchfoot, “The War Inside,” #3 in the album Vice Verses (lower case people records/Atlantic, 2011).} Because Paul is his spirit and his flesh, what he “feels” in either part, or the “work” of either part, may be attributed to him as a whole. But he is not wholly the one or the other, and when Paul does use this form of predication he speaks “as if” he were \textit{simul totus caro et totus spiritus}. Luther’s \textit{quasi} in this sentence must be carefully noted and weighed, for it is an explicit rejection on his part of the (in Joest’s terminology) “total simul” in favor of the Augustinian “\textit{partim/partim simul}” that he has been advocating in his exegesis of Rom. 7 all the while. Oppressed by his own flesh, Paul confesses he has not yet been
perfected in the holiness of love that he longs for. But because he is filled with the charity and delight that the Holy Spirit produces in his heart, he resists his flesh and does not sin. In this regard, Luther’s anticipation—on Paul’s behalf—of a possible objection to Paul’s words is especially illuminating. “If you do not do what the law commands, how do you not sin?” Denifle’s and Hermann’s modern Lutheran Paul might reply: “I do sin, boldly; but I rejoice more boldly still, because Christ’s alien righteousness covers me!” By stark contrast, Luther’s Augustinian Paul replies: “You are mistaken, for I do not sin; I delight in God’s law and I do the good—though I confess not yet completely, as I heartily wish I could.”

(6) The proper role of imputation comes into view in the twelfth and final argument, replete with striking “simul” statements, on Rom. 7:25b: Igitur Ego ipse mente seruo legi Dei, Carne autem legi peccati. “This,” writes Luther, “is the most express proof of them all.”

Look, as one and the same man (vnus et idem homo) he serves the law of God and the law of sin at the same time, he is righteous and he sins at the same time! For he does not say: “My mind serves the law of God,” nor “My flesh serves the law of sin,” but “I, he says, the whole man, the same person (totus homo, persona eadem), I serve both servitudes.” Therefore he also gives thanks that he serves the law of God, and he seeks mercy because he serves the law of sin. Who would assert this about the carnal man, that he serves the law of God? Now look at what I said above, that at the same time as the saints are righteous, they are sinners: righteous, because they believe in Christ, whose righteousness covers them and is imputed to them; but sinners because they do not fulfill the law, they are not without concupiscence (non sunt sine concupiscentia). They are like sick people under the care of a physician, who really are sick, but are healthy in a beginning way and in hope, or rather they are being healed, i.e., becoming healthy.687

687 WA 56.347.2-13: Vide, vt vnus et idem homo simul seruit legi Dei et legi peccati, simul Iustus est et peccat! Non enim ait: Mens mea seruit legi Dei, Nec: Caro mea legi peccati, Sed: ego, inquit, totus homo, persona eadem, seruo vtranque seruitutem. Ideo et gratias agit, Quod seruit legi Dei, et misericordiam querit, quod seruit legi peccati. Quis hoc de Carnali asserat homine, quod seruiait legi Dei? Vide nunc, quod supra dixi, Quod simul Sancti, dum sunt Iusti, sunt peccatores; Iusti, quia
Grane reads Luther’s “*totus*” and “*simul*” language here dialectically and paradoxically—i.e., the whole person is righteous, the whole person is a sinner, *simul*—and sets it against Augustine’s more pedestrian spirit/flesh “*simul*.” This might perhaps appear to be the case at first glance if extracted from its context in the scholion on Rom. 7:7. But Luther’s *vnus et idem homo* and *persona eadem* clearly link this passage back to the christological analogy worked out in the preceding arguments. Once more, Luther is showing why Paul is not a Manichean theologian: the one person St. Paul, *Ego ipse*, confesses he serves a twofold servitude, to wit, to God’s law with his renewed mind or spirit on the one hand, and to the law of the flesh with his flesh on the other. That he serves the law of sin—or, as Luther has it at the top of the excerpt, that he “*sins*” and is a “sinner”—is reduced to a single cause: he is not without concupiscence, and therefore does not fulfill the law; for the law forbids evil desire entirely. There are two causes, however, for Paul’s (or any other Christian’s) being holy and righteous. First, he does in fact serve the law of God: a spiritual reality for which he gives thanks, this being not the result of his own moral striving but the gift of God’s grace. Second, Christ’s righteousness covers him and is imputed to his account. In this, we see Luther’s mature theology of “gift” and “grace” in its germinal form, with real but imperfect renewal in holiness complemented by the *iustitia Christi imputata*.

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*credunt in Christum, cuius Iustitia eos tegit et eis imputatur, peccatores autem, quia non implet legem, non sunt sine concupiscentia. Sed sicut egrotantes sub cura medici, qui sunt re vera egroti, Sed inchoatiue et in spe sani seu potius sanificati i. e. sani fientes. Cf. LW 25.336.  
688 Grane, *Modus Loquendi*, 57.*
What’s more, the “gift”-style sanative analogy that concludes the excerpt—so favored, in its several permutations, by Karl Holl, and firmly emphasized by Hamel—points to the rationale behind the abiding need for the “grace” of Christ’s righteousness imputed to faith, which Hermann, Grane, et al. prefer. The saints in the care of Christus Medicus really are being healed of the disease of evil desire that afflicts them. But even as the saints convalesce, being not yet fully cured of concupiscence, they are already entirely sub cura medici, with Christ’s righteousness covering their sinful imperfections. This is the point where Holl’s analytic theory falters, and the more confessional emphasis on the free imputation of Christ’s righteousness to faith in the present stands on firmer ground. Only when the strengths of the two interpretative schools are held together—thus correcting their respective weaknesses—can both (a) the Augustinian debt of Luther’s sanative theology of real progressive sanctification and (b) the Reformer’s genuine novelty vis-à-vis what he later came to regard as Augustine’s Achilles heel (de imputatione non clare omnia explicet!) be rightly esteemed in their mutual relation one to the other, which I have referred to in this study as his dogmatics of gift (“a”) and grace (“b”). But in light of

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689 See Holl’s essay of 1910, “Die Rechtfertigungslehre in Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Frage der Heilsgewißheit.”


691 On this image in Luther’s theology, see Johann Anselm Steiger, Medizinische Theologie: Christus medicus und theologia medicinalis bei Martin Luther und im Luthertum der Barockzeit. Mit Edition dreier Quellentexte (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 3-47. Steiger observes the roots of the metaphor in patristic theology, especially Augustine and Gregory the Great (p. 3). But in light of my argument here, I think Steiger’s assumption of a one-sided Simullehre leads him to place too much emphasis on imputation as the content of Christ’s healing work (e.g., 4-5, 16-8).

692 But cf. the somewhat exceptional c. Iul. op. imp. 1.57, CSEL 85/1.55 (cf. WSA I/25.85): ... sic imputari generatis parvulis iniustitiam primi hominis ad subeundum supplicium, quemadmodum imputatur parvulis regeneratis iustitia secundi hominis ad obtinendum regnum caelorum; c. Iul. op. imp. 3.148, CSEL 85/1.454 (cf. WSA I/25.350): Si autem parvuli propter iustitiam secundi hominis, qui regenerationis est auctor, deputantur iusti, cur non propter peccatum primi hominis, qui generationis est auctor, deputantur iniusti? Also: c. Iul. op. imp. 3.49, 6.22-3.
Luther’s unannounced citation of *c. Iul.* 2.4.8 in the first marginal gloss on Rom. 7:18, even this real novelty regarding imputation should not be exaggerated beyond its proper bounds. For in early 1516, Luther very much intends to recover and carry forward Augustine’s teaching that “God in Christ regenerates the man who was born, and heals the wounded man: from guilt instantly, from weakness bit by bit.”

2. The scholia on Rom. 7:17-18

In the concluding portion of his exegesis of Rom. 7, Luther cites *nupt. conc.* once and *c. Iul.* four times: the first four references interspersing his own extensive exegesis of v. 17, the last and longest standing essentially by itself as Luther’s adopted commentary on v. 18, in place of any substantive exegetical remarks of his own. To grasp the role played by each quotation, and to assess its textual accuracy and theological fittingness in Luther’s argument, it is vital to observe their place in the overall flow of his exegesis. I will therefore examine in turn each Augustinian quotation in Luther’s scholia on these two verses from St. Paul. I also count nine excerpts from (or strong allusions to) Augustine’s mature works against Julian in the glosses on Rom. 7:15-24: one likely alluding to *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28, the rest taken from *c. Iul.* itself. Some of these have already factored in my exposition of the scholion on Rom. 7:7 above, and others will be brought in here to illumine the scholia on Rom. 7:17-18.

2.1. On Rom. 7:17

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693 WA 56.70.22-3, NBA I/18.524, PL 44.679. Cf. Hamel, II/83.
694 1. Interlinear gloss on v. 17, *c. Iul.* 2.5.14 (citing Ambrose); 2. first marginal gloss on v. 18, quoting from (but not referring to) *c. Iul.* 2.4.8; 3. & 4., second marginal gloss on v. 18, *c. Iul.* 2.3.7 and 2.4.8; 5. first marginal gloss on v. 19, *c. Iul.* 3.26.62; 6. and 7., second marginal gloss on v. 19, *c. Iul.* 2.3.5 and 2.3.6 (citing Cyprian); 8. marginal gloss on v. 20, naming Augustine without reference, but alluding to *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28 or any number of passages in *c. Iul.* explicating that contentious text; 9. marginal gloss on v. 24, *c. Iul.* 2.3.6.
2.1.1. c. Iul. 2.5.12. Luther first sets his interpretation in the context of the question that would soon factor so critically in the *Ablaffstreich*, to wit: is “sin” abolished by baptism and by sacramental penance, such that the baptized/absolved person is without sin *simpliciter*, or does it in some real sense remain? As I explained above, modern scholars recognize that Augustine’s position on this question shifted during the 410s and 20s, in general viewing postbaptismal *concupiscentia* as an “evil” that is not properly sinful apart from the consent of the will in the 410s, but then in the 420s evincing an increasing willingness to speak of it as sinful (or simply as “sin” or “iniquity”) already prior to such consent.695 Luther’s use here of three late Augustinian texts *contra Iulianum* displays his awareness of Augustine’s two positions, the sense in which he too can affirm both of them, and his clear preference for the latter.

It was, after all, St. Paul himself who started the controversy by writing at v. 17 that “it is no longer I who do it, but sin (*peccatum*) that dwells in me.” Hence, says Luther, when “our theologians” assert that sin is “abolished” (*aboleri*) in baptism (or penance), and think it “absurd” for Paul to say what he in fact says in v. 17, it only goes

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695 The foundational discussion in c. *Iul. op. imp.* takes place at 1.47 (CSEL 85/1.35-6, cf. WSA I/25.73-4), where Augustine distinguishes three types of sin: 1. fully volitional sin, which Augustine limits to Adam’s original rebellion (*peccatum*), 2. the penalty of sin, which one suffers rather than commits, e.g., when a murderer is executed (*poena peccati*), and 3. sin that is also sin’s punishment (*ita peccatum ut ipsum sit etiam poena peccati*). The *peccatum* in Rom. 7[.19] is of the third sort: *tertium vero genus, ubi peccatum ipsum et poena peccati, potest intelligi in eo qui dicit: Quod nolo malum hoc ago*. Original sin, the just penalty of Adam’s freely chosen rebellion, belongs to the third category: *pertinet originale peccatum ad hoc genus tertium, ubi sic peccatum est ut ipsum sit et poena peccati*. Augustine develops this theme throughout this last great but unfinished work against Julian, e.g., 2.38, 3.210, 4.48, 4.103, 5.28 (CSEL 85/2.224-5; ... *hoc autem, ubi facit homo quod non vult et tamen peccatum esse apostolus clamat [Rom. 7:15-20]... Quomodo enim liberum est abstinere ubi clamatur: Quod nolo hoc facio? Aliter ergo natura humana peccavit, quando ei liberum fuit abstinere a peccato, aliter nunc peccat perdita libertate, quando eget liberatoris auxilio; et illud tantummodo peccatum erat, hoc autem est etiam poena peccati*, 5.50, 5.59, 5.61 (CSEL 85/2.276: *Unde [Paulus] posteaquam peccati habitantis in carne sua, quo cogebatur malum agere quod nolebat, necessitatem poenamque deflevit, max ad quem confugiendum esset ostendens: [citing Rom. 7:24-5]), 6.8, 6.17.
to show the depth of their deception at the hands of fallax Aristotelis methaphysica.\textsuperscript{696}

As Oberman, Dieter, Leppin, and others have established over against the monolithic Antischolastik posited by a Hermann, an Ebeling, or a Hampson, Luther has Gabriel Biel especially in mind, as well as his Erfurt teachers Trutfetter and Usingen.\textsuperscript{697} In this light, it is important to recognize that in 1515/16 Luther is reacting against the position he himself had held as recently as his (incomplete) 1509/10 Sentenzkommentar, and is instead championing the bracing Augustinianism of Peter Lombard which—as a good student of Biel, Usingen, and Trutfetter—he had once rejected in no uncertain terms.\textsuperscript{698} Luther had been deceived too: but by 1515 the anti-Pelagian writings bound

\textsuperscript{696} WA 56.349.23-6, cf. LW 25.338.

\textsuperscript{697} See Biel, Collectorium II d. 32 q. 1 (W & H II/580-84) on utrum per sacramentum baptismatis tollatur reatus culpae originalis and IV d. 4 q. 1 a. 2 (W & H IV/1.150-63) on utrum effectus baptismi in non indigne suscipiente sit infusio virtutum et gratiae ac remissio culpae et poenae. In the first place, fascinatingly, Biel discusses the mature Augustinian solution of non-imputation, and explains that God could have dealt this way de potentia eius absoluta—citing Ps. 32:2/Rom. 4:8 to this effect! But this is purely hypothetical: Deus tamen de potentia sua ordinata non remittit, nisi illud restituat quod peccatum privat, et hoc in se formaliter vel aequivalenter virtualiter. Biel argues for the virtual equivalent suggested here: Infundendo autem gratiam tollit debitum habendi iustitiam originalem et ipsum commutat in debitum habendi gratiam (W & H II/580-1). In the second place, Biel argues that baptism’s effect includes universalis remissio culpae, which given his position in book II requires that it tollit omne peccati inquinamentum and tollit mundanam omnem maculam originalem, etc. (W & H IV/1.150). At IV d. 4 q. 1 a. 2 conc. 3 (W & H IV/1.155-6), however, Biel does think Paul speaks autobiographically in Rom. 7, only insisting that Paul’s “sin” is really the fully remitted fomes peccati. This is Augustine’s typical stance in the 410s (Biel cites pecc. rem. 2.7-9) and would become the doctrine of the Council of Trent. For an overview with bibliography, see Brecht, Road to Reformation 161-74, esp. 167 and 173-4 for Luther’s personal break with Trutfetter and Usingen.

\textsuperscript{698} WA 9.75-6, on Sent. II d. 32. So, e.g., 9.75.11-13: because concupiscentia remains after baptism, patet, quod peccatum originale non est ipsa concupiscentia seu fomes, quia non tota aboletur, sed tantum debilitatur, peccatum autem originale totum aboletur. Or II. 16-19: illa concupiscentia in carnis est nihil aliquid nisi inobediencia carnis ad spiritum quae de se non est culpa, sed poena, quia si esset aliquo modo culpa et non dimittit in baptismo diceretur, injuria fierit baptismo et gratiae dei. Indeed, II. 21-23, after baptism concupiscence non est mala nisi occasionali inquantum ratio contra eam sibi in pugnam pro poena inobediientiae primae relictam debet certare. Thus in winter 1509/10, Luther rejects Peter’s Augustinian definition of original sin as fomes, languor naturae, tyrannis, etc. (II. 26-8), and interprets Paul accordingly, 9.76.1-4: Unde dicit Apostolus, quod concupiscetia non nocet his qui secundum Christum vivunt, quia non est malum deleta culpa, sed tantum pondus et inclinatio ad malum quam sic deus esse voluit in poenam Adae. NB that Lombard compiles copious excerpts from Augustine’s anti-Pelagian writings in d. 32, including (at d. 32.1.6) the momentous line from nupt. conc. 1.25.28: dimittitur concupiscentia carnis in baptismo, non ut
up in vol. 8 of the Amerbach edition have opened his eyes to grasp the real meaning of the Apostle.\textsuperscript{699}

Thus with the rational force of a settled conclusion obtained by the twelve arguments in the excursus at Rom. 7:7, together with the zeal of a convert, Luther asserts that v. 17’s “peccatum”—combined with the bad premise, common to the line of Pauline interpretation stemming from Origen,\textsuperscript{700} that as a saint the Apostle “had absolutely no sin”—plunged his opponents into the false and dangerous opinion that Paul “was not speaking in his own person, but in that of a carnal man.”\textsuperscript{701} By thus framing his debate with nostros theologos as an interrelated choice between (a) either Paul or Aristotle, either the Bible or human philosophy, on the one hand, and on the other (b) either a spiritual and apostolic or a pre-Conversion and carnal Paul as the

\textit{non sit, sed ut non imputetur in peccatum.} In spring 1532, Luther declared at table: “Peter Lombard was adequate as a theologian; none has been his equal. He is quasi the method of theology. He read Hilary, Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory, and also all the councils. He was a great man. If he had by chance come upon the Bible, he would no doubt have been the greatest.” WA Tr 1.85.17-20, #192, cf. LW 54.26.

\textsuperscript{699} Grane (\textit{Modus Loquendi}, 59-61) argues that Luther first discovered his theology in Paul, then in effect read it back into Augustine’s without ever quite realizing it. Apart from the fact that this theory is basically indemonstrable, and reflects a Protestant historiographical bias (first Bible, then tradition), Grane assumes the very Hermann-styled Lutheran divergence from Augustine that I am contending against in this book. In passing, it’s worth noting that Thomas Aquinas experienced a similar change in mind after reading some of Augustine’s anti-Pelagian writings in his second Parisian period, abandoning the semi-Pelagianism of his \textit{Sentenzkommentar} in favor of the robust Augustinian doctrine of predestination and grace found in the \textit{Summa Theologicae}.


\textsuperscript{701} WA 56.349.26-30, cf. LW 25.338.
subject of Rom. 7, Luther situates his opponents on both counts squarely in the position of Julian of Eclanum and volunteers himself for the role of Augustine redivivus contra pelagianos modernos.\footnote{As I noted above, this is not quite fair in Biel’s case at least, for he does think Paul speaks autobiographically in Rom. 7, but in the manner of Augustine in the 410s (\textit{Collectorium} IV d. 4 q. 1 art. 2 conc. 3) as opposed to Augustine in the 420s. For Augustine the biblical and patristic theologian versus Julian the Aristotelian philosopher, see e.g. \textit{c. Iul.} 1.4.12. After citing numerous patristic authorities, Augustine lectures Julian thus: “I brought you, not into the lecture hall of some philosopher, but into the peaceful and honorable assembly of the holy fathers. May it be worth the effort! I beg you, see how they look upon you and kindly and gently say to you, ‘Julian, our son, are we Manichees?’ I ask you: What will you answer? How will you face them? What arguments will help you out? What categories of Aristotle? For, when you attack us like a skillful debater, you want to appear well trained in his categories.” NBA I/18.450, WSA I/24.274. Cf. \textit{c. Iul.} 2.10.34, 2.10.37 (“As if you, who complain so much that ‘you are denied an episcopal hearing and judgment,’ could find a council of Peripatetics in which a dialectical decision has been pronounced against original sin on the basis of subjects and those things which are in subjects [i.e., accidents]!”), 3.2.7, 4.15.75-8, 5.14.51, 6.18.53-7, 6.20.64; \textit{c. Iul. op. imp.} 2.51, 5.23.3: “I am happy to have as my teacher, not Aristotle or Chrysippus, much less Julian, a fool despite all his banter, but Christ.” CSEL 85/2.211, WSA I/25.544.}

Luther advances his position—viz., that “sin” remains in the baptized—in two steps, then supports it with the first major excerpt from Augustine. In the first step, the earnest young friar blends the penitential spirituality that Jared Wicks\footnote{Jared Wicks, S.J. \textit{Man Yearning for Grace. Luther’s Early Spiritual Teaching} (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1969), esp. 95-125.} has emphasized with the basic dogmatic components of his Augustinian “\textit{simul.” The Bielish position on sin’s abolition in penance is spiritually pernicious, because it inculcates false security, presumption, and laziness at just the point where penitents ought rather to be exhorted to fight against and purge out the sin that remains with groaning, tears, lamentation, and labor.\footnote{WA 56.350.1-4, cf. LW 25.338-9.} This, in early 1516, is the spiritual doctrine of lifelong repentance that will commence the famous theses of October 1517, which Leppin has compellingly linked to Tauler’s mystical \textit{Bußtheologie}.\footnote{Volker Leppin, “Omnem vitam fidelium penitentiam esse voluit.”} It also shares a deep (and in the Western Church, common) root in the mature spirituality of
Augustine, which increasingly gravitated to the graced weakness St. Paul speaks of as the remedy for spiritual pride at 2 Cor. 12:7-10. Luther continues: “Therefore sin is left over (relictum) in the spiritual man for the exercise of grace, for the humbling of pride, for the repression of presumption.” Sin in its fragmentary form, sin as evil desire in the saints, is useful to them because it humbles them and keeps them in a spiritual posture of deepening dependence upon God. In the context of this Augustinian and taulerisch spiritual theology, Luther adumbrates his basic dogmatics of sin and grace:

... for we are not called to ease, but to labor against passiones. These passions would not be without guilt (for they are truly sins and indeed damnable), but for the mercy of God not imputing it. However, he does not impute it only to those who, assailed by their vices and invoking God’s grace, manfully fight against them.

The peccatum relictum which Paul speaks of as a unitary reality in Rom. 6-8 (“sin”) is in fact a bundle of vicious passions suffered by the spiritual man in his divided soul. Being vicious in quality, such passions are intrinsically blameworthy, vere peccata et quidem damnabilia. But God in his mercy does not reckon these sinful passions to the account of those who prayerfully fight against them, precisely because they do so.

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706 On this point in Augustine, see Thomas F. Martin, O.S.A.’s fine study, “Paul the Patient: Christus Medicus and the “Stimulus Carnis” (2 Cor. 12:7): A Consideration of Augustine’s Medicinal Christology,” AugS 32/2 (2001), 219-56; Hombert, Gloria Gratiae, 310-12.

707 WA 56.350.5-6, cf. LW 25.339.


709 NB that in the interlinear gloss on Rom. 7:5, Luther simply equates the “old man” with evil desires. WA 56.65.9-11 (cf. LW 25.59): cum enim essemus in carne extra gratiam passiones peccatorum affectus, pronitates et motus mali, qui sunt vetus homo et vir prior. In the context, Luther is referring to a person who is sheer flesh, sub lege et ante gratiam (to use Augustine’s terms). In the regenerate, the “old Adam” remains in fragmentary form as the reliquia peccati: but precisely as such, “he”/they retain this same mode of being as evil affections, propensities, passions, impulses, etc.
Once again, the saints are sinners in the one quite exact sense that they suffer the presence of unlawful passions in their souls. But they are real saints for two reasons: first, by God’s misericordia and non-imputation; second, by virtue of the real renewal evidenced in their fight against “sin” and their earnest prayer for gratiam. At this early stage in Luther’s development, “grace” in this context most likely refers to the gratia sanans so well-explicated by Wicks; by 1521 at the latest, it will morph terminologically into the donum I studied in chapter 2 above, while retaining the same dogmatic content. So we have the “grace” of God’s merciful non-imputation together with the “gift” of inner healing joining hands to deal with the ongoing reality of vicious and afflictive passions in the renewed soul: not, to be sure, in their mature gratia/donum form; nor yet with the gladness and parrhesia that will soon characterize Luther’s theology (and preaching) of the gospel promise of free forgiveness in Christ and new life in the Spirit. Even so, the seeds that will blossom into the Reformer’s mature evangelical and creedal theology of holiness are already recognizably present in their basic dogmatic substance.

In the second step, Luther pauses to clarify the privative ontology of the saints’ “sin,” “flesh,” internum vitium peccati, or even (as he allows here) fomes. St. Paul does not want us to think that

... spirit and flesh are a sort of twosome, but one single reality (quaedam velut duo, Sed vnum omnino), just as a wound and flesh are one. For although what is proper to the wound (proprium vulneris) is one thing and what is proper to flesh (proprium carnis) is another, nevertheless, because the wound and the flesh are one, and the wound is not some thing besides the wounded or weak flesh itself, therefore what belongs to the wound is attributed to the flesh. In

700 A point which Wicks has recently noticed in passing: “Half a Lifetime with Luther in Theology and Living,” Pro Ecclesia 22/3 (2014), 307-36, here 311. See below, chapter 5.3.
the same way, the same man is spirit and flesh at the same time. But the flesh is his weakness or wound. And insofar as he loves the law of God, he is spirit; but insofar as he desires evily, it is the weakness of the spirit and the wound of sin, which has begun to be healed. Thus Christ says: “The spirit indeed is ready, but the flesh is weak” [Matt. 26:41].

As the second quotation (c. Iul. 3.20.39) in the Rom. 7:17 scholion shows, to which I will attend in its place below, this is pure Augustine. One single man, St. Paul, is spirit and flesh “simul,” not because he is comprised of two contrary substances, but because even the spiritual man undergoing progressive renewal or healing still suffers the lingering effects of the infirmitas and vulnus that originally besets him as a son of Adam. Paul’s “flesh” simply names this as yet imperfectly healed weakness or wound. To the extent that he has been healed, and thus loves (diligit) God’s law, he is spirit: this is his real being. But to the extent that he still concupiscit—this remnant of original sin in the form of evil desire (“flesh”) is not an entity of its own, but rather the wound that scars the really but inchoately and partially renewed person. Indwelling sin or “flesh” thus names a privation and lack, not a being in its own right; its shadowy reality as this lack is purely parasitic upon the real being, will, and affections of the renewed spiritus, the spiritual man. To explain this difficult ontological point further, Augustine once spoke of seeing darkness and hearing silence (c. dei 12.7). In 1516, Luther is taking up his teacher’s anti-Manichean metaphysics of good and evil and

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712 WA 56.350.22-351.2: *Est autem Notandum, Quod Apostolus non velit intelligi spiritum et carnem esse quedam velut duo, Sed vnum omnino, Sicut vulnus et caro sunt vnum; Vbi etsi aliud sit proprium vulneris, aliud proprium carnis, tamen quia vulnus et caro vnum sunt, et non est aliud quam ipsa vulnerata caro seu infirma, ideo carni tribuitur, quod est vulneris. Sic idem homo simul est spiritus et caro. Sed Caro est eius infirmitas seu vulnus, Et inquantum diligit legem Dei, Spiritus est; inquantum autem concupiscit, est infirmitas spiritus et vulnus peccati, quod sanari incipit. Sic Christus ait: ‘Spiritus quidem promptus est, Caro autem infirma.’* Cf. LW 25.339.

713 WA 56.352.10-2. NBA I/18.624: [concupiscientiam carnis] usque adeo malum esse, ut repugnans expurgando vincatur, donec sicut vulnus in corpore, ita perfecta curature sanetur.
applying it to the very polemical and exegetical use that Augustine had already put it to himself in the late 410s and 20s contra Iulianum.\(^\text{714}\)

This brings us to the first major excerpt, from \textit{c. Iul.} 2.5.12:

And blessed Augustine, in book 2 against Julian, says: “we understand our vices (\textit{vitia}) in a catholic way: they resist the law of the mind because of the law of sin. When these vices have been separated from us, they will not be somewhere else, but having been healed in us they will be nowhere. Then why do they not perish in baptism? Or do you not yet confess that their guilt (\textit{reatus}) has perished, but weakness (\textit{infirmitas}) remains? Not the guilt (\textit{reatus}) by which they [sc., \textit{vitia}] were guilty (\textit{rea}), but the guilt by which they made us guilty (\textit{nos reos}) in the evil works to which they drew us. Neither does their weakness so remain, as if they were some kind of animals which were weakened, but they themselves [sc., \textit{vitia}] are our weakness.”\(^\text{715}\)

Luther’s citation matches our best modern edition closely.\(^\text{716}\) There is one elision of some importance: in the first sentence, Luther changes Augustine’s \textit{catholice istos equos intelligimus vitia nostra} to \textit{Catholice intelligimus vitia nostra}. This editorial redaction affords Luther the freedom to reproduce the substance of Augustine’s remarks while avoiding the (to his purposes) unnecessary complication of explaining the matter of \textit{istos equos}—though it does leave the \textit{quasi aliqua animalia} near the end of the excerpt hanging somewhat in the air. For our purposes, however, “these horses”

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\(^{714}\) \textit{nupt. conc.} 2.3.7-10, 2.29.49-50; \textit{c. Iul.} 1.5.16, 1.8.36-41, 2.3.6-7, 2.8.28, 3.26.63, 4.1.1, 5.6.24, 6.18.53-7; \textit{c. Iul. op. imp.} 1.24, 1.63, 1.114, 2.8-9, 2.228, 3.37, 3.53-7, 3.95, 3.153-216, 4.1-2, 4.23, 4.109, 4.120, 5.19, 5.25, 5.30, 5.38, 6.5, 6.14.


\(^{716}\) \textit{NBA} I/18.530-2, reproducing \textit{PL} 44.682: \textit{catholice istos equos intelligimus vitia nostra, quae legi mentis ex lege peccati resistunt. Non a nobis haec vitia separata, aliciu ali bi erunt, sed in nobis sanata nusquam erunt. Veruntamen quare non in Baptismate perierunt? An nondum fateres, quod reatus eorum perierit, infirmitas manserit, non reatus quo ipsa rea fuerant, sed quo nos reos fecerant in malis operibus, quo nos traxerant? Nec ita eorum mansit infirmitas, quasi aliqua sint animalia quae infirmatur: sed nostra infirmitas ipsa sunt.} I count three minor differences: the first I discuss in the argument; the second shifts the order of PL’s \textit{Non a nobis haec vitia separata} to WA’s \textit{Non h`ec vitia a nobis separata}; the third, PL’s \textit{ipsa rea fuerant} to WA’s \textit{ipsa rea fuerunt}. 
help get to the heart of the position that Augustine contended for in 421 and, therefore, to a sound evaluation of what Luther was arguing for in 1516.

Horses ruled by a charioteer are a commonplace Platonic metaphor for either the soul’s parts, its faculties, or its passions, depending on one’s psychology (see Phaedrus 246a-254e; cf. vera rel. 45.83). In the case at hand, it stems from a passage in Ambrose’s de Isaac et anima 8.65 that Augustine is urging against Julian in the catalogue of patristic citations that forms c. Iul. books 1 and 2.\footnote{See Mathijs Lamberigts, “Augustine’s Use of Tradition in His Reaction to Julian of Aeclanum’s Ad Turbantium: Contra Iulianum I-II,” AugS 41/1 (2010), 183-200.} Ambrose writes:

A good horseman reins in and holds back evil horses, and spurs on good ones. The good horses are four: prudence, temperance, fortitude, iustitia. The evil horses are: wrathfulness, concupiscentia, fear, iniquitas.\footnote{NBA I/18.530, WSA I/24.314. For de Isaac et anima 8.65, see PL 14.527; cf. Nisula, 33-4.}

This supplies weighty evidence in Augustine’s case for the catholicity of his doctrine of concupiscientia mala. But because Julian levels the charge of Manichaeism against this doctrine of evil desire, Augustine must demonstrate that Ambrose’s “evil horses”—which include concupiscentia in their number—are not substances, but vices: that is, affective “wounds” which afflict the good soul characterized by the four cardinal virtues. In the passage cited above, Luther excerpts the central portion of Augustine’s argument to this effect. I provide it here in full, with the material excerpted by Luther underlined:

In the book de Isaac et anima, Ambrose says: “A good horseman reins in and holds back evil horses, and spurs on good ones. The good horses are four: prudence, temperance, fortitude, iustitia. The evil horses are: wrathfulness, concupiscentia, fear, iniquitas.” He doesn’t say, A good horseman has good horses, he does not have evil horses, does he? No, he says: “he spurs on the good ones, he reins in and holds back the evil ones.” Where do these evil horses come from? To be sure, if we say or think that they are substantias, we side with or belong to the madness of the Manichees. But to keep that madness...
far from us, in a catholic way we understand that those horses are our vices, which resist the law of the mind because of the law of sin. When these vices have been separated from us, they will not be somewhere else, but having been healed in us they will be nowhere. Then why do they not perish in baptism? Or do you not yet confess that their guilt has perished, but weakness remains? Not the guilt by which they were guilty, but the guilt by which they made us guilty in the works to which they drew us. Neither does their weakness so remain, as if they were some kind of animals which were weakened, but they themselves are our weakness. Nor should it be thought that among these evil horses he named that iniquity (iniquitatem) which is destroyed in baptism. For that was the [iniquity] of the sins which we did, which were all forgiven and now do not exist at all. The guilt of those sins remained in force, when the sins themselves happened and then passed away. But this law of sin—which remains after its guilt is forgiven in the sacred font—he called iniquity (iniquitatem) precisely because it is iniquitous (iniquum) that the flesh should desire (concupiscat) against the spirit [Gal. 5:17a]: although there is iustitia in our renovation, because it is just (iustum) that the spirit desire (concupiscat) against the flesh [Gal. 5:17b], that we may walk by the spirit and not complete the desires of the flesh [Gal. 5:16]. And to be sure, we find this, our iustitiam, named among the good horses.799

Several factors, all central to Augustine's polemic against Julian, converge in this paragraph. First, Augustine defends his basic contention, viz., that inherited concupiscence is evil, by arguing that this evil is to be understood psychologically, privatively, and affectively rather than ontologically, i.e., as evil desire that wounds

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and weakens the renovated *spiritus*, and not as a substance existing in its own right (whether in the Manichean sense or, by extension, as the lowest part of the kind of bi- or tripartite soul theorized paradigmatically by Plato). Even the good horseman has evil horses to deal with: but the metaphor breaks down if carried to the point of thinking that these unruly and rebellious evils are *things*, when in fact they name the lack, wound, disease, or weakness that continues to beleaguer the affections of the imperfectly renovated soul itself.

Second, Augustine distinguishes between the *guilt* that accrues to a person because of this evil desire on the one hand, and its *operations* in the just soul on the other. In a way, it was this distinction, classically formulated in *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28-26.29, that animated the vigorous polemics of the 420s. In the case of actual sin, its

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720 Cf. *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28, BA 23.118: *Non enim substantialiter manet, sicut aliquod corpus aut spiritus, sed affectio est quaedam malae qualitatis, sicut languor.*

721 BA 23.116-120 (cf. WSA I/24.46-7): 25.28. *Si autem quaeritur, quomodo ista concupiscientia carnis maneant in regenerato, in quo uniueorsorum facta est remissio peccatorum, quandoquidem per ipsam seminatur et cum ipsa carnalis gignitur proles parentis etiam baptizati, aut certe, si in parente baptizato potest esse et peccatum non esse, cur eadem ipsa in prole peccatum sit: ad haec respondetur dimitti concupiscientiam carnis in baptismo, non ut non sit, sed ut in peccatum non inpusetur. Quamuis autem reatu suo iam soluto, manet tamen, donec sanetur omnis infirmitas nostra, proficiens renovacione interioris hominis de die in diem, cum exterior induerit incorrupcionem. Non enim substantialiter manet, sicut aliquod corpus aut spiritus, sed affectio est quaedam malae qualitatis, sicut languor. Non ergo aliiquid remanet, quod non remittatur, cum fit, sicut scriptum est: *Propitius Dominus omnibus iniquitatibus nostris, sed, donec fiat et quod sequitur: qui sanat omnes langues tuos, qui redimit de corruptione uitam tuam, manet in corpore mortis huius carnis concupiscencia, cuius uitiosis desideris ad illicita perpetranda non obedire praecipimur, ne regnet peccatum in nostro mortali corpore.* Quae tamen concupiscencia cotidie minuitur in proficientibus et continentibus, accedente etiam senectute multo maxime. Qui vero ei nequiter seruiunt, tantas in eis uires accipit ut plurumque, iam aetate deficientibus membris eisdemque partibus corporis ad illud opus admoerui minus valentibus, turpius et procaciis insanire non desinit. 26.29. In eis ergo, qui regenerantur in Christo, cum remissionem accipient prorsus omnium peccatorum, utique necesse est ut reatus etiam huius licet adhuc manentis concupiscentiae remittatur, ut in peccatum, sicut dixi, non inpuetur. Nam sicut eorum peccatorum, quae manere non possunt, quoniam cum fluint praetereunt, reatus tamen manet et, nisi remittatur, in aeternum manebit, sic illius, quando remittitur, reatus auferatur. Hoc est enim non habere peccatum, reum non esse peccati. Nam si quisquam verbi gratia fecerit adulterium, etiamsi numquam deinceps faciat, reus est adulterii, donec reatus ipsius indulgentia remittatur. Habet ergo peccatum, quamuis illud quod admisit iam non sit, quia cum tempore quo factum est praeteriti. Nam si a peccando desistere hoc
guilt remains in force long after the sinful act itself has transpired. Conversely, argues
Augustine, the reatus owing to mala concupiscientia is abolished in baptism, but its
malicious operations remain in force.

The third factor is the most difficult point to interpret and, at the same time,
the most decisive: the question of whether the evil desire that remains in the holy soul
and is forgiven in baptism retains in itself an intrinsic guiltiness. That is to say, is the
concupiscentia which Augustine emphatically asserts to be mala also rea, even in the
baptized/forgiven person who has been set free from the bond of all guilt? As noted
above, modern scholarship recognizes that Augustine’s position on this point
fluctuates; but there are two strong reasons to count c. Iul. 2.5.12 amongst the places in
his works where he affirms the intrinsic guiltiness of evil desire in sanctis. It is easier, I
think, to begin with the second instance, where Augustine explains the “evil horse”
named iniquitas vis-à-vis baptismal forgiveness and the inner conflict described in Gal.
5:16-17. This Ambrosian horse is not, argues Augustine, to be mistaken for the iniquity
pardoned in baptism: the guilt of all sins was destroyed in that sacred font, including
the guilt of original sin or concupiscence, the lex peccati that binds all Adam’s
children. Rather, explains Augustine, when Ambrose spoke of iniquitas, he meant the
law of sin itself: and he spoke rightly, because it is iniquum for the flesh to lust against
the spirit. The evil operation of the flesh is iniquitous or unjust. By contrast, the
renovated soul or spiritus possesses real iustitia by virtue of the fact that it fights back
against this evil and iniquitous desire with its own holy desire, and does not complete

esset non habere peccata, sufficeret, ut hoc nos moneret Scriptura: Fili, peccasti, non adicias iterum;
non autem sufficit, sed addidit: et de pristinis deprecare, ut tibi remittantur. Manent ergo, nisi
remittantur. Sed quomodo manent, si praeterita sunt, nisi quia praeterierunt actu, manent reatu? Sic
itaque fieri e contrario potest, ut etiam illud maneat actu, praetereat reatu.
the desires of the flesh. Now, to call concupiscence *iniquitas* and to assert that its
operation in the baptized is *iniquum* is at most a hair’s breath from naming it
*peccatum* and affirming its intrinsic *reatus*; and a cursory glance at (say) Augustine’s
sermon on Ps. 50[51] demonstrates the real semantic equivalence that obtains amongst
these overlapping scriptural terms. It is, I suggest, reasonable to assume that
Luther’s interpretation of the material he excerpted from c. *Iul.* 2.5.12 is influenced by
its immediate context. But we must look into the first and more important instance
directly, which so greatly interested Luther in 1516.

Augustine first repeats the familiar refrain: the guilt (*reatus*) of the vices that
comprise the believer’s flesh perishes in baptism, but their weakness (*infirmitas*)
remains. But then he continues: *non reatus quo ipsa rea fuerant, sed quo nos reos
fecerant in malis operibus, quo nos traxerant*. This sentence is a further specification of
the guilt that is forgiven in baptism. In the context, it is clear that the antecedent of
the *ipsa* that Augustine says had been *rea* is *vitia*. So the sentence, somewhat amplified
to clarify its meaning, comes roughly to this:

The guilt of the vices perishes in baptism, but the weakness remains. The guilt
that perishes is not the guilt by which the vices themselves had been guilty.
Rather, the guilt that perishes is that by which the vices made us guilty by
doing the evil works to which our vices drew us.

There would be little to perplex in Augustine’s sentence if his *fuerant* read *sunt*
instead: if it did, this would amount to an unambiguous statement of the intrinsically

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722 CCSL 38.599-616, WSA III/16.410-29. This semantic equivalence arises naturally from the Psalm
itself, in Augustine’s old Latin version of the Psalter: v. 3, *dele iniquitatem meam* (CCSL 38.603.6.12);
v. 4, *lava me ab inujustitia mea, et a delicto meo munda me* (38.603.7.1-5); v. 5, *quoniam iniquitatem
meam ego agnosco, et delictum meum contra me est semper* (38.603.8.1-2); v. 7, *in inuquitatibus
conceptus sum, et in peccatis mater mea in utero aluit* (38.606.10.3-29); v. 11, *averte faciem tuam a
guilt-bearing quality of the vicious and evil passions with which the just soul must contend by grace. But even as it stands, the text leans in this direction. From the momentous *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28 on in his debate with Julian, Augustine upholds his key distinction between *reatus* and *vitium*. But it appears that here he makes a further distinction. There is, on the one hand, a guilt by which the renewed soul’s vices were themselves guilty (*ipsa rea*). On the other, there is a guilt by which the pre-baptized person as a morally responsible person had become guilty (*nos reos*) when his vicious passions had led him into consensual sinful acts. In my judgment, this signals an (at this point) still somewhat opaque yet latent and ultimately germinal distinction between the guiltless person and his guilt-bearing flesh: and it begs the question how a baptized person battling intrinsically guilty *vitia* in his soul can nonetheless be fully set free from guilt. The most plausible solution, which is arguably already present at *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28, is that God in his mercy does not impute to the baptized person the guilt that ought to accrue to him by right on account of his evil flesh.

This, as it happens, is the solution Augustine himself provides explicitly at *c. Iul.* 6.17.51—note well, in defense of *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28:

I said that “the concupiscence of the flesh is forgiven in baptism, not so that it does not exist, but so that it is not imputed as sin; although its guilt has already been released, it remains nevertheless.” Against these words of mine you argue, clever fellow that you are, as if I had said that concupiscence itself is set free from guilt through Baptism (*tamquam ipsam concupiscentiam dixerim per Baptismum reatu liberari*), since I said, “its guilt has already been released” (*reatu suo iam soluto*)—as if I had said “its (*suo*)” [guilt, meaning the guilt] by which concupiscence itself is guilty (*quo ipsa rea est*); and its guilt having being released, concupiscence itself would remain, absolved. If I had really thought that, I would surely not have said that concupiscence is evil, but that it had been so. And in this way, according to your marvelous understanding, when you hear that the guilt of murder in some person has been released, you think that the murder itself, not the man, has been absolved from guilt! Who would think this way, except someone who is not embarrassed to praise that with
which he is compelled to fight? And how can you boast and exalt in refuting this opinion, which is plainly not mine but yours? You say the sort of things that ought to be said to those who affirm that through Baptism the concupiscence of the flesh has become sanctified and faithful in the regenerate people in whom it remains. But it is fitting rather for you, who declare it to be good, to say that “the good of sanctification is added to its natural goodness,” as you say to infants, and that the concupiscence of the flesh is God’s holy child. We, however, who say that concupiscence is evil, and that it nevertheless remains in the baptized, although its guilt—not the guilt by which it itself was guilty (for it is not some persona), but the guilt by which it was making a man guilty from his origin—was forgiven and wiped away: heaven forbid that we should say that it is sanctified since, if they have not received the grace of God in vain, the regenerate must fight with it as though with an enemy in a civil war, and they must desire and pray to be healed of that plague.\textsuperscript{723}

Augustine’s \textit{quo ipsa rea est} here in bk. 6 closely matches his \textit{quo ipsa rea fuerant} in bk. 2: in fact, it is just the hypothetical shift in verb tense that I had suggested might clear up Augustine’s meaning. And here it is: \textit{concupiscientia ipsa rea est}, in the present, in the regenerate; but it is not imputed to the person who has been baptized, absolved, and set free from all his guilt. A murderer can be set free from guilt by God’s grace, but the act of murder itself is always guilty. In the same way, the evil desire of the flesh is and can only ever be guilty \textit{per se}, but the flesh-bearing regenerate person

\textsuperscript{723} NBA I/18.930-2, PL 44.852-3 (cf. WSA I/24.510-11): \textit{a me dictum est, “dimitti concupiscentiam carnis in Baptismo, non ut non sit, sed ut in peccatum non imputetur; quamvis autem reatu suo iam soluto, manet tamen.” Adversus haec mea verba sic argumentaris homo acutissimus, tamquam ipsam concupiscentiam dixerim per Baptismum reatu liberari; quoniam ipsam dixi, “reatu suo iam soluto”: velut “suo” dixerim, quo ipsa rea est, eoque soluto illa permaneat absoluta. Quod utique si sensissem, profecto eam malam esse non dicerem, sed fuisse. Ac per hoc, secundum mirabilem intelligentiam tuam, quando audis in aliquo homicidii reatum solutum, non hominem, sed ipsum homicidium a reatu existimas absolutum. Sic intellegat quis, nisi qui non erubescit laudare, cum qua compellitur dimicare? Et quomodo te iactas et exsultas in redarguendo istam sententiam, non neeam plane, sed tuam? Tale quippe dicis, qualia dicenda sunt in eos, qui per Baptismum sanctificatam et fidelem factam concupiscentiam carnis affirmant in eos, in quibus regeneratifs manet tamen. Sed hoc tibi potius qui eam bonam praedicatas, convenit dicere, “ut bono eius naturali,” sicut de infantibus dicitis: “bonum sanctificationis accedat,” et sit carnis concupiscientia sancta Dei filia. Nos autem qui eam malam dicimus, et manere tamen in baptizatis, quamvis reatus eius, non quo ipsa erat rea (neque enim aliqua persona est), sed quo reum hominem originaliter faciebat, fuerit remissus atque vacuatus; absit ut dicamus sanctificari, cum qua necesse habent regenerati, si non in vacuum Dei gratiam susceperunt, intestino quodam bello tamquam cum hoste confligere, et ab ea peste desiderare atque optare sanari.}
emerges from the water of baptism washed entirely clean from all guilt. And, to be sure, the regenerate and forgiven person is instantly enrolled in a lifelong prayerful “civil war” against the evil of his flesh, which God does not reckon to his account, longing to be completely healed (sanari) from the affective disease that afflicts him and displeases God.

That, at any rate, may serve us as Augustine’s own interpretation (from the same work) of the text from c. Iul. 2.5.12 that Luther cites in his scholion on Rom. 7:17.²²⁴ And it will be remembered that at the head of the great excursus on Rom. 7:7, Luther had pointed to the end of c. Iul. 6—which of course includes the striking passage at 6.17.51—as “the clearest explanation of all.”²²⁵ Well, here is the interpretation of c. Iul. 2.5.12 that Luther offers himself:

From this beautiful authority it is clear how concupiscence is our very weakness toward the good, which in itself is certainly guilty (rea), but nonetheless does not make us guilty (reos nos) unless we consent and work. Now something marvelous follows from this: that we are guilty and not guilty. For we ourselves are that weakness, therefore it is guilty and we ourselves are guilty, until it ceases and is healed. But we are not guilty, so long as we do not work in accord with it: for God’s mercy does not impute the guilt of the weakness (reatum infirmitatis), but the guilt of the one who consents to the weakness of the will (reatum consentientis infirmitati voluntatis).²²⁶

²²⁴ According to Hans-Ulrich Delius, though Luther cites nupt. conc. 1.25.28 with great frequency he does not seem to have quoted c. Iul. 6.17.51. Augustin als Quelle Luthers, 181-6. That said, we do know that Luther read c. Iul. as a whole, and in the introduction to his long excursus at Rom. 7:7 he states that omne clarissime li. 6. contra eundem c. XI vsque in finem (WA 56.340.3-4). So it is plausible to infer that impressions formed from his reading of book 6 informed his interpretation of 2.5.12 and, for that matter, nupt. conc. 1.25.28.


²²⁶ WA 56.351.10-7: Ex ista pulchra authoritate patet, Quomodo Concupiscencia sit ipsa infirmitas nostra ad bonum, que in se quidem rea est, Sed tamen reos nos non facit nisi consentientes et operantes. Ex quo tamen mirabile sequitur, Quod rei sumus et non rei. Quia Infirmitas illa nos ipsi sumus, Ergo ipsa rea et nos rei sumus, donec cesset et sanetur. Sed non sumus rei, dum non operamur secundum eam, Dei misericordia non imputante reatum infirmitatis, Sed reatum consentientis infirmitati voluntatis. Cf. LW 25.340.
This is the place where Rudolf Hermann exclaimed: “Grave words, which sound just like Augustine!”

In arguing that this resonance is merely apparent, Hermann takes two steps to pit the two theologians’ real positions against each other. First, he points out that Luther speaks of a *reatus* that belongs to one’s *infirmitas* as such: and this Hermann regards as a material advance beyond Augustine’s actual position. Second, he asserts that Luther’s *non consentire* cannot be the same as Augustine’s, because Luther’s claim that (a) the flesh’s weakness is guilty per se, combined with (b) the claim that we *are* this guilty weakness, must mean (c) that there is a kind of *consensus* in operation within the saint’s *rea concupiscientia*, i.e., a consent already in being prior to the full-blown consent of which Luther speaks in such a beguilingly Augustinian way. Thus unlike Augustine, concludes Hermann, when Luther sets forth his *non consentire* as the condition for God’s merciful non-imputation, it is not a matter of refusing consent to an individual sinful act, but rather of refusing consent to one’s total self-destruction: “a whole-hog messing up of one’s life.”

Otherwise, as I noted above, an Augustinian Luther would send his modern spiritual descendants back to the confessional, *quod impossibile est*. Q.E.D. And thence, perhaps, to what Michael Root identifies as one of the central “constructions” at bottom of twentieth-century Lutheranism: the radical “simul” and the indifference/hostility to real growth in holiness that attends it.

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727 Hermann, 192.
728 Hermann, 193-4.
729 Hermann, 194-5. For similar reasons but with greater reserve, Adolf Hamel’s (II/18) interpretation of the same passage concluded: “that is more than Augustine, in the texts cited, actually says.”
But let us examine the two fateful steps which Hermann took in 1930. Luther at the very least intends to be restating in his own words the doctrinal content of the excerpt he has just related from *c. Iul.* 2.5.12. On this attempted *reditio* of Augustine’s *traditio*, all sides are agreed. In essence, Luther states that concupiscence is intrinsically guilty, but that it does not make the regenerate person guilty apart from his consenting to its evil desires: God mercifully declining to impute the real and intrinsic *reatum infirmitatis* to the person who refuses to consent to his own *infirmitas voluntatis*. Hermann first asserts that Augustine does not hold concupiscence to be guilty in itself. But as I have proven at least plausibly with respect to *c. Iul.* 2.5.12, and I believe demonstrably with respect to *c. Iul.* 6.17.51, Augustine upholds this very point: *tamquam ipsam concupiscentiam dixerim per Baptismum reatu liberari! ipsa rea est.* Luther thus proves himself both a better interpreter of the “420s Augustine” than Hermann and, at least in this respect, a faithful “Augustinian” in his own right.

Secondly, Hermann posits that Luther’s *infirmitas illa [rea] nos ipsi sumus* involves a kind of consent within the flesh’s evil desires which dramatically erodes the significance of refusing consent to these evil desires. But as we have seen in the entire scholion on Rom. 7 up to this point, when Luther teaches that the saints are their own weakness, he stands on firm Augustinian ground. This is the whole force of the affective and privative *vulnus* psychology that Luther had exposited immediately prior to the excerpt from *c. Iul.* 2.5.12, 731 and of the spirit/flesh *communio idiomatum* elaborated in the scholion on Rom. 7:7. 732 Augustine argues that our vices are not some separate substance, but that they belong to us as the affective defect, weakness,

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731 WA 56.350.22-351.2, LW 25.339.
732 WA 56.343.16-27, LW 25.332.
sickness, or wound afflicting our partly renovated souls. When Luther says that we are this weakness, he is simply reiterating—via the synecdoche of the *communio idiomatum*—the anti-Manichean ontology of privation that factors so centrally in Augustine’s psychology of the affectively divided regenerate will. Luther is thus not claiming that the regenerate are *nothing but* this weakness. Rather, he is upholding the basic Augustinian conviction that this weakness belongs to the regenerate as intimately as a wound belongs to a man being healed: which is why Luther affirms Augustine’s *sanata* with a *sanetur* of his own, and proceeds directly to the Parable of the Good Samaritan to explain the ongoing nature of this healing further. For Luther the Augustinian, the sick or sinful desires of the “flesh” are precisely that privative “part” (so to speak) of the divided will to which this same embattled will does not consent, because holy *delectatio victrix*, infused into the heart by the Holy Spirit to renew the will into “spirit,” holds its ground.

Once this point is grasped, Hermann’s hypothesis of a *consensus* within the flesh itself is not only rendered unnecessary, it is shown to be groundless. Like Augustine in *c. lul.* 2 and 6, Luther upholds the intrinsic *reatum infirmitatis*. And when Luther maintains that the regenerate are this remaining (and in itself, guilty) weakness, he does so in the Augustinian fashion I have just described. For Luther as for Augustine, the partially renewed will’s refusal to succumb to its own weakness is the condition *sine quo non* for God’s merciful non-imputation of the *reatum infirmitatis*. On the surface, Luther’s “we are guilty and we are not guilty” appears to

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734 WA 56.343.6-7: *quia iam non tantum vniius sunt persone mens et caro, Sed etiam vniius voluntatis*. Cf. LW 25.331.
be the sort of paradox that Hermann, Grane, et al. have taken it to be. But upon close examination of its meaning in light of the Augustinian theology that Luther is explicitly (and rather learnedly) appropriating, the soon-to-be Reformer’s nascent rhetorical verve communicates more forcefully essentially the same position that Augustine held against Julian centuries before. The regenerate Christian is “guilty” in the restricted sense that his evil and guilt-laden fleshly desire would make him so personally if God held his concupiscentia rea against him. But so long as he keeps up the fight against the evil desires that remain within him by not consenting to them, God forgives the intrinsic guilt of these desires and does not impute any guilt whatsoever to the baptized person’s account. God does not impute the guilt of the weakness that wounds the renewed person’s will: he only imputes the guilt of the person who consents to this weakness, and in so doing foolishly flees from the medicus whose grace had begun to heal his soul. Whether or not such words are “grave” depends on one’s own theological convictions, but I believe Hermann is right to think that they sound just like Augustine.

We can afford greater brevity in considering the final three excerpts from Augustine’s works against Julian in the scholion on Rom. 7:17.

2.1.2. c. Iul. 3.20.39. On the heels of his traditio of the excerpt from c. Iul. 2.5.12, Luther explains the logic of progressive sanative renewal amidst the disease of residual sin via the christological interpretation of Luke 10:25-37. Taking the homo semivivus into his care and pouring (Infundens) wine and oil into his wounds, the Good Samaritan did not heal him instantly, but began to heal him (incepit sanare). Luther shifts quickly to the now familiar Augustinian language of one and the same man (idem homo) who is
rightly described in various ways insofar as (Inquantum) the gracious healing of his affections has progressed. The same sick man is both weak and getting well: insofar as he is healthy he desires good things, but as one who is still weak he desires alia; indeed, he is “compelled” (cogitur) to yield to his weakness, “which he himself does not want.”\footnote{735} This is an unremarkable restatement of the theory of involuntary affective “peccatum” that became increasingly important for Augustine’s interpretation of Rom. 7 in the late 420s,\footnote{736} here set within the overarching context of the partially renewed person’s ongoing healing by grace. Christ’s patient suffers the ongoing operations of his affective disease invitus,\footnote{737} against the good desires of his own holy will which Christ’s Spirit pours into him: reading Luther’s Infundens as a implicit reference to gratia infusa et sanans.

At just this point and from this Augustinian vantage, Luther engages in a brief and highly allusive debate with ancient and medieval philosophical psychologies; and this forms the context for his citation of c. Iul. 3.20.39:

\footnote{736} c. Iul. op. imp. 5.61, CSEL 85/2.276 (cf. WSA I/25.588): Unde [Paulus] posteaquam peccati habitantis in carne sua, quo cogebatur malum agere quod nolebat, necessitatem poenamque deflevit, etc.; cf. c. Iul. op. imp. 4.103.4, CSEL 85/2.107 (cf. WSA I/25.464): ... profecto in homine mole consuetudinis presso simul esse possunt et iustitiae voluntas et peccati necessitas, quoniam velle adiacet mihi [Rom. 7:18b] professio est voluntatis, perficere autem bonum non invenio [Rom. 7:18c] confessio est necessitatis; 5.50.1-2, CSEL 85/2.255-6 (Cf. WSA I/25.574): Attende eum qui dicit: Quod nolo malum hoc ago [Rom. 7:19] et responde utrum necessitatem non habeat agendi malum, qui non quod vult facit bonum, sed quod non vult malum hoc agit. Quod si apostolo repugnare non audes, ecce homo a necessario malum agens definitiones tuas dirumpit et dissipat; necessitate quippe malum agit qui non vult et agit... Notum est quod primus homo voluntate malum egit non necessitate, sed iste qui dicit quod nolo malum hoc ago, necessitate se ostendit malum agere, non voluntate, et flens miserias suas ridet definitiones tuas. Also: c. Iul. op. imp. 2.38, 5.28, 5.59. Cf. Nisula, 126, 345-50.
\footnote{737} Cf. the interlinear gloss on Rom. 7:15, WA 56.70.2-7: Non enim quod uolo per spiritum Charitatis bonum i.e. non concupiscere, Vt lex dicit hoc ago: i.e. vtique concupisco contra legem sed quod odio secundum interiorem hominem per spiritum malum i.e. concupiscere illud Quia concupiscentiam non odit, qui non est spiritualis facio. non opere, Sed quia concupiscientia fit et surgit, etiam Inuito spirito. Cf. LW 25.63.
In light of these points the frivolous and delirious commentum of the metaphysical theologians is plain to see, when they dispute about contrary appetites, whether they are able to exist in the same subject (de appetitibus contrariis, an possint in eodem esse subiecto). They invent the idea that spirit, sc. reason, is a thing separate by itself and absolute and integral and perfect in its own kind. Likewise sensuality or flesh by opposition is some contrary thing, equally integral and absolute. And because of these, their foolish phantasies, they are driven to forget that flesh is the weakness itself or wound of the whole man, who through grace has begun to be healed in the reason or spirit (Caro sit ipsa infirmitas velut vulnus totius hominis, qui per gratiam in ratione seu spirituceptus est sanari). For who imagines that in a sick man there are thus two contrary realities (duas res contrarias)? since it is the same body, which seeks health and yet is compelled to do things which belong to its weakness: the same body under both conditions. Book 3 contra Iul. c. 20: “concupiscence is so great an evil, that as it resists it is conquered by being assaulted until, like a wound in a body, it is healed by the perfect cure” (Concupiscentia vsque adeo malum est, Ut repugnans expugnando vincatur, donec sicut vulnus in corpore perfecta curatone sanetur).

In the first place, I note that Luther’s text in the excerpt matches our best modern edition’s without any substantial variations.

As to the content of the passage: from what I can gather from the detailed researches of Pekka Kärkkäinen and Theodor Dieter, Luther seems to be taking up some tenets of his Erfurt teachers’ philosophical psychology. Kärkkäinen has shown that in the Buridanian strand of the via moderna regnant in early sixteenth-century Erfurt, Trutfetter and Usingen rejected the plurality of substantial forms in one subject in favor of the real unity of the soul and, in the course of their commentaries on Aristotle’s de anima, defended their positions against both live philosophical alternatives (e.g., Thomas’, Scotus’, or Ockham’s psychology) and historical stances no
longer currently held by a particular school. Amongst the latter category, Usingen discussed Anaxagoras, Plato, and Averroës. Is it possible that Luther the Erfurt magister artium turned Wittenberg doctor in bibliă is doing something similar here? Of the three historical positions mentioned by Usingen, it seems to be Plato’s psychology (in Phaedo, as opposed to Republic) that most nearly resonates with what Luther dismisses as a frivolous invention, to wit: reason or spirit juxtaposed with sensualitas as contrary entities with contrary appetites that together make up a single subject, with the nod going to ratio as the better and more real of a human being’s two constituent parts. On this reading, Luther sets the Erfurt/Buridanian rejection of the soul’s division into real parts (or faculties really distinct from the essentia animae) against a broadly Platonic interpretation of Rom. 7:14-25’s confessing subject as an akratic spirit or mens unable to control its lower and impassioned partes.

There is, I think, a more plausible interpretation to consider. When Luther denounces the “frivolous and delirious commentum of the metaphysical theologians,” he probably has the de anima commentaries contained within the eighth book of Trutfetter’s Summa in totam physicen and Usingen’s Exercitium de anima especially in mind, and perhaps relevant loci from Biel’s Collectorium. Luther had, after all, introduced his comments on Rom. 7:17 just a few pages earlier by lamenting the fallax Aristotelis methaphysica that has deceived “our theologians.” But if this is the case, we must inquire farther into the exact nature of Luther’s disagreement with his

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741 Kärkkäinen, “Psychology and the Soul in Late Medieval Erfurt,” 439.
743 On these two works, see Kärkkäinen, “Psychology and the Soul in Late Medieval Erfurt,” 423-6.
744 Esp. IV d. 4 q. 1 art. 2 conc. 3.
teachers, for his rejection of an aspect of their philosophical psychology does not
involve a blanket repudiation of philosophical psychology as such, as is commonly
assumed.\textsuperscript{746} Take, for example, the specific question at hand: Luther clearly agrees
with his Erfurt teachers in rejecting a real partition of the soul. So what is the issue at
stake between them?

Dieter’s research is particularly useful in answering this question. He has
shown that Usingen still uses the conceptual (as opposed to real) distinctions amongst
the soul’s several faculties to diversely apportion the conflicting desires that exist
within the single subject of the soul \textit{as if} its faculties were really distinct after all.\textsuperscript{747}
This is just the philosophical problem that Luther names here: \textit{disputant de appetitibus
contrariis, an possint in eodem esse subiecto}. What Dieter has recognized is that
Luther rejects Usingen’s solution to this problem as self-defeating and illusory, for
Usingen’s treatment of contrary desires ends up maintaining \textit{de facto} a kind of real
partition that contradicts the deeper tenets of his own psychology. That is to say,
Usingen ends up with a division between \textit{spiritus/ratio} as one integral \textit{res} and
\textit{sensualitas/caro} as another integral \textit{res} separate therefrom.\textsuperscript{748} So does Biel: \textit{gratia} and
the concupiscent \textit{fomes} are not formally opposed to one another, because grace is

\textsuperscript{746} As I discussed in cp. 1, this is the dominant position in scholarship that takes its bearings from
Joest and Ebeling, \textit{e.g.,} Notger Slenczka, “Luther’s Anthropology,” \textit{OHMLT}, 212-32.
\textsuperscript{747} Dieter, 131-2, in n. 426 citing Usingen’s \textit{Exercitium de anima} lib. 3 tract. 2, fol. 73v: \textit{In eodem
animali secundum eandem potentiam appetitus non contrariatur appetitui sed bene secundam
diversas [sc. potentias].}
\textsuperscript{748} Thus Usingen contrasts \textit{ratio} and \textit{sensualitas} in precisely the manner Luther rejects in his
\textit{Exercitium de anima} lib. 3 tract. 2, fol. 74r (Dieter, 134 n. 437): \textit{Continentes qui operantur bona sed
cum luctu et renitentia propterea quod sensualitas non est omnino rationi subiecta, vincit tamen
ratio sensum atque debellat et in illis appetitus sensitivus contrariatur intellectivo. Incontinentes qui
operantur mala cum luctu et resistentia propterea quod ratio non est omnino suppressa atque
sensualitati subjicta, vincit tamen sensualitas rationem in surgentibus passionibus in appetitu
sensitive.}
infused into the soul (anima) while concupiscence is merely in carne vel in aliqua virtute corporali. Ironically, Luther attacks this in the scholion on Rom. 7:17 at least in part because he actually shares with Usingen a common belief in the real unity of the soul. This is all quite helpful.

However, Dieter’s interpretation of the constructive position that Luther advances against “the metaphysical theologians” of Erfurt is unsatisfying. He realizes the Augustinian influences in play in the text, noting in particular the presence of the familiar spiritus/caro, facere/perficere, non consentire, and vulnus themes. But in a book on Luther und Aristoteles, Dieter’s attention fixes a little too quickly on the young Luther’s evolving concerns with the traditional language of sin as a bad qualitas, habitus, or vitium of the soul. No one can possess the moral disposition “virtue” and the moral disposition “vice” at the same time; as Usingen put it in a textbook example taken up endlessly by his pupil Luther, Inest autem contrarietas qualitati ut album, nigrum. Any given subject can only be qualified by the one or the other at a given time. Thus, continues Dieter—still soundly at this point—it is Luther’s judgment that if a theologian thinks consistently in these Aristotelian terms, St. Paul’s spirit/flesh “simul” cannot be adequately grasped and thematized. But then to resolve the matter, Dieter turns to Luther’s Worttheologie as a kind of deus ex machina: when the Word of God seizes a person, it sets his identity into a conflict which can only be expressed in the form of two contradictory “total” definitions. There is, I think, more of Hermann, Ebeling, Joest, and Grane in this than Dieter might care to admit, and

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749 Collectorium IV d. 4 q. 1 art. 2 conc. 3 (W & H IV/1.156).
750 Parvulus loyce cum figuris, tract. 5 fol. I IVr, cited by Dieter, 136.
751 Dieter, 134-6.
not a little of his teacher Bayer too. But on my reckoning, the real problem is that there is not enough of Augustine.

Taking up Dieter’s sound diagnosis of the problem, I propose a different interpretation of Luther’s solution. He does take up his teachers’ emphasis on the real unity of the soul. But when he addresses the philosophical-psychological problem posed by appetitus contrarii—which is at once the exegetical problem posed by Rom. 7:14-25—Luther outmaneuvers Usingen’s failed effort to uphold this unity in terms of nominalistic Aristotelianism by instead appropriating the heavily modified Stoicism embedded within the mature Augustine’s theology of grace.752 To be clear, I am not suggesting that Luther quite realized he was doing this: hence my emphasis on its embeddedness in Augustine’s theology. In Luther’s mind, he was simply recovering the anti-Pelagian theology of grace common to both St. Paul and Augustine and setting it against the Aristotelian (and Pelagian) aberrations of his teachers. But Luther’s straightforwardly Augustinian reply to the “metaphysical theologians”—which culminates in the citation of c. Iul. 3.20.39 as a proof from authority—contains within it a prepackaged affective philosophical psychology better suited to achieving the twofold end of maintaining both the real ontological unity of the soul and the mysterious reality of its inner division. Augustine’s modified Stoicism accomplishes this end, not by positing separate psychological parts, but by confessing the diverse passions that rend apart the entire regenerate soul.753 St. Paul’s “flesh” does not name a

752 Cf. my discussion at cp. 2.2.1 above. Timo Nisula’s (254) claim that “to Augustine, concupiscentia has moved beyond philosophical competence” eloquently captures the thoroughgoingness with which Augustine has both appropriated and transformed eclectic elements of ancient philosophy in light of the Bible (see 2 Cor. 10:5).
753 On this point, see esp. Byers, “Augustine on the ‘Divided Self’: Platonist or Stoic?”
part of the soul, or even a vicious qualitas animae, but rather a vicious affectio animae operating within and vitiating all the soul's faculties in a habitual manner.  

Likewise, Paul’s “spirit” and “mind” refer to neither Plato’s immortal logistikon nor Aristotle’s nous, but to the good, virtuous, and holy affections which vie against the vicious desires of the flesh within the battlefield of the one graced soul. This is all basic to Augustine’s simultaneously anti-Manichean and anti-Pelagian psychology. Classically stated at nupt. conc. 1.25.28, the “weakness” left behind in the regenerate after baptism does not remain “substantially,” for it is not a body or a spirit of some kind, but a vicious desire afflicting the holy soul: “a certain affection of an evil quality, like a disease” (affectio est quaedam malae qualitatis, sicut languor). Thus as Timo Nisula nicely has it, Augustine labors to unsettle Julian’s confidence in the “citadel of virtue” that is the magnanimous (pagan and Pelagian) soul by stressing that for the Christian, “no intact ground is left: the battle has to be fought inside the citadel.”

In the scholion on Rom. 7:17, Luther sets a philosophical psychology (and theology of healing grace) formulated in just these characteristically Augustinian terms against the substantia- and qualitas-oriented positions of his Aristotelian teachers. To wit: Christ progressively heals the half-dead man, who is healthy insofar as he desires (cupit) good things but sick to the extent that he still desires other things against his own will; “flesh” is a vulnus affecting not just a part, but the whole man;

754 That the affection is itself already vicious prior to the affected person’s volitional consent to it marks the vital modification of the Stoic theory of pro-passions and consent which Augustine develops in the context of his anti-Pelagian theology of grace.

755 BA 23.118, cf. WSA 1/44.46, which omits the crucial word affectio from its translation.

through grace the man’s “spirit” has begun to be healed (sanari) of this evil affective disease; and, on the authority of c. Iul. 3.20.39, this disease and wound is conquered in this life by battling against it, till the day it will be healed with the perfect cure of the eschatological resurrection. Luther then expands upon Augustine’s analogy of the wounded man being healed with one of his own devising: a dilapidated house undergoing renovations. Like the wound and the wounded man in process of being healed, the remaining imperfectio of a ruined house and its constructio upon beginning to be restored (instaurari) are not two separate things: eadem res est. On account of the fact that it is being rebuilt, the house is truly said to be a house and to be making progress (proficere). But on account of its imperfection, it is also said simul to not yet be a house and to fall short of what is proper to a house (deficere a proprietate domus). In both cases, true predications are made of one and the same house, but in different respects and on the basis of the mechanism of suppositional carrying that Luther has translated from its native christological sphere of discourse to make sense of Paul’s anthropology. As in Augustine’s vulnus analogy, Luther’s domus analogy moves firmly and unequivocally from the terminus a quo of the house’s original state of ruination, through its progressive renovation, to the terminus ad quem of its eventual completion. This is why Luther momentarily leaves off the analogy to cite Rom. 8:23 and Jas. 1:18: “we have the firstfruits of the spirit, we have become the beginning of God’s creature,” then returns to it via 1 Pet. 2:5 and Eph. 2:21: “we are being built up into a spiritual house, and a building thus constructed grows into a holy

Luther’s new analogy, which is meant to explain Augustine’s old one, demonstrates how deeply he has grasped the logic of Augustine’s *idem homo* spirit/flesh “*simul*” within the overarching context of Augustine’s theology of progressive renewal, healing, or renovation by grace.

Once Luther’s appropriation of Augustine’s philosophical psychology, precisely as an integral thread in the fabric of the church father’s theology of grace, is adequately grasped, it should be plain to see that his polemic against the “metaphysical theologians” does not signal a proto-Heideggerian rejection on his part of the *Substanzmetaphysik* that (per Ebeling *et al.*) dominated medieval Scholasticism. Luther the young O.E.S.A. lecturer on Romans is not anticipating the philosophy of late modernity. Nor, for that matter, is he rejecting philosophy *per se* for the Bible, as his rhetoric (and Augustine’s before him) might lead us to think. Rather, Luther is recovering a kind of paleo-Augustinianism that champions the very same affective psychology and theology of efficacious grace that had perplexed and indeed enraged Julian, the virtue-oriented Aristotelian moral philosopher, in late antiquity. On the eve of the Reformation, Luther is at least beginning to realize that “our theology and St. Augustine” would have much the same effect upon the early modern Church and its several schools of theology.760

760 Thus the famous lines from Luther’s 18 May 1517 letter to Johannes Lang, prior of the Erfurt Augustinians, WA Br 1.99.8-13 (#41): Theologia nostra et S. Augustinus prospere procedunt et regnant in nostra universitate Deo operante. Aristoteles descendit paulatim inclinatus ad ruinam prope futuram sempiternam. Mire fastiduntur lectiones sententiariae, nec est, ut quis sibi auditores sperare possit, nisi theologiam hanc, id est biblia aut S. Augustinum aliumve ecclesiasticae autoritatis doctorem velit profiteri. Cf. LW 48.42.
Both the third and fourth Augustinian excerpts appear in Luther’s comments on Rom. 7:17b: Sed quod habitat in me peccatum. Indeed, Luther begins his exegesis by yielding the floor to Augustine:

Blessed Augustine book 2 contra Iulianum: “How then is sin dead, since it operates so many things in us even with us struggling against it? What are these many things? Nothing except foolish and harmful desideria, ‘which plunge those who consent (consentientes) into destruction,’ etc. [cf. 1 Tim. 6:9]. How then do we say that this sin is dead in baptism and how do we confess that it dwells in our members and operates many desideria, unless that it has died in its guilt (reatu), by which it was holding us (quo nos tenebat), and that until it is healed by the perfection of burial, it both rebels and is dead? Although now it is not called sin in the same way, by which it makes guilty (facit reum), but because it came about by the first man’s guilt, and because by rebelling it strives to draw us into guilt (ad reatum).”

Comparison with our best modern edition shows that although Luther has compressed Augustine’s text through three elisions, the sense remains intact. After quoting Rom. 7:23 and 7:18, Augustine writes:

Behold, that mighty soldier of Christ and faithful doctor of the Church [i.e., Ambrose] shows what a great fight we have with dead sins. How then is sin dead, since it operates so many things in us even with us struggling against it? What many things, if not foolish and harmful desideria which plunge those who consent into destruction and perdition? Certainly to endure such things, and not consent to them, is a struggle, a conflict, a fight. A fight between whom, if not good and evil: not of nature against nature, but of nature against a wound (vitium) that is already dead, but that still has to be buried (sepeliendum), that is, to be completely healed (sanandum)? How then do we say that this sin is dead in baptism, just as that man [i.e., Ambrose] said, and how do we confess that it dwells in our members, and operates many desideria even though we struggle against them and resist by not consenting to them, just as this man confesses—unless that it has died in its guilt, by which it was holding us, and that until it is healed by the perfection of burial, it both rebels and is dead? Although now it is not called sin in the same way, by which it

makes guilty; but because it came about by the first man’s guilt, and because by rebelling it strives to draw us into guilt, unless the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord helps us, lest even the sin that is dead in this way should rebel and, by thus conquering us, come back to life and reign.\footnote{NBA I/18.562, PL 44.696: Ecce quantam nos pugnam cum mortuis habere peccatis, ille strenuus Christi miles, et Ecclesiae fidelis doctor ostendit. Quomodo enim peccatum mortuum est, cum multa operetur in nobis reluctans nobis? Quae multa, nisi desideria stulta et noxia, quae consentientes mergunt in interitum et perditionem? Quae utique perperti, eisque non consentire, certamen est, conflictus est, pugna est. Quorum pugna, nisi boni et mali, non naturae adversus naturam, sed naturae adversus vitium iam mortuum, sed adhuc sepeliendum, id est, omnino sanandum? Quomodo ergo mortuum dicimus hoc peccatum in Baptismate, sicut etiam iste vir dicit, et quomodo habitare in membris fatemur, et multa operari desideria reluctantibus nobis, quibus non consentiendis resistimus, sicut etiam hic vir fatetur; nisi quia mortuum est in eo reatu quo nos tenebat, et donec sepulturae perfectione sanetur, rebellat et mortuum? Quamvis iam non eo modo appelleatur peccatum, quo facit reum; sed quod sit reatu primi hominis factum, et quod rebellando nos trahere nitiur ad reatum, nisi aduget nos gratia Dei per Iesum Christum Dominum nostrum, ne sic etiam mortuum peccatum rebellet, ut vincendo reviviscat et regnet. Cf. WSA I/24.330.}

For Luther exegeting Rom. 7:17b, the main object is to illumine what Paul means by the “sin” which he confesses still indwells him, and the \textit{c. Iul.} excerpt is suitable to this purpose. Taking up Ambrose’s apt remarks and then drawing them further into the decisive Pauline context of Rom. 6 and 7, Augustine maintains essentially the same position I exposed above vis-à-vis \textit{c. Iul.} 2.5.12, 6.17.51, and 3.20.39. St. Paul’s “sin” is not a Manichean nature of darkness, but an evil affective and privative wound that continues to operate many vicious \textit{desideria} despite the fact that in baptism it has “died” with respect to the guilt by which it had once held the unbaptized person bound in the chains of Adam’s sin and guilt. Though already “dead” in this guilt-related sense, Paul’s “\textit{peccatum}” has not yet been “buried”: an implicit allusion to Rom. 6:4. En route to its burial, the grotesque corpse of dead indwelling sin continues to fight its fate, rebelling against its burial through the operation of its evil desires and even coming back to life if the baptized person consents to them. By contrast, when the Christian fights against the evil desires he continues to suffer by not consenting to
them, the ongoing “burial” of dead (but operative!) indwelling sin carries on apace; that is—switching back to Augustine’s preferred metaphor—the baptized and forgiven person’s wounded nature continues to be healed. Meanwhile, Augustine clarifies, this “dead sin” (whose rebellious operations Mary Shelley might have admired) is not called “sin” in the same way it had been so called prior to the great disruption of baptismal grace, i.e., in the sense that previously it had made the unbaptized person guilty of Adam’s rebellion. The grace of forgiveness in baptism breaks the chain that held the heirs of Adam’s vitiated nature bound by Adam’s guilt. But as the regenerate still endure the lamentable effects of the original wounding, the “dead” or guilt-released “sin” that indwells them is called “sin” both on account of its source in Adam’s reatus and because it strives to entice the reborn to consent to its allurements and thus drag them out of life in Christ and back into Adam’s death, ad reatum.

Luther adds only one brief comment: “Therefore, it [i.e., Rom. 7:17b’s peccatum] is the original vice of the tinder” (est ipsum originale vitium fomitis). In itself, and given the content of the excerpt from nupt. conc. 1.23.25 that follows shortly thereupon (and indeed the tenor of the entire scholion), this suggests that Luther has adopted the excerpted material from c. Iul. 2.9.32 without modification as a satisfactory explication of Rom. 7:17b. I shall comment further on the conceptual links between these two excerpts in §4 below, especially regarding the nature and role of Augustine’s non consentire as it relates to the sinfulness of concupiscentia. But just prior to the next excerpt, Luther inserts a short back-reference to his comments in the first corollarium in the scholion on Rom. 7: “about this original vitium fomitis, it was

said above that we are more aptly said to die to it than it to us, and that while it remains, we are turned away (*diuerti*) from it in this life through grace.”⁷⁶⁴ Since this earlier text is sometimes taken to signal a complete break on Luther’s part with any kind of broadly Augustinian theology of progressive renovation, I need to look into it farther here. Given what we have seen thus far in the scholion on Rom. 7 both vis-à-vis Luther’s defensible grasp of Augustine’s meaning in its original context and his intention to appropriate this “420s Augustine” in his own theology, it is *prima facie* unlikely that the interpretations advanced by Grane, Forde, and others are sound. But let us see for ourselves what Luther wrote.

**Excursus on the corollarium at Rom. 7:1: Paul’s Augustinian *modus loquendi***

As Grane has famously observed, Luther contrasts Paul’s apostolic *modus loquendi* with the metaphysical or moral *modus* in vogue in late medieval theology. Thus Paul says

... that a man rather is taken away, with sin remaining as a relic, and a man is purged (*expurgari*) from sin rather than the contrary. However, the human sense says the contrary: sin is taken away, with the man remaining, and the man rather is purged (*purgari*). But the Apostle’s sense is the best of all, and more proper, and perfectly divine.⁷⁶⁵

Luther’s exact meaning in these few lines is cryptic: *peccatum remanens* or *relictum* is familiar enough and resonates with what Luther writes in his back-reference at Rom. 7:17b. But what is the import of the contrast he draws between (a) taking the man

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⁷⁶⁵ WA 56.334.14-19: *Modus loquendi Apostoli et modus methaphysicus seu moralis sunt contrarii. Quia Apostolus loquitur, vt significet sonet homine m potius aufferri peccato remanente velut relictro et hominem expurgari a peccato potius quam econtra. Humanus autem sensus econtra peccatum aufferri homine manente et hominem potius purgari loquitur. Sed Apostoli sensus optime proprius et perfecte diuinus est.* Cf. LW 25.322. Note the humanist ring to Luther’s praise of Paul’s *sensus divinus*. 
away from sin, which is St. Paul’s sense, and (b) taking the sin away from the man, which is the all too human sensus Luther sets out to oppose? The initial obscurity is further complicated by the fact that in both cases Luther states that man is “purged” or “cleansed,” first using the more emphatic expurgari, then purgari in the second instance. Grane argues that Luther is drawing a contrast between his (or Paul’s) theology and that of die Scholastik. But the great Dane too hastily explains this in terms of a contrast between Lutheran or Pauline justification on the one hand, and the Scholastic or Catholic theologies of qualitative transformation on the other.

Rechtfertigung is not about etwas am Menschen being transformed, states Grane, but about the man himself being changed. He is paraphrasing Luther’s own words at this point, and out of context it might sound as if Grane is envisioning a real renovation of some kind. Not exactly. Grane explains that the

... renovatio or mutatio of grace expresses itself in the attitude (Haltung) of the person who expects only the action of God, and completely abandons a fulfilling of the law of his own. Where this renewal takes place, sin has died, even though it still remains in the flesh.\textsuperscript{766}

In other words, the “change” that takes place in justification is seated in the attitude, bearing, or self-understanding of the person who confesses his status as a total sinner before God, and thus awaits God’s gracious bestowal of iustitia aliena. Sin ist gestorben in such a person—the emphasis is Grane’s—because “sin” is correlative to the wrath-working law (Rom. 4:15); and the sinner who thus postures himself before God, renouncing all claims to a righteousness of his own, no longer stands under the law’s sentence. But sin in itself still remains in the flesh, indeed it must remain, for the whole rationale behind the justification of the sinner is his (self-) recognition of his

\textsuperscript{766} Grane, \textit{Modus Loquendi}, 96.
total sinfulness. Thus sin has “died” only in the person in whom it remains, and who confesses its totalizing effect upon himself. This is the (I dare say) rather paradoxical Erneuerung that Grane sets forth to explain the obscure Lutherrede that opens the first corollary in the Rom. 7 scholion. This he sets against the “metaphysical” and “moral” theories of die Scholastik, with their literally misplaced concern for the transformation of psychological qualities or external works in advance of the deeper renovation of the person in his “psyche” (in the modern sense of the word) that Luther upholds.\footnote{Grane, \textit{Modus Loquendi}, 95-6. Cf. Berndt Hamm’s remarks on this text in his essay, “What was the Reformation Doctrine of Justification?” (in \textit{The Reformation of Faith}, 212): Luther “sees the interest of scholastic theology as being bent on human morality, man’s moral quality before God, and his natural quality in accordance with his creation, its diminution through sin and its restoration and improvement through the metaphysical quality of grace. Luther sees the Pauline approach to theology, on the other hand, as leaving aside the entire field of virtue and morality, physics and metaphysics, and man’s ability to act for better or worse. He is not concerned with man’s human ability but with his new creation by God, and a new relationship between the merciful God and sinful man in which man is outside himself in Christ. Consequently Luther can formulate the whole mold-breaking antithesis to the Catholic doctrine of the Middle Ages, the contrast between the two approaches, cogently as follows: Paul says that man is removed but sin remains. The moral approach, however, says that sin is removed and man remains” (citing WA 56.334.14-9 in n. 108).}

What are we to make of this? Dieter has properly upbraided Grane (and Ebeling) for their monolithic accounts of scholastic theology. (Not unjustifiably, he has also taken Luther to task for much the same reason.\footnote{Dieter, \textit{Der junge Luther und Aristoteles}, 28-37 for Grane and Ebeling; 27-28 \textit{et passim} for Luther.} That said, the often impassioned polemics against scholastic \textit{Sawtheologen} in the Romans lectures are plain as day,\footnote{On Rom. 4:7, WA 56.274.14, cf. LW 25.261.} and Grane is right to emphasize the either Paul or Aristotle/Scholastik dichotomy (which is, after all, Luther’s own invention) as a crucial factor in the scholia on Rom. 7 and 4 in particular. But as I have shown above, the roots of this very dichotomy lie in Augustine’s own polemical self-definition as a simple biblical theologian of grace over against Julian the clever Aristotelian moralist: and the \textit{modus}
*loquendi* that Luther advocates here *contra pelagianos modernos* has much in common with both the technical terminology and the theological substance developed by Augustine in his debate with Julian. If Grane falters in failing to diagnose the *problem* Luther takes himself to be facing with quite the degree of sophistication that Dieter provides, on my reading the real issue at stake is Grane’s failure to recognize the mature Augustinian character of the *solution* that Luther commends here as truly apostolic theology. A close reading of Luther’s elaboration of his puzzling claim that the man must be taken away from his sin, rather than the sin from the man, bears this out.

Luther confirms Paul’s *modus loquendi* by supplying parallel texts from Ps. 81:6, Rom. 6:17, the Exodus narrative, and Ps. 21:12, then explains:

> The reason for this kind of speaking is this: that grace and spiritual righteousness destroy and change (*tollit et mutat*) the man himself, and turn him away from sins—although sin is left behind (*relinquat*), so that while it justifies the spirit, it leaves behind (*reliquit*) concupiscence in the flesh and in the midst of the sins in the world. And this way of speaking is a most powerful engine against the self-righteous. But human righteousness endeavors to destroy and change (*tollere et mutare*) sins first, and to preserve the man himself; therefore, it is not righteousness, but hypocrisy. Therefore, as long as the man himself lives and is not destroyed and changed through the renovation of grace (*tollitur ac mutatur per renouationem gratiȩ*), by no works is he able to forestall his being under sin and the law.\(^{770}\)

Thomists (*et amici evangelici* like Hooker, Owen, or Bavinck) accustomed to the axiom that *gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit* instinctively cringe at Luther’s language at this point; and for that matter, in the *Lectures on Genesis* Luther himself energetically upholds this very axiom in his polemics against “the monks” (and Thomas Müntzer).

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\(^{770}\) WA 56.334.24-335.4, cf. LW 25.323.
who aim to destroy human nature by their asceticism. But we should not jump too quickly to the conclusion that Luther in 1516 is actually affirming that grace destroys nature: which, to be clear, he never actually says here. Rather, grace destroys *ipsam hominem*, that is, the man himself as a son of Adam apart from Christ, and changes him: which is why Luther can and does speak of the entire process of destruction and change—in St. Paul's terms, of death and new life—as *renovatio gratiae*. Luther is presupposing a bleak Augustinian account of human nature's vitiation in Adam, but not its abolition. Grace and spiritual righteousness abolish the old Adam's inherited vitiation in order to change and renovate the graced man himself in the depths of his being. Not, to be sure, all at once: grace *iustificat spiritum*, but *concupiscientia in carne* is left behind as a kind of relic. This, then, is what Luther means when he says that the man must be taken away from his sin, rather than the other way around.

And this is why he forcefully opposes the alternative. So long as *homo ipse* as a son of Adam remains intact, it will do no good—as the *iustitiarii* presume—to take away this or that sinful deed or vicious quality and in its place to cultivate a virtue or do a good work. For as Luther will say in the 1518 *Heidelberg Disputation*, “Adam is

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77 Asendorf, *Lectura in Biblia*, 75; Forsberg, *Das Abrahambild*, 101-5. In cp. 2.2.2 above, I pointed to WA 44.493.3-26, LW 7.261. In addition, see e.g. (1) WA 44.525.34-526.3, LW 7.305 (on Gen. 42:38): *Ea igitur doctrina Spiritus sancti in hoc exemplo proponitur, quae in omnibus Historiis patrum admodum celebris est et alibi quoque traditur, quod στοργὰς φυσικὰς quae efficiunt hunc luctum et dolorem, maneant in sanctis, et quod Deus non sit author destruendae naturae, sed sanandae. Spiritus sanctus non facit ex hominibus truncos et insensatos, quando infundit fidem, sed conservat, et auget quicquid in natura boni est, στοργὰς paternas, filiales, etc. Sunt enim creaturae Dei. Infirmantur quidem in multis, et tolluntur per Diabolum, sed Deus non tollit eas, sicut Monachi et fanatici faciunt. Nam et Ioseph vir est fortis, et sanctus, tamen plorat, sicut audivimus supra. (2) WA 44.552.27-33, LW 7.340 (on Gen. 43:30): *Vide quanta vis sit naturae, quae quanto melior est et integrior, tanto excellenteres atque ardentiores στοργὰς habet nec tollit aut corrumpit eam gratia et spiritus sanctus, ut monachi somniarant, sed corruptam sanat et restituit in integrum. Id enim ex hoc exemplo Ioseph appareat, qui adeo vincitur στοργῇ, ut cor et oculi eius liqueascant et solvantur in lachrymas. Totus stupet et obmutescit praed magna miseratione, qua adficitur erga fratrem et parentes.*
rather edified by good works.”772 This is ramped-up Luther rhetoric at its finest, but in the sequel Luther explains with necessary precision exactly what he means: “For it is impossible for a person not to be puffed up by his own good works, unless he has first been emptied out and destroyed by sufferings and evils, until he knows that he himself is nothing and that the works are not his own, but God’s.”773 The theologus gloriae in 1518 and the iustitiarii in 1516 are identical, and suffer from the same deadly brew of a Bielish theology and a Pelagian spiritual pathology, to wit: the presumption of their own fundamental integrity; the failure to grasp the depths of their perversions; the vain notion (at once dogmatic and spiritual) that just a little bit of gratia elevans is needed to boost their naturalia integra into the state of grace that will permit them to achieve condign merit and, in the end, eternal life.

No, says Luther—as theologian certainly, but also as Staupitzian Seelsorger—that path only leads the “penitent” to re-inscribe ever more deeply in his proud heart the lust for his own autonomous “self” that felled Adam in the Garden. 774 It is not enough to take away this or that sin from the man and lift him up to a state of grace, so long as he remains in the depths of his being the filius Adae he had been all along, originaliter. A more powerful remedy is needed to match the severity of the case facing Adam’s ruined children: who, on top of it all, are blind to their own ruination! They

773 WA 1.362.31-33: Impossibile est enim, ut non infletur operibus suis bonis, qui non prius exinanitus et destructus est passionibus et malis, donec sciat seipsum esse nihil et opera non sua sed Dei esse. Cf. LW 31.53.
774 Cf. Heidelberg Disputation #16, WA 1.360.25-30: Homo putans, se ad gratiam velle pervenire faciendo quod in se est, peccatum addit peccato, ut duplo reus fiat. Quia ex dictis patet: dum facit quod est in se, peccat et sua querit omnino. At si per peccatum putet se dignum fieri gratia aut aptum ad gratiam, iam superbam addit praesumptionem et peccatum non peccatum et malum non malum credit, quod est nimis grande peccatum.
are in desperate straits calling for desperate measures: *gratia sanans* as a kind of spiritual chemotherapy, grace that puts the congenitally cancerous Adam infecting them to death, and changes and renews the whole person (*homo ipse*) in Christ.\(^7\) The man himself must be ripped away from his sin, emptied and destroyed and crucified with Christ in order to be torn out of the first Adam’s flesh and changed and raised up *per renovationem gratiae* into the newness of life that is to be had only in the Last, the Life-Giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). This gracious and “radical” (in the sense that it reaches down to the roots) renovation must take place first if one’s works are to become truly good: otherwise, the most pious and industrious doer of good works *manu* is only reinforcing his inherited Adamic pathology *in corde*, and fooling himself as to his own holiness in the bargain. There is not a little of John Tauler and the *Theologia Deutsch* in this.\(^8\) But for my present purposes, it is more vital to recognize (as Grane failed to do) that this complex of doctrines—involving the depth of human nature’s vitiation in Adam, the corresponding necessity of a strong healing grace to renovate what had fallen into disrepair, the fragmentary “relic” of the old Adam left behind as the new justified *spiritus* advances in the course of its ongoing renewal—bears upon it the

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\(^7\) Cf. *Heidelberg Disputation* #17, WA 1.361.12-21: *Patet quod non desperatio, sed spes potius praedicatur, quando nos esse peccatores praedicatur. Ilia enim praedicatio peccati est praeparatio ad gratiam seu potius agnitione peccati et fides talis praedicationis. Tunc enim surgit desiderium gratiae, quando orta est peccati cognitione. Tunc aeger querit medicinam, quando intelligit malum sui morbi. Sicut itaque non est causam desperationis vel mortis dare, quando aegroto dicitur periculum sui morbi, sed potius est eum provocare ad curam medicinae querendae, Ita dicere quod nihil sumus et semper peccamus, quando facimus quod in nobis est, non est desperatos (nisi sint stulti) sed sollicitos ad gratiam Domini nostri Ihesu Christi facere.* Cf. LW 31.51.

\(^8\) Especially in the need for a “radical” transformation of the whole person, and the connection between this theme and the stark Adam/Christ contrast. Consider the title Luther gave to his (incomplete) 1516 publication of the *Theologia Deutsch* (WA 1.153): *Eyn geystlich edles Buchleynn. von rechter vnderscheyd und vorstand Was der alt und new mensche sey. Was Adams und was gottis kind sey. und wie Adam yn uns sterben und Christus ersteen sall.*
characteristic marks of Augustine’s mature theology, which, as I have shown, Luther begins to quote copiously just a few pages farther on in his scholion on Rom. 7.

This interpretation is further confirmed if we follow Luther’s argument just a few lines farther down this page in the WA. Keep in mind the perplexing contrast that orients these paragraphs: for the moral philosopher, man remains intact and sin is taken away; for the Apostle, the man is taken away but sin remains. Paul’s repeated statements about “dying to sin” in Rom. 6–7 form the immediate context for Luther’s paradox. In his comments on Rom. 7:1–6 in particular, Luther as exegete needs to explain what it means that “the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives” (v. 1), and, relatedly, what it means to be set free from the law by dying to sin. This is just the kind of context where an interpreter of Grane’s persuasion might expect the young Luther’s nascent forensicism (or existential personalism) to come to the fore. In fact, what we find is an Augustinian account of the inner renovation of the will by grace and the Spirit. 777 Thus Luther:

When a man has been mortified from sin and been taken away from it, then sin has already been beautifully taken away and has died. But when a man has not been mortified and taken away, with utter vanity is sin taken away and mortified. It is therefore plain to see that the Apostle understands that sin is taken away spiritually (i.e., the desire for sinning [voluntatem peccandi] is mortified). They, however, want the works of sin and sinful desires (concupiscentias) to be taken away metaphysically, like whiteness from a wall or heat from water. 778

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777 As might be expected given Luther’s explanation of “dying to sin” in the scholion on Rom. 6:2. Luther first supplies an excerpt from Augustine’s (early) ex. prop. Rm. 35, then comments (WA 56.320.20–29): Ex quibus verbis clare patet Intelligentia verborum Apostoli. Quia omnes iste propositiones: 1. Mortuum esse peccato; 2. Vt destruatur corpus peccati, non obediatis eis. Item, Vt rei recte regnare etc. Cf. LW 25.308.

778 WA 56.335.7–13, cf. LW 25.323.
The “metaphysical” way to holiness proceeds by replacing evil deeds with good ones and, at the deeper level of motivation, extinguishing the sinful desires that prompt them: all of which lies in the hands of the devout person _qui facit quod in se est_, whose “self” remains intact—and in control—as the acting subject propelling, directing, and mastering the project of self-cultivation in virtue. Luther’s “spiritual” and apostolic alternative begins, as we saw above, with the dismantling of this “self” (however impressive its show of virtue may appear) in the gracious death of the Adam within. The person who boasts, with William Ernest Henley, “I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul,” even—and precisely!—the person who would manfully steer the ship of his soul into the placid waters of moral excellence, must die.779

Now, when this actually happens by grace, and _homo ipse_ dies and has been mortified and taken away from sin: then, Luther explains, sin does in fact die too. Indeed, it is taken away _pulcherrime_. But what does this actually mean? Not, as Luther’s opponents maintain and as he himself once thought, the complete eradication of that “sin” which is evil desire, but rather the mortification of one’s _voluntas peccandi_. The renewed person has fleshly _concupiscentiae_ as his perpetual foe: but because, as justified _spiritus_ through the renovation of grace, his will has been changed, he no longer _wants_ to sin and, therefore, does not in fact commit sin by consenting to the evil desires that continue to afflict him. The moralist refrains from

779 Cf. Plotinus, _Ennead_ 1.6.9: “If you do not yet see yourself beautiful, then, just as someone making a statue which has to be beautiful cuts away here and polishes there and makes one part smooth and clears another till he has given his statue a beautiful face, so you too must cut away excess and straighten the crooked and clear the dark and make it bright, and never stop ‘working on your statue’ till the divine glory of virtue shines on you, till you see ‘self-mastery enthroned upon its holy seat.’” Trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 259.
sinful acts out of fear of punishment or hope of reward, i.e., *ex amore sui*, the primal and morbid drive for self-preservation and exaltation impelling all Adam’s orphaned children, which lies hid beneath the dazzling fig leaves of the virtuous self like a rotting corpse in a whitewashed tomb (Matt. 23:27). St. Paul’s *homo spiritualis* refrains from sinful acts too, but he does so because his will to sin has been put to death and he, in his heart’s deepness, has been made alive *voluntate per spiritum*. ⁷⁸⁰

Luther sums up his *corollarium* with a compact statement of the same doctrine: “First, therefore, one must beg for grace, that a man may be changed *in spiritu*, and will and do all things with a glad and voluntary heart, not in servile fear or puerile cupidity, but with a free and manly soul. And this the Spirit alone accomplishes.”⁷⁸¹ *Gratia sanans* infused into the heart by the Holy Spirit to transform one’s self-bent will from within: nothing less than this can set a son or daughter of Adam free for holiness and joy. In the end, therefore, Luther’s perplexing and obscure contrast between St. Paul and the philosophers turns out to be yet another iteration of his stoutly Augustinian opposition to the high Ockhamist theology and popular pious meritocracy of his day.

2.1.4. *nupt. conc. 1.23.25*. We return now to the scholion on Rom. 7:17b. I left hanging in the air Augustine’s claim, in *c. Iul.* 2.9.32, that “dead,” guilt-denuded “sin” (*concupiscentia*) is no longer called “sin” in the baptized for two reasons or better, in two respects: first, it no longer makes the forgiven person guilty; second, because it

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⁷⁸⁰ WA 56.335.21-3, cf. LW 25.323.
stems from Adam’s guilt originally, and by its rebellion strives to draw us back into a state of guilt through consent to its desires. At first glance, this appears to fit the evaluation of *concupiscentia mala* more characteristic of Augustine in the 410s, viz., that it is not intrinsically guilty apart from consent, rather than the farther advanced position evinced at *c. Iul.* 2.5.12 and 6.17.51. That said, Augustine’s basic distinction between (a) the person no longer rendered guilty because of concupiscence, and (b) the evil and dangerous nature of concupiscence itself, is still very much in play. For our present purposes, we must bear in mind that on Luther’s reading of the texts, Augustine articulates exactly the same point at *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28 in the distinct but related terms of the non-imputation of concupiscence as “sin”: *dimitti concupiscentiam carnis in baptismo, non ut non sit, sed ut in peccatum non inputetur.* At any rate, in commenting on Rom. 7:17b Luther adopts *c. Iul.* 2.9.32 without critique or redefinition within paragraphs of explaining *c. Iul.* 2.5.12 at Rom. 7:17a, where he had set forth the nuanced sense in which evil desire is *rea in sanctis* without making the saints guilty as persons. One might be led to think that Luther can do this because he has not recognized the two different ways Augustine tackles the problem. But I think it is more likely that he has, and that he is either interpreting Augustine in the charitable medieval fashion by reconciling contradictions into a coherent whole, or has perhaps concluded that there is no real contradiction at all. I am inclined to this judgment in large part because at just this point in the scholion, Luther quotes approvingly—with some modifications—the unequivocally “410s”-styled evaluation of *concupiscentia* at *nupt. conc.* 1.23.25:

And book 1 to Valerius, c. 23: “Concupiscence is not now a sin in the regenerate, so long as there is no consent to it: so that even if what is written
doesn’t happen: ‘Non concupiscas’ [Exod. 20:17, Rom. 7:7], at least let what is read elsewhere happen, Ecclesiast. 18[:30]: ‘Do not go after concupiscentias tuas.’ But in a certain modo loquendi it is called sin, because it was both made by sin and if sin conquers the sinner, it makes him guilty.”

Our best modern text reads:

To be sure, concupiscence itself now is not a sin in the regenerate, so long as there is no consent to it resulting in forbidden works, and the members are not given up to perpetrate them [cf. Rom. 6:12-13] by the ruling mind; so that even if what is written doesn’t happen: ‘Non concupiscas,’ at least let what is read elsewhere happen, ‘Do not go after concupiscentias tuas.’ But because in a certain way of speaking it is called sin, because it was both made by sin and it makes sin if it conquers, its reatus prevails in one who has been born, quem reatum Christ’s grace—through the forgiveness of all sins—does not permit to prevail in the reborn, if the reborn does not obey it [Rom. 6:12] when it somehow commands him to do evil works.

There follows Augustine’s famous analogies: we call speaking a “tongue” because our tongues produce it, and we call one’s handwriting his “hand” because his hand produces it. So too concupiscence is called “sin” because sin (i.e., Adam’s sin) produced it, and it in turn produces sin through consent. But in the regenerate, who withhold consent and do not obey the desires they still suffer, non sit ipsa peccatum: concupiscence per se is not “sin.”

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782 WA 56.353.5-10: Et li. 1. ad Vale c. 23.: ‘Concupiscientia iam non est peccatum in regeneratis, quando illi non consentitur, Vt si non fit, quod scriptum est: “Non concupiscas”, fiat saltem, quod alicubi legitur, Ecclesiast. 18.: “Post concupiscentias tuas non eas”. Sed modo quodam loquendi peccatum vocatur, quod et peccato facta est et peccatum peccantem si vicerit, reum facit.’ Cf. LW 25.342.

783 BA 23.110-12: Nam ipsa quidem concupiscientia iam non est peccatum in regeneratis, quando illi ad inlicita opera non consentitur, atque ut ea perpetreat a regina mente membra non dantur, ut si non fit quod scriptum est: Non concupiscas, fiat saltem quod alicubi legitur: Post concupiscentias tuas non eas. Sed quia modo quodam loquendi peccatum vocatur, quod et peccato facta est et peccatum, si uicerit, facit, reatus eius ualet in generato, quem reatum Christi gratia per remissionem omnium peccatorum in regenerato, si ad mala opera ei quodam modo iubenti non obediat, ualere non sinit. Cf. WSA I/24.44.

784 BA 23.112, WSA I/24.44. On the role of this text at Trent, and Seripando’s gallant but futile advocacy for the “420s Augustine” that I am arguing Luther appropriated, see Peter Walter, “Die bleibende Sündigkeit der Getauften in den Debatten und Beschlüssen des Trienter Konzils,” in Theodor Schneider and Gunther Wenz, eds., Gerecht und Sünder zugleich? Ökumenische Klärungen (Freiburg: Herder and Göttingen; Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2001), 268-302; Anthony N. S. Lane,
Luther’s excerpt differs subtly from our modern critical text: most significantly, near the end of his excerpt the second rationale Augustine gives for Paul’s *modus loquendi* shifts from Augustine’s “[conc.] makes sin, if it conquers” to Luther’s confusing “if sin conquers the sinner, it makes him guilty.” In the context of *nupt. conc.* 1.23.25, Luther’s alteration seems to amount to a telescoping of the following sentences—which concern *reatus*, grace, baptism, and non-consent—into one compressed claim: “sin”/concupiscence, if it triumphs over the regenerate person, brings him back into a state of guilt. The question is: Does this change Augustine’s meaning? Or is this a legitimate summary of his position? What Augustine writes here comes quite close to *c. Iul.* 2.9.32. In both places, concupiscence is called “sin” for two reasons: (a) it was caused by Adam’s “sin” (*nupt. conc.* 1.23.25) or “guilt” (*c. Iul.* 2.9.32), and (b) when the regenerate person consents to it, it leads him back into guilt or “sin,” meaning actual and guilt-laden sinful acts, *reatus* being emphasized in both places. In light of this comparison, Luther’s editorial compression appears to retain the substance of Augustine’s original text; what’s more, the comparison helps to explain how Augustine’s assertion of the non-sinfulness of the regenerate person’s *concupiscentia* fits with both his more ambiguous claim just a few paragraphs later at *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28 and with his bolder pronouncements in the 420s. The grace and forgiveness of Christ in baptism liberate the regenerate person from the guilt of all sins, both original and actual. Inherited evil desire, which had naturally (or racially) bound this person to Adam’s guilt prior to the great interruption of baptism, continues to infect and afflict the regenerate person as his “flesh,” but it no longer

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binds him to Adam’s guilt—unless, that is, by consenting to his evil desires he falls out of Christ’s grace and plunges himself back into Adam’s guilt. If Augustine’s evaluation of the intrinsic sinfulness of *concupiscentia* in the baptized is something of a moving target, his dogmatic and spiritual response to the problem it poses stays basically the same: Christ’s grace does not permit its guilt to prevail in the regenerate (1.23.25), that is, it is forgiven and not imputed as sin (1.25.28), so long as—by the same grace of Christ, and the operations of his Spirit—the regenerate do not consent to it.

In 1516, Luther solidly grasps Augustine’s nuanced interpretation of how *gratia Christi* liberates ruined and guilty people from both *reatus* and *concupiscentia*. At this early stage in his development, flat-out *concupiscentia rea* texts like *c. Iul.* 2.5.12 (“420s Augustine”) and *non sit ipsa peccatum* texts like *nupt. conc.* 1.23.25 (“410s Augustine”) can stand alongside one another. Indeed, as he does on the heels of quoting *nupt. conc.* 1.23.25, Luther can even adopt a faintly Thomist solution to the discrepancy—which he probably learned from Biel—by distinguishing between the “weak” (if you will) sinfulness of concupiscence *causaliter et effectualiter* in non-consenting regenerate people on the one hand, and on the other its full-blown sinfulness/guilt *formaliter* upon the grant of consent to its evil desires. But from the initial Reformation crisis on into the works of his maturity, this distinction will no longer appear serviceable to Luther. *Concupiscentia rea* increasingly takes the field, and to the extent that it does so, the non-imputation of its intrinsic guiltiness (which is

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785 See Biel, *Collectorium* II d. 30 q. 2, *utrum peccatum originale sit aliquod positivum in anima vel in carne*, esp. art. 1 (W & H II/562-8).
786 WA 56.353.8-10: ‘... Sed modo quodam loquendi peccatum vocatur, quod et peccato facta est et peccatum peccantem si vicerit, reum facit i. e. causaliter et effectualiter, non formaliter. Cf. LW 25.342.'
already there in the mature Augustine) and the positive imputation of Christ’s *iustitia aliena* (which but for a few rare exceptions is not) grows in equal proportion. But as I demonstrated above in chapter 2—and now in concert with what I have shown in this chapter regarding both Augustine in the 410s and 20s and Luther in 1516—right up into the 1540s the regenerate Christian’s refusal of consent (*non consentire*) to the “sin” that indwells him continues virtually unaltered as the moral-psychological lynchpin that holds together Luther’s “*simul*” within the overarching dogmatic reality of forgiveness by Christ’s grace and renewal by the Spirit’s gift. For the old Luther not a whit less than for Augustine in either of the two decades of his controversy with Pelagius and Julian, Spirit-empowered non-consent to the regenerate person’s flesh is the *conditio sine qua non* for his abiding *in statu gratiae (et doni)*.

This brings us to the scholion on Rom. 7:18.

2.2. On Rom. 7:18

2.2.1. c. Iul. 3.26.62. Luther follows the subject-line heading *Perficere autem non Invenio* with the terse but telling comment: “There is a difference between to do/to complete (*facere/perficere*) in this place,” then relates Rom. 7:18 to its parallel at Gal. 5:16-17 by relaying the longest of his many Augustinian excerpts:

Blessed Augustine book 3 against Julian at the end: “Remember what the Apostle writes to the Galatians, who were certainly baptized people: ‘But I say,’ he says, ‘walk by the spirit (*Spiritu*) and do not complete (*non perfeceritis*) the concupiscences of the flesh’ [Gal. 5:16]. He does not say: Do not do (Ne faceritis), because they were not able to not have them, but ‘do not complete’ (ne perfeceritis), that is, do not fulfill the works of these [concupiscences] by the consent of the will (consensu voluntatis). If, therefore, one does not consent to the concupiscences of the flesh, although they are incited by emotions (*agantur motibus*), nevertheless they are not brought to completion (*perficientur*) by works. Accordingly, when flesh desires (*concupiscit*) against spirit and spirit against flesh, so that we do not do (*faciamus*) the things we
want to do, neither are the flesh’s concupiscences completed (perfi ciuntur), although they happen, nor are our good works completed (perfi ciuntur), although they happen. For just as the concupiscence of the flesh is completed, when the spirit consents to it in order to bring it into operation—so that the spirit does not desire against it, but with it—so too our good works will then be completed, when the flesh will so consent to the spirit that even it will no longer desire against the spirit. To be sure, this is what we want (volumus) when we desire (concupiscimus) the perfection of righteousness. But because we are not able to complete this in this corruptible flesh, therefore [Paul] said to the Romans: ‘To want (Velle) lies at hand for me, but to complete (perficere) the good I do not find’ [Rom. 7:18] or, as Greek codices have it, ‘To want lies at hand for me, but not to complete the good,’ i.e., to complete the good does not lie at hand for me. He does not say: To do (facere), but ‘to complete (perficere) the good.’ Because to do the good is to not go after concupiscences [Ecclus. 18:20]: but to complete the good is non concupiscere. Therefore, what’s written to the Galatians: ‘Do not complete the flesh’s concupiscences’ [5:16], this from the opposite angle is written to the Romans: ‘To complete I do not find’ [7:18]. Because neither are those [concupiscences] completed in evil, when the assent of our will (nostre voluntatis assensus) does not accede to them, nor is our will completed in good, so long as the movement of those concupiscences—to which we do not consent—remains. The spirit therefore does (facit) a good work by not consenting to evil concupiscence, but it does not complete it (perficit), because it does not destroy the evil desires (desideria) themselves. And the flesh does (facit) an evil desire (desiderium), but it does not complete it (perficit) either, because when the spirit does not consent to it, it too does not arrive at works subject to damnation."
When compared to our best modern edition of *c. Iul.*, it is clear that apart from a handful of minor reversals in word order, and three ellipses to pare away redundancies in the argument, Luther reproduces Augustine’s text accurately. In context, Augustine is arguing that Adam’s sin vitiated human nature and that—against Julian’s interpretation of Rom. 7—the holy Apostle confesses that he too suffers the lingering effects of this deeply set wound (*c. Iul.* 3.26.59-61). He next turns from Rom. 7:18-25 to Gal. 5:16-20: even if Julian stubbornly insists that Rom. 7 refers to an as yet unbaptized catechumen, he cannot deny that in Gal. 5 Paul addressed baptized Galatian

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788 NBA I/18.650-2, PL 44.733-4: *recole tamen quid scribat ad Galatas, certe homines baptizatos*. Dico autem, inquit, spiritu ambulate, et concupiscitis carnis ne perfercretis. Non ait: Ne feceritis, quia eas non habere non poterant; sed: Ne perfercretis; id est, ne opera earum, consensu voluntatis impleatis. Caro enim, inquit, concupiscit adversus spiritum, et spiritus adversus carnom: haec enim invicem adversantur; ut non ea quae vultis faciatis. Vide si non hoc est ad Romanos: Non enim quod volo facio bonus, sed quod nolo malum, hoc ago. Deinde ad Galatas addit et dicit: Quod si spiritu ducimini, non adhuc estis sub lege. Vide si non hoc est ad Romanos: Iam non ego operor illud; et: Condelector legi Dei secundum interiorem hominem; et: Non regnet peccatum in vestro mortali corpore, ad oboediendum desideriis eius. Si enim non oboediatur concupiscientiis, quas necesse est esse in carne peccati atque in corpore mortis huius, non perficietur quod perfici vetat Apostolus dicens: Concupiscientias carnis ne perfercretis. Ipsa quippe sunt opera, de quibus totum mire sequitur, et dicit: Manifesta autem sunt opera carnis, quae sunt fornicationes, immunditiae luxuriae, idolorum servitus, et cetera. Si ergo non consentiat concupiscientiis carnis, quamvis agantur motibus, non tamen perficiuntur operibus. Proinde cum caro concupiscit adversus spiritum et spiritus adversus carnom, ut non ea quae volumus faciamus; nec carnis perficiuntur concupiscientiae, quamvis fiant, nec nostra perficiuntur bona opera, quamvis fiant. Sic et bona opera nostra tunc perficiuntur, quando ita spiritui caro consenserit, ut adversus eum etiam ipsa non concupiscat. Hoc enim volumus, cum perfectione[i] justitiae concupiscimus: hoc intentione non intermissa velle debemus, sed quia id perficere in ista corruptibili carne non possumus, ideo dixit ad Romanos: Velle adiacet mihi, perficere autem bonum non invenio. Vel, sicut habent codices graeci: Velle adiacet mihi, perficere autem bonum non invenio. Vel, sicut habent codices graeci: Velle adiacet mihi, perficere autem bonum non invenio. Vel, sicut habent codices graeci:
Christians. Therefore, to quote the passage which immediately follows Luther’s excerpt, the spirit/flesh conflictus narrated in Gal. 5:16-17 refers to the agonizing struggle of “Christians who are faithful and are laboring in this contest by living well.”

In the excursus at Rom. 7:7, Luther has already made his case that St. Paul himself, as the paradigmatic homo spiritualis, is the subject of the chapter. What interests him in c. Iul. 3.26.62 is the light it sheds on the nature of the spiritual person’s struggle with his residual flesh. Augustine’s explanation of the two interwoven texts from Paul supplies all the vital concepts for grasping the precise nature of the Christian’s agon with himself. The flesh has its desires, but in the Christian flesh only “does” (facere) these evil desires, i.e., the Christian experiences or suffers them as loathsome impulses, desideria, or motus to which he does not yield the consent (or assent) of his will. Thus the still lamentably active flesh cannot bring the desires it “does” to their “completion” (perficere) in act, for the renewed person’s refusal of consensus voluntatis suae stands in the way. On the other hand, as renewed spiritus the baptized Christian “does” (facere) good deeds, both in terms of the internal renovation of the heart and its desires and in terms of the good works that flow therefrom. But because of his residual flesh, which divides his affective being and therefore blemishes his nonetheless real holiness, the baptized Christian cannot yet bring to completion (perficere) the single-minded and whole-hearted love for God that he longs for. In terms of Rom. 7:18, St. Paul can and does “do” the good, i.e., he does not go after his evil desires by consenting to them (Ecclus. 18:20); but he cannot yet “complete” the good as he heartily wishes to do, i.e., he is not yet entirely free from the very presence of such desires, as he will be in the eschatological resurrection and as
God’s holy law already requires of him in the present (Exod. 20:17/Rom. 7:7). In short, the spiritually-renewed Christian’s will is itself divided by the new and holy desires that are his being as spiritus and the old and evil desires that comprise his residual caro—yet with the upper-hand unequivocally belonging to his new affective and volitional being as “spirit,” for (a) he battles against his flesh by not consenting to it, and (b) he wishes for and desires the end of this battle in the total victory of spiritual delight. “That,” says Augustine, “is what we want when we desire (concupiscimus) the perfection of righteousness.” In 1516, Luther quite simply agrees, and so much so that he lets his long excerpt from c. Iul. 3.26.62 speak for itself and offers no comment of his own upon Rom. 7:18.

That is to say, apart from the brief but significant paragraph that follows the excerpt and completes the Rom. 7 scholion. In it, Luther bears autobiographical witness to the consolation which Augustine’s interpretation of Paul affords weak, suffering, battle-scarred, angefochtenen Christians like himself. Granted, he allows, “the more recent doctors” have said the same things about first motions, extinguishing the tinder, delight, and consent. But because they do so in the Aristotelian or human way, rather than the genuinely scriptural and divine manner, they do not really understand the Augustinian terms they are parroting. “Now, however, since the ancient doctors, thinking with the Apostles, say the same thing more clearly, we are warmed by the gift of a more quiet comfort and more easily healed from scruples of conscience.” Luther can (without scruple) use the plural Doctores antiqui largely on

789 WA 56.354.14-19: licet Recentiores doctores eadem dicant de primis motibus, de fomite extinguen do, de delectatione et consensu.
the strength of the references to Ambrose and others in c. Iul. 1-2, including 2.5.12. But as we have seen in this study, and as Hilton Oswald nicely puts it in a footnote to another place in the lectures on Romans, “for Luther *antiqui patres* often means Augustine.”\(^\text{791}\) High and late medieval theologians could not but have rehearsed—and to varying degrees adopted—the terminology that lies at the heart of the complex intersection of Augustine’s theology of grace, moral-psychology, anti-Pelagian spirituality, and Pauline exegesis: for those *verba* (and no little of their Augustinian *res*) are there to be dealt with on the pages of Peter Lombard’s *Sententiae*. But Luther is convinced that the intrusion of an Aristotelian metaphysics of the soul, together with its attendant moral psychology, into the Church’s Augustinian inheritance has cut off from the start the very possibility of grasping what these words actually mean.

There is no need to repeat here what we saw above regarding Luther’s opposition to Biel and Usingen *de appetitibus contrariis in eodem subiecto* and their corresponding interpretation of “spirit” and “flesh” in Paul. In this *seelsorgerlich* finale to his exposition of Rom. 7, Luther now concludes that to the extent that a theory of virtue and vice drawn *ex Aristotele* holds the ascendancy in an exegete’s philosophy, “the distinction of spirit and flesh has completely ceased to be understood.”\(^\text{792}\) That is to say, St. Paul’s meaning is obscured in medieval commentaries on the Bible, and Augustine’s meaning—which Luther champions as identical to Paul’s—is obscured in medieval commentaries on the *Sentences*. Reading the undiluted Augustine’s works in

\(^{791}\) LW 25.300, note 13.

\(^{792}\) WA 56.354.22-6: *Quocirca futilis est et noxia eorum phantasia, dum ex Aristotele Virtutes et vitia velut albedinem in pariete, Scripturam in assere et formam in subiecto occidentissimis verbis et metaphoricos docuerunt in anima herere. Sic enim Spiritus et carnis differentia penitus cessavit intelligi.* Cf. LW 25.343.
the Amerbach edition has opened Luther’s eyes to the original meaning of well-worn traditional terms like *motus*, *fomes*, *delectatio*, and *consensus*, and thus provided the at once dogmatic, moral-psychological, spiritual, and hermeneutical key he needed (as *doctor in biblia*) to open up the locked door of St. Paul’s perplexing teaching *de spiritu et carne*. And this, in turn, gave Luther the spiritual *solatium* he needed, not as a learned doctor of theology, but as a perplexed and suffering penitent.

As a devout monk, and thus at a much deeper level than the “merely” theological, Luther had taken as granted that extinguishing every last bit of fleshly desire from his soul was the goal of his severe asceticism. But try as he had, *frater Martinus* failed to attain this end; and being the devout man that he was, the undeniable (and endlessly confessed) *experientia* of evil desire—which lesser men think less or little of—drove him to the point of despair. Dr. Staupitz, the kind and compassionate father-confessor, pointed Luther away from himself to the bleeding wounds of Christ crucified: an indispensible remedy for the scrupulous and self-obsessed soul. 793 But it was the polemicizing old Augustine who taught young suffering Luther that right up to drawing their last breath, the little *hominest* spirituales who look to such a Christ as this still have wounded and bleeding souls. 794

What John Wesley might have thought of all this I dare not venture to say; but in this concluding paragraph to the scholion on Rom. 7, Luther bears unmistakable witness

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793 Prof. David Steinmetz’s summary of Staupitz’s counsel to Luther is without peer: *Luther and Staupitz*, 30-4.

to the way reading Augustine’s trenchant works against Julian had left his troubled heart strangely warmed.\footnote{WA 56.354.17-19: Nunc Vero Cum Doctores antiqui cum Apostolis sentientes eadem apertius dicunt, quietioris solati nos munere fouemur et Scrupulis conscientie facilius medemur.} With this I conclude my study of the Augustinian roots of Luther’s theology of grace, gift, and the “\textit{simul}” as he—like Augustine before him—painstakingly worked it out in the exegetical laboratory of Rom. 7.\footnote{In his Marquette lectures on Augustine, Prof. Michel René Barnes describes Rom. 7 as Augustine’s moral-psychological laboratory.} The emphasis on spiritual consolation in its conclusion is an especially fitting segue backwards in the lectures to the scholion on Rom. 4:7, where the experiential depths of penitential suffering, the false comforts of \textit{die Sawtheologen}, and the true solace of St. Paul’s “Augustinian” theology are driving concerns for Luther.
4. AUGUSTINE CONTRA IULIANUM IN THE LATE 1515 SCHOLIA ON ROMANS 4:5-8: THE SAINTS’ “SIN,” THEIR RENEWAL, AND GOD’S MERCIFUL NON-IMPUTATION

Some of the most influential Lutherreden for twentieth-century theology, both historical and dogmatic, are found in the scholia on Rom. 4:7. Its first, thesis-type sentence reads: “The saints are always sinners intrinsically, and therefore are always justified extrinsically.”\(^797\) From this point forward, eye-popping—a Gerhard Forde might say “radical”—declarations of the sinner’s justification ex sola Dei reputatione punctuate Luther’s exegesis like the refrain in a Psalm. These include in their number explicit statements of the “simul,” e.g., to God the saints “are righteous and unrighteous at the same time,”\(^798\) or near equivalents, e.g., the saints “are sinners in reality, but righteous by the imputation of God, who has mercy.”\(^799\) Denifle, Hermann, Elert, Joest, Ebeling, Pinomaa, Nilsson, Grane, Beer, Forde, Hamm, Jüngel, Hampson, \textit{et al.} have found in these and other like assertions ample proof for a \textit{Simullehre} that ignores, sidelines, downplays, or even disparages real renewal in holiness in favor of a purely forensic/imputational interpretation of justification.\(^800\) In the 1910 essay to which I referred briefly above, Karl Holl offered a quite different interpretation of the same texts; broadly speaking, post-Lortzian Roman Catholic and/or Finnish scholars like Iserloh, Peter Manns, Wicks, Mannermaa, Peura, Saarinen, Vainio, and Pereira have followed his lead. In certain respects, my own interpretation does so as well: I

\(^{797}\) WA 56.268.27-8, cf. LW 25.257.
\(^{798}\) WA 56.269.21-2: \textit{simul sunt iusti et iniusti}. Cf. LW 25.258.
\(^{799}\) WA 56.269.29: \textit{Re vera peccatores, Sed reputatione miserentis Dei iusti}. Note the allusion to Rom. 9:16. Cf. LW 25.258.
\(^{800}\) Berndt Hamm, “What was the Reformation Doctrine of Justification?,” in \textit{The Reformation of Faith}, esp. 193-7.
share Holl’s concern to recognize Luther’s teaching in the Rom. 4:7 scholia regarding the ongoing “healing” (sanari) of the saints. However, it seems to me that the great Berliner’s “analytic theory” failed to do full justice to the imputational side of the iustitia fidei rightly (if disproportionately) emphasized by the other school of interpretation.

As in the scholia on Rom. 7, but to an even greater degree, I believe this failure to hold together the two aspects of Luther’s theology of “grace”—which in 1515/16 he does not yet distinguish terminologically from “gift”—and the correlative failure to grasp the real meaning of his striking “simul”-statements stems from an anterior scholarly misapprehension of the role played in these scholia by the “420s Augustine.” As I explained above in the introduction to Part II, it was Denifle’s polemics that set the ball rolling: Luther, he charged, had intentionally misquoted the all-important sentence from nupt. conc. 1.25.28. Hermann pushed it along by basically agreeing with Denifle’s historical analysis—touché, as it were—but then, as a modern Lutheran theologian, he championed what Denifle derided, i.e., the clean dogmatic break in loco iustificationis from Augustinian Catholicism that Luther’s newly-discovered “simul” powerfully encapsulated and symbolized. One is tempted, at this point, to try his hand at an allegorical interpretation of Luke 23:12—but I hold my peace. To rightly understand the young Luther’s ruminations on St. Paul, we shall have once more to retrace the steps he took with Augustine as his principal guide.

Two interrelated comments are in order before turning to Luther’s exegesis of Rom. 4:7. First, St. Paul supplies the words “reputare” in vv. 3-5 (from Gen. 15:6) and (non-) “imputare” at v. 8 (from Ps. 32:2). For Luther, immersed in vol. 8 of the
Amerbach edition of Augustine’s works, this ineluctably evokes Augustine’s mature baptismal theology of the non-imputation of *concupiscentia carnis* as “sin” in the regenerate. Luther gives us the crucial excerpt from *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28—with one highly significant variation, so obnoxious to Denifle—several pages into the scholion, but the doctrine he believed to be contained in it is in play from the very start. I will substantiate this claim shortly.

Second, much as I urged in the introduction to chapter 1 regarding Luther’s 1532 comments on Ps. 51, we must keep in mind (as Wicks rightly stresses) the ethos of penitential spirituality that shapes this entire scholion. Luther is, after all, expositing Ps. 32 in order to exposit Rom. 4; and Ps. 32 is fertile scriptural soil for a decidedly monastic and experiential theology of sin, repentance, forgiveness, and renewal. Is this not just the sort of theology we should expect from Luther, the earnest, scrupulous, and observant Augustinian Eremite, in 1515? Thus his short comments on Rom. 4:6 in effect draw a contrast between two kinds of monks: the one content with the external performances of piety, the other longing for his “heart” (cor) to be “justified and healed from base desires.”

This is the unmistakable stuff of an Augustinian theology of inner renewal by grace; and the presence or absence of this renewal in one’s heart, explains


802 WA 56.268.9-15: Nam similia operantur etiam Iusti, Sed non simili corde. Iusti scil., vt Iustitiam per ipsa querant et impetrent, Impii vero, vt per ipsa Iustitiam ostentent ac Inuentam presumant. Illi non contenti factis operibus cor etiam querunt Iustificari et Sanari a prauis concupiscentiis, isti Vero interiorea nihil curantes externe factis operibus contenti sunt. Ideo sunt simulatores, hipocrites i. e. similis Iustis exterius et non vere Iusti interius. Cf. LW 25.256.

803 Hamel, II/83-4, calls this “sanative Rechtfertigung oder reale Gerechtmachung.”
Luther, is the factor that determines whether or not “God counts righteousness apart from works” to him. The time-serving churchman and the devout monk do exactly the same works, “but not with the same heart.”\textsuperscript{804} The former confidently presumes—whether by virtue of popular piety’s common sense (think Johannes von Paltz), or in the learned “Aristotelian” fashion of the schools (Biel \textit{et al.}, or both—that doing righteous works has made him a righteous person.\textsuperscript{805} He knows “how much and what one must do, in order to be righteous.”\textsuperscript{806} But the latter sort, being true penitents of vintage late medieval variety, humbly confess their sinfulness before God, live vigilantly poised between fear and hope, and

... do not know when they are righteous, because they are only righteous \textit{ex Deo reputante}. And no one knows God’s \textit{reputationem}, but ought only to ask and hope. Therefore, the former sort have a time when they do not think that they are sinners. But the latter always know that they are sinners.\textsuperscript{807}  

Jacob A. O. Preus tidied up Luther a bit here in his translation for \textit{Luther’s Works}, so that “no man knows His accounting fully” (my italics). But in 1515 Luther is still far too Augustinian and “medieval” in his theology and piety to admit Preus’ consolatory adverb. No one knows God’s accounting—\textit{Punkt!} This is the precarious hinge on which the great matter of one’s eternal destiny turns. Only the self-righteous presume to know God’s just \textit{reputatio}, on the basis of their piety and good works. By stark contrast, Luther’s ideal penitent—praying his Psalter \textit{ex corde contrito}—knows that God reckons righteousness apart from works \textit{only} to the kind of person who humbly

\textsuperscript{804} WA 56.268.9-10: \textit{Nam similia operantur etiam Iusti, Sed non simili corde.}  
\textsuperscript{805} One thinks at once of Chesterton on our being born Aristotelians, and Spurgeon’s autobiographical confession: “Born, as all of us are by nature, an Arminian...”—to Spurgeon’s advantage.  
\textsuperscript{806} WA 56.268.20: \textit{Illi sciunt, quantum et quid operandum, Vt Iustus quis sit.} Cf. LW 25.256.  
\textsuperscript{807} WA 56.268.21-4: \textit{Isti vero ignorant, quando Iusti sunt, quia ex Deo reputante Iusti tantummodo sunt, cuius reputationem nemo nouit, Sed solum postulare et sperare debet. Ideo illi habent tempus, quando se non putent esse peccatores. Isti Vero semper sciunt se esse peccatores.} Cf. LW 25.256-7.
confesses that God’s merciful *reputatio* is his sole hope of salvation. Luther’s true penitent does not know, and by definition cannot know, if in fact God’s mercy pertains to him. What he does always know is that he is a “sinner.”

But in what sense? He does his good works as zealously as the hypocrite, but as he does them he prays for the healing of his heart *a pravis concupiscentiis*. The very presence of these base desires requires the perpetual confession that he is a *peccator*. But as the “very rare man who confesses and believes he is a sinner,”\(^{808}\) and therefore longs for the justification and healing of his broken heart, this lifelong confession no longer needs to be exacted from him *invitus*. This is the major theme of the scholia on Rom. 3:4ff, where St. Paul quotes—not incidentally—Ps. 51:4: quite as it had been two years earlier in Luther’s *Dictata* on the same verse.\(^{809}\) Just a few paragraphs farther into the scholia on Rom. 4:7, Luther states in classic monastic fashion, and in terms virtually identical to those of the 1513 Psalter lecture,\(^{810}\) that “the righteous man, in principle, is his own accuser.”\(^{811}\)

This “inward”-oriented penitential spirituality—with its Augustinian focus on the Rom. 7-styled battle against the evil desires at work in one’s heart, and the longing for heart-deep renovation that accompanies it—forms both the historical Sitz im Leben in which Friar Martin wrote and the monastic-theological context for his brooding meditations on God’s merciful *reputatio/imputatio* in the scholia on Rom.

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\(^{808}\) Scholion on Rom. 3:7, WA 56.231.24-5, LW 25.216.


\(^{810}\) WA 3.288.31: *Iustus enim primo est accusator sui et damnator et iudex sui*. Cf. LW 10.236.

\(^{811}\) WA 56.270.6-7, cf. LW 25.258.
4:7. Hence it is right on the heels of describing the confession of the true penitent—
semper peccator—and his “yearning” (as Wicks styles it) for both the gratia sanans
that will heal his evil desires and the merciful imputation of iustitia to his account
despite these desires, that Luther transitions from 4:6 into 4:7:

Therefore, in order that Beati, quorum remisse etc. [Rom. 4:7/Ps. 32:1] may be
understood—

and then elaborates the two-sentence thesis that sets the tone for the rest of the
scholion:

The saints are always sinners intrinsically, therefore they are always justified
extrinsically.
But hypocrites are always righteous intrinsically, therefore they are always
sinners extrinsically.813

Here we have in embryonic fashion the powerful—but often misunderstood—
paradoxes that Luther would soon become famous for. Taken out of its textual context
in the scholion, and its monastic or “spiritual” setting in Luther’s life, the first sentence
at least can be construed as a bold assertion of a purely forensic doctrine of

812 For further insight into Luther’s Augustinian (that is, O.E.S.A.) Sitz im Leben, see Eric L. Saak,
High Way to Heaven. The Augustinian Platform between Reform and Reformation, 1292-1524
(Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2002). Saak works closely with writings of Jordan of Quedlinburg, a
fourteenth-century Augustinian monastic or “pastoral theologian” (1300- c. 1370/80). In his
exposition of Jordan’s teaching on grace and holiness (412-17), Saak states: “Jordan affirmed that
the presumption of one’s own righteousness is indeed a sin. No one is able to know for sure whether
his works are really true, for a false righteousness deceives many. No human work is ever pure;
works are always contaminated by sin. Indeed, ‘there has never been a righteous person or saint
who was free from sin’ (n. 235: … nec quicumque iusti et sancti sunt sine peccato),” citing Jordan’s
Opus Postillarum, sermo 374B, fol. 90b—90a. In OP sermo 376A, Jordan writes: “A humble sinner is
better than a proud righteous person (melior est peccator humilis quam iustus superbus), because
by the very fact that a sinner humbles himself, he is no longer a sinner; and the righteous person,
by the very fact that he is proud, now is not righteous” (417, n. 236). Saak exclaims: “Here we have a
fourteenth-century version of Luther’s simul iustus et peccator!” but then points to differences
between Jordan and Luther that depend on the mistaken interpretation of Luther’s “simul” that I
am arguing against in this book (417). In fact, if Saak’s reading of Jordan’s theology is sound, it
would seem that he and the young Luther stand quite close to one another in their monastic
theologies of sin, penitence, grace, and holiness.

813 WA 56.268.27-30: Sancti Intrinsece sunt peccatores semper, ideo extrinsece Iustificatur semper.
Hipocrite autem Intrinsece sunt Iusti semper, ideo extrinsece sunt peccatores semper. Cf. LW 25.257.
justification: in themselves, the saints are always and nothing but sinners; but in God’s mercy, they are forgiven, justified, and so forth. But in light of what I have shown from Luther’s exposition of Rom. 4:6, this is clearly not the case. For precisely by confessing their sinfulness, the saints demonstrate the reality of the inchoate renovation of their hearts: which, to be sure, is hidden from their own eyes. For how else could their confession of sin be truthful ex toto corde? To take pleasure in the humility of one’s confession is the quintessence of spiritual pride. So Luther, friar and Humilitastheologe, explains his meaning: “I say Intrinsece, i.e., how we are in ourselves, in our own eyes, in our own estimation.” This is not an “objective” dogmatic claim about the ontology of the saint, i.e., it is not an assertion that the saint is a sinner totaliter, nothing more. This is spiritual theology in its monastic vein, and the decisive question at this juncture for Luther is this: What does the truly—not just apparently—holy person, that is the “saint,” think about himself? The answer to this question lies ready to hand in Rom. 7, once that chapter has been shown—with the mature Augustine’s help—to express the autobiographical confession of St. Paul as a spiritual man. That answer is: ego carnalis sum (v. 14), i.e., I am a sinner. As I have demonstrated above, this by no means implies that St. Paul is not a spiritual man after all. To the contrary, it is because of his heightened “spirituality” (if you will) that Paul recognizes and confesses the depths of his fleshly and sinful affectivity. The confessing saint who passes experientially through Rom. 7 arrives at Rom. 8:1—though in late 1515, the true penitent has no assurance of his arrival into the grace of St. Paul’s great

84 WA 56.268.31-2, cf. LW 25.257.
nihil damnationis in Christo (as Bayer rightly argues). Here in the scholion on Rom. 4:7, Luther’s confessing saint is very much passing through the Rom. 7 experientia, but now he arrives at the same (though to himself painfully hidden) evangelical truth by way of Ps. 32:1-2. They who confess that they are sinners in their own eyes, and mean this and feel it in their hearts, are the saints of God: the Beati. Despite the reality of their sinfulness—which is the only thing they see in themselves and yet which, paradoxically, they could not possibly see if they had not first begun to be renewed—these sinner-saints are righteous Extrinsece or apud Deum or in his reputatio.

In short, and to summarize Luther’s “monastic” exegesis in terms of Rom. 4:5-6: To the person broken in his own self-estimation by the experience of evil desire, who therefore does not rely on his good works to establish his righteousness before God, and instead trusts in the God who justifies the ungodly—his faith reputatur ad iustitiam (Rom. 4:5). In the same way, David pronounces that man beatus to whom God reputat Iustitiam sine operibus (Rom. 4:6). Or, as St. David goes on to say in Ps. 32:2/Rom. 4:8, “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not imputavit peccatum.” This is the real dogmatic and spiritual substance that underlies and—rightly interpreted—finds expression in the first of Luther’s several intrepid paradoxes in the Rom. 4:7 scholion, quoted above. At the heart of it—as of the entire scholion and indeed the lectures on Romans as a whole—lies this intensely “inward” monastic piety

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815 Bayer, Promissio, 74-5.
816 WA 56.268.32-269.2, cf. LW 25.257. Cf. the Lutheran theologian and pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing on the saints in his 1937 classic Nachfolge: “The saints are only conscious of the strife and distress, the weakness and sin in their lives; and the further they advance in holiness, the more they feel they are fighting a losing battle and dying in the flesh... their whole life must be an act of faith in the Son of God.” The Cost of Discipleship, 285.
817 WA 56.267.30-268.1: Construatur sic: Reputatur fides eius ad Iustitiam, Sicut et David dicit (i. e. asserit) Beatitudinem hominis (i. e. quod is homo sit beatus, siue beatitudinem huius esse hominis solum), cui Deus reputat Iustitiam sine operibus. Cf. LW 25.255-6.
revolving around the experience of *concupiscentia* in the regenerate after baptism and penance alike, which for Luther gave rise to the need for a dogmatic explanation of this undeniable (and intractable: though not invincible) phenomenon. In what follows, we shall see this again and again. And as in the comments on Rom. 7 studied in chapter 3, here too it is the “42os Augustine” who decisively aids Luther’s exegetical efforts to untie the dogmatic and spiritual knot that puzzled his mind and afflicted his soul.

1. *Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis*

Luther’s second set of paradoxical theses comes on the next page of the WA:

> “God is marvelous in his saints” [Ps. 67:37 Vg.], to whom they are righteous and unrighteous at the same time.
> And God is marvelous in hypocrites, to whom they are unrighteous and righteous at the same time.\(^8\)

In slightly different forms, Luther read that God is “marvelous” in his saints in Ps. 4:4 and 67:37 Vg.\(^8\) Commenting on Ps. 4:4 in his 1513 *Dictata* on the Psalter, Luther interpreted its singular *mirificavit dominus Sanctum suum* christologically: “God is indeed marvelous in his Holy One, because he hands him over to tribulations and thus crowns him.”\(^9\) In the long run, it is the moral/tropological or “mystical” interpretation of these verses—itself intimately related to Christ’s cross—that gains the upper hand. This is already present in the *Dictata* on Ps. 51:4, where (as I hinted earlier) Luther expounds the same “monastic” and humility-oriented spiritual theology

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\(^8\) WA 56.269.21-4: ‘*Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis,* Cui simul sunt Iusti et Iniusti. Et Mirabilis in hypocritis Deus, Cui simul sunt Iniusti et Iusti.* Cf. LW 25.258.

\(^9\) On this theme and its roots in the two Psalm verses, see Lennart Pinomaa, *Die Heiligen bei Luther* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola, 1977), 38-42.
Luther explains that as the stars are unclean before God, so “the saints are not saints before him.” For God’s humble sancti confess readily that they themselves maxime are unclean, and therefore always pray Ps. 51:4.\(^{821}\) This, says Luther, is why “God is marvelous in his saints” (67:37 Vg.):

’Mirabilis est Deus in sanctis suis.’ For it is true: he who is most beautiful before God, the same person is most deformed. And vice versa: he who is most deformed is the most beautiful. In this way: he who is most beautiful to himself (pulcherrimus sibi) is the ugliest before God.\(^{822}\)

The 30/1 year old Psalter-praying and exegeting Augustinian friar goes on to cite St. Mary’s Magnificat (Luke 1:48), then adds: “These things are the marrow of Scripture and the fat of the heavenly grain, amabilior than all the glory of riches.”\(^{823}\)

From the first page of the 1515 lectures on Romans, Luther announces that this same humility-theology is the Summarium of Paul’s epistle, which purposes “to tear down and uproot and destroy all the wisdom and righteousness of the flesh.”\(^{824}\) That Luther cites Augustine’s sp. litt. 7.12 to back up his claim\(^{825}\) becomes especially intriguing in light of Pierre-Marie Hombert’s magisterial study of the way “boasting in the Lord” (gloriari in Domino, from 1 Cor. 1:31) rather than in one’s self (1 Cor. 4:7) is the spiritual glue that holds together Augustine’s theology of grace. In particular, Hombert draws attention to Augustine’s claims about Paul’s intentio in Rom. 9 (at

\(^{821}\) WA 3.290.15-22, LW 10.239.
\(^{822}\) WA 3.290.22-5, cf. LW 10.239.
\(^{823}\) WA 3.291.3-5, LW 10.239-40.
\(^{824}\) WA 56.157.2-3, cf. LW 25.135.
\(^{825}\) WA 56.157.7-11: Unde b. Aug c. 7. de spi. et lit. ait: Paulus Apostolus ‘multum contra superbos et arrogantes ac de suis operibus presumentes dimicat’ etc. ‘Deinde ad Romanos ipsa questio pene sola versatur tam pugnaciter, tam multiplicer, vt fatiget quidem legentis intentionem, Sed tamen fatigatione vtili et salubri.’ Cf. LW 25.135. Luther's excerpt substantially agrees with the text in CSEL 60.163-4.
Simpl. 1.2⁸²⁶) and indeed the uniuersa facies and uultus of the entire Bible (at Ench. 25.98⁸²⁷). The gospel of God’s undeserved grace in Christ humbles the proud heart and reorders its vain “glorying” from the idol of one’s “self” back to the true praise of God. This, for Augustine, is the Bible’s main point.

Augustine’s claim to this end at Ench. 25.98 is especially similar to Luther’s statement regarding the Bible’s “marrow,” “fat,” and amabilia in the Dictata. The humility-driven Frömmigkeitstheologie epitomized in Mary’s Magnificat and summed up in the paradox that God is “marvelous” in his saints is the richest portion of the Scriptures. For Luther in 1513/14, nothing is more loveable than the sweetness of humility tasted in God’s Word, and nothing more spiritual than the confession of one’s misshapenness before the God who is only ever marvelous in such “ugly” saints as these. For Luther in 1515, it is St. Paul’s object in his great letter to establish this same spiritual theology of sin, grace, humility, and right boasting in God. “What else does the whole Scripture teach,” asks Luther in the scholion on Rom. 2:12, “but humility?”⁸²⁸

Thus from the initial Summarium and the excerpt from sp. litt. Luther proceeds for several pages to sketch the Augustinian contrast between false and true “boasting.” The most noble of the self-righteous in history—i.e., the virtuous pagans of antiquity, held in highest esteem by Renaissance humanists like Erasmus—“would take pleasure

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⁸²⁶ Hombert, Gloria Gratiae, 105. Ad. Simp. 1.2.2, CCSL 44.24: Et primo intentionem apostoli, quae per totam epistulam uiget, tenebo, quam consulam. Haec est autem, ut de operum meritis nemo glorietur. Ibid, 1.2.21, CCSL 44.53: Nulla igitur intentionem tenetur apostoli et omnium iustificatorum, per quos nobis intellectus gratiae demonstratus est, nisi ut qui gloriatur in domino glorietur.
⁸²⁷ Hombert, 325. Ench. 28.98, CCSL 46.101: non volentis neque currentis, sed miserentis est dei. Altissimo quippe ac saluberrimo sacramento uniuersa facies atque, ut ita dixerim, uultus sanctarum scripturarum bene intuentes id admonere inuenitur, ut qui gloriatur in domino glorietur.
in themselves and would at all events glory (gloriarentur) among themselves in their hearts as wise, righteous, and good men.⁸²⁹ This self-complacency and vain-glorying vitiated their semblance of virtue at its core: like the rotting corpses in white-washed tombs denounced by the Lord Jesus (Matt. 23:27), these are of course the vitia splendidia meticulously accounted for in civ. dei 14 and 19 and c. Iul. 4.3.14-33—even if Augustine himself never quite employed that splendid phrase.⁸³⁰ Luther’s well-known (and sometimes abused) exhortation to “an exodus from the virtues to Christ’s grace”⁸³¹ is thus in its substance an Augustinian summons to repent and turn away from the false-boasting of self-cultivated virtue to the true boasting in God’s grace in Christ that characterizes humble misshapen saints. God’s lavish gift of gratia in Christ redounds to the praise of the gloria gratiae (Eph. 1:3-14). Christ wills for “our whole affective being” to be “so stripped bare” that we will neither fear embarrassment for our vices, nor love gloriam and vain joy for our virtues, nor “glory” (gloriari) before men on account of the true righteousness which is in us from Christ, nor be dejected because of the sufferings and evils which are brought upon us by Christ.⁸³² In short, nothing, not one’s virtue nor even his iustitia ex Christo, is in fact “his”: “The true Christian ought to have absolutely nothing that belongs to himself.”⁸³³ The spiritual conclusion follows apace from the Pauline premises: the saints praise, thank, and glory in God alone. Soli Deo gloria.

⁸³² WA 56.158.22-159.4: Nunc Christus vult omnem affectum nostrum ita esse exutum, vt non solum pro nostris viciis non timeamus confusionem et pro nostris virtutibus non amemus gloriam et vanam letitiam, Sed nec de ipsa externa, que ex Christo in nobis est, Iustitia, gloriari coram hominibus debeamus neque de passionibus et malis, que ex ipso nobis inferuntur, deici. Cf. LW 25.137.
⁸³³ WA 56.159.4-5: Sed omnino Christianus verus ita debet nihil proprium habere. Cf. LW 25.137.
Now, at one level Luther’s nihil proprium has a straightforward monastic connotation vis-à-vis the vow of poverty. But in the Augustinian polemic against self-originated “virtue” that constitutes this prelude to the Romans lectures, Luther refers primarily to the iustitia sua at Rom. 10:3 or mea at Phil. 3:9, i.e., to iustitia (and sapientia) propria. This, of course, is just the sort of “righteousness” that the radical ascetic is invariably tempted to claim as his own. In Luther’s judgment, Biel et al. had fashioned it into the “half-merit” (meritum de congruo) acquired by that soul who does what lies within his power to do. Thus iustitia propria—which St. Paul delicately defined as “rubbish,” “dung,” or “crap” (σκύβαλα) at Phil. 3:8—became the late medieval entryway to obtaining gratia gratum faciens. Monasticism provided the fast track—or at least the safer route, via securior—through that entryway to the “full-merit” (meritum de condigno) acquired in a state of grace and leading up to the state of glory. In this dogmatic and spiritual schema, each step in the Christian’s via en route to eternal glory affords the possibility of an affirmative answer to Paul’s question at Rom. 3:27: “What then becomes of our boasting?” For in this schema, gloriari in se is not excluded, but established.

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834 That the monastic life was the “safer way” to reach heavenly glory was a common conviction of the medieval Church: Bernard had promoted it with great effect in the twelfth century; Thomas Aquinas (e.g.) theorized its superiority in the thirteenth (ST II/2 q. 88 a. 6, qq. 182, 184, 186; note too q. 189 a. 3 ad. 3: rationabiliter autem dici potest quod etiam per ingressum religionis aliquis consequatur remissionem omnium peccatorum... unde in vitis patrum legitur quod eandem gratiam consequuntur ingredientes quam consequuntur baptizati); and on the eve of the Reformation it formed a central theme in Johannes von Paltz’s Frömmigkeitstheologie. Paltz was one of the brothers in the Erfurt Augustinian cloister when Luther entered it in 1505. See Leppin, Martin Luther, 36; Bernhard Lohse, Mönchtum und Reformation: Luthers Auseinandersetzung mit dem Mönchsideal des Mittelalters (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1963), 171: “Tatsächlich ist das Mönchtum bei Paltz zu einem himmlischen Versicherungsunternehmen geworden”; Berndt Hamm, Frömmigkeitstheologie am Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts. Studien zu Johannes von Paltz und seinem Umkreis (Tübingen, 1982), esp. 291-99.
But St. Paul replied: “It is excluded.” For he had just announced the gospel of God’s freely given righteousness, through Christ’s atoning blood, for everyone who believes in Rom. 3:21-26, and will declare emphatically in v. 28 that “one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.” Therefore: no more boasting (cf. Eph. 2:8-10). The Pauline and (as Hombert has magnificently documented) Augustinian Christian has nothing of his own of which he might boast before God, for all he has came to him from God as a free gift in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:26-30). Hence the twin verses from 1 Corinthians that Hombert has shown to stand at the center of Augustine’s spiritual theology of grace:

What do you have that you did not receive? If you received it, why then do you boast (*quid gloriaris*), as if you had not received it? (1 Cor. 4:7)

It is from God that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption: in order, as it is written, that the one who boasts might boast in the Lord (*ut qui gloriatur, in Domino glorietur*, 1 Cor. 1:30-1).

It is no accident that Luther concludes his Augustinian prelude on false and true boasting by pitting the natural desire for—and Bielish theology of—acceptance and reward on the basis of one’s works over against the *fixa sententia* of Rom. 9:16, 835 a proof-text ubiquitously cited by Augustine in defense of his spiritual doctrine of predestination and grace. As for Augustine, so for Luther, the object of true “glorying” lies not in the one who wills or the one who runs, but in God alone, who has mercy.

But to return to Rom. 4:7—This Augustinian and monastic spiritual theology forms the real content of Luther’s otherwise perplexing (and perhaps startling) assertion that “God is marvelous in his saints, to whom they are righteous and

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unrighteous *simul*.” In fact, what he writes here is essentially identical to the passage from the *Dictata* noted above. Ps. 67:37 Vg. attests the “marvelous” truth of the God of grace, who is seated on high yet regards the lowly, who is incomparably beautiful in his holiness yet dwells with those who confess the ghastliness of their sinful hearts.

The man who is most beautiful in his own eyes is the ugliest in God’s, but the man who abases himself in confession before God is beautiful in God’s sight (cf. Luke 18:9-14). For in confession, this self-abasing person begins to become *true*. Thus Luther’s explanation of his bold thesis runs as follows:

For while the saints always have their own sin before their eyes, and implore righteousness from God according to his mercy, for this very reason (*eoipso*) they are always also reputed (*reputantur*) righteous by God. Therefore to themselves and in truth they are unrighteous, but they are righteous to God reckoning them so because of (*propter*) this confession of sin. In reality sinners, but righteous by the reckoning of the God who has mercy [Rom. 9:16]. Unknowingly righteous and knowingly unrighteous. Sinners in fact, but righteous in hope. And this is what he says here: “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered” [Ps. 32:1]. Hence it follows: “I said, I will confess against myself my unrighteousness” [Ps. 32:5] (i.e., I will always have my sin before my eyes, because I confess to you). Therefore, “and you forgave the ungodliness of sin” [Ps. 32:5], not only to me, but to all. Hence it follows: “For this, every saint will pray to you” [Ps. 32:6]. Behold, every saint is a sinner and prays for his sins. In this way, the righteous man is, in principle, his own accuser.\(^{836}\)

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\(^{836}\) WA 56.269.25-270.7: *Quia dum sancti peccatum suum semper in conspectu habent et Iustitiam a Deo secundum misericordiam ipsius implorant, eoipso semper quoque Iusti a Deo reputantur. Ergo sibiipsis et in veritate Injusti sunt, Deo autem propter hanc confessionem peccati eos reputanti Iusti; Re vera peccatores, Sed reputatione miserentis Dei Iusti; Ignoranter Iusti et Scienter inIusti; peccatores in re, Iusti autem in spe. Et hoc est, quod dicit hic: ‘Beati, quorum remisse iniquitates et tecta peccata.’ Vnde sequitur: ‘Dixi: confitebor aduersum me Injustitiam meam’ (i. e. in conspectu meo semper habebo peccatum meum, quod tibi confitear). Idea ‘et tu remisisti impietatem peccati,’ Non solum mihi, Sed omnibus. Vnde sequitur: ‘Pro hac orabit ad te omnis sanctus.’ Ecce omnis sanctus est peccator et orat pro peccatis suis. Sic Iustus in principio est accusator sui. Cf. LW 25.258.
My reader may recall from chapter 2 how Luther wove together these very verses from Ps. 32 in just this way in late 1538, adding playfully, “Rhyme that if you can!” At this early stage in his development, the gist of his mature exegesis and theology is already in place; but I think it is fair to say that young Luther “yearning for grace” (Wicks) and still unassured of its reality in the promissio evangeli (Bayer) has yet to gain a playful soul. But farther on this point in its place. Three observations are in order here, leaving aside for the moment the precise nature of the “sin” that the saints confess they have for the next section of this chapter.

First, note that while Paul only quotes Ps. 32:1-2, Luther reads Rom. 4 in light of the rest of the Psalm: and in a way, it is vv. 5-6 of Ps. 32 that spiritually and logically drive Luther toward his “simul.” If one prays Ps. 32—and for that matter the rest of the Psalter, as Luther did “religiously” as an Augustinian—the notion that saints pray to God for their sins seeps into the very bones of one’s soul. Second, note Luther’s clear allusion to Rom. 9:16. The true penitent who always has his sin before his eyes lodges all his hope for salvation in the merciful reputatio of the miserentis Dei. This, and not just the spe/re contrast, ties Luther’s meditations here unmistakably to Augustine. Third, notice “Holl’s propter”: for the very reason (eoipso) that the saints confess their sin and beg God for iustitia to be granted to them by his mercy, God does in fact reckon them as righteous; again, although they are truly unrighteous and see this fact all too well, God reckons them righteous because of (propter) their confession

837 WA 39/1.507.19-508.1 [A], cf. ATD, 153: “What is this? How do these things fit together? How does it agree, to be holy and to pray for sin? It is truly a marvelous thing. It is truly a fine thing. Reim da, wer reimen kan.”
838 This is a rather sophisticated hermeneutical strategy, which Richard B. Hays has advocated in his book Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).
of sin. In his 1910 essay on justification in the Romans lectures, Holl emphasized these and other like claims in Luther’s writings and set them over against the propter Christum of the Lutheran confessions. Holl posed the question: does Luther’s propter smuggle “Catholic” merit or “Melanchthonian” synergism into Reformation theology? An appeal to God’s Alleinwirksamkeit freed Holl to answer his own question with a decisive “No,” for the faith, humility, or confession propter quod God justifies the sinner is always itself the gift of God’s prevenient grace and thus the temporal effect of his eternal predestination.\(^{839}\) This will not be the last time we meet “Holl’s propter.”

For the time being, what matters is that we recognize how God’s marvelous and merciful reputatio of the sinner as “righteous” does indeed have a point of contact in the real renewal of the sin-confessing, Psalter-praying sanctus. Holl grasped this point well. In reality, the saint is a sinner, and his sin is all that he can see when he kneels before the Holy One in prayer. But the very fact that he sees and acknowledges his sinfulness with even the smallest measure of truth, and confesses his sin as sin before God, and seeks God's mercy in hope’s humble prayer, shows that Luther’s sinful saint is not nothing but a peccator without remainder—and this “in re,” too, however hidden, inchoate, partial, and fragile the present reality of one’s gracious renewal in holiness may be.

2. The kind of “sin” that saints have, and its healing and forgiveness

This becomes clearer in the following corollarium, which takes its initial bearings from Rom. 7 and Ps. 32. Luther first states that in Ps. 32—as well as Ecclus. 39:5 and Ps. 38:8, which had also been cited—the “sins” in question are not only sinful deeds “in

work, word, and thought,” but also regard “the tinder” (de fomite). He immediately directs the reader infra 7., and quotes Rom. 7:17/20 (“Not I, but the sin that dwells in me”). “In the same place,” explains Luther, referring to Rom. 7:5, Paul “calls it [ipse, viz. peccatum] ‘the passions of sins’ i.e., desyderia, affectiones et inclinationes for sins, which he says operate fruit for death.” St. David did not think in the first place of adultery and murder when he wrote his great Psalms, and neither did St. Paul in Rom. 7:

Therefore actual sin (as it is called by the theologians) is more truly the sin, i.e., the work and fruit of sin; sin, however, is the passion itself, the tinder, and concupiscence or proneness toward evil and difficulty toward good, just as it says below: “I would not have known that concupiscence is sin” [Rom. 7:7]. If indeed they “work” (operantur) [7:5, 13, 15, 17, 20], therefore they are not themselves works (opera), but workers (operantes), in order that it may bear fruit (Vt fructificet); therefore, they are not the fruit.

Grane was right to underline that for Luther the decisive matter was grasping Paul’s meaning, not Augustine’s per se: but here once more, as in the Rom. 7 scholia, Luther is evidently employing Augustinian conceptuality to interpret the apostolic modus loquendi. In Rom. 7, “sin” means sinful passion itself—not actual sin—which in its residual being in the regenerate “operates” all manner of evil desires by its bent toward evil and aversion from the good. Drawn from Augustine through Peter Lombard, violent (and indeed, tyrannical) affective pronitas ad malum et difficultas ad bonum are amongst the terms Luther will use shortly to define original sin in the scholion on

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840 WA 56.271.2-6, cf. LW 25.259.
841 WA 56.271.6-11: Ergo Actuale (sicut a theologis vocatur) verius est peccatum i. e. opus et fructus peccati, peccatum autem ipsa passio | fomes | et concupiscentia siue pronitas ad malum et difficultas ad bonum, sicut infra: ‘Concupiscentiam nesciebam esse peccatum.’ Si enim ‘operantur’, ergo non sunt ipsa opera, Sed operantes, Vt fructificet; ergo non sunt fructus. Cf. LW 25.259.
Rom. 5:12. It is this sin—not *peccatum actuale*—for which the saint pleads forgiveness in Ps. 32:1-6: “the very bending away from good (*declinatio a bono*) and propensity for evil (*inclinatio ad malum*)” that he inherits originally from Adam. The “works” or “fruits” of this root sin are the sinful deeds that grow organically and necessarily therefrom in the unregenerate.

But as I have argued above and as we shall see again presently, in the regenerate person—who suffers the presence of his vicious affectivity unwilling—sin’s “fruits” only grow back into being *in opere, verbo et cogitatione* through the consent of his will. This distinction between “sin” as evil affectivity and sin’s “work”/“fruit” as *peccata actualia* “will be seen more clearly below in chapters 7 and 8,” writes Luther; but just as importantly, he clarifies that “all the previously related texts must be understood *de tali peccato*.”

Just to be sure we grasp his point, Luther then repeats Ps. 32:1, 32:5-6, and 51:3-4, and throws in 1 John 1:8 for good measure. In short, the affective *malum* that St. Paul bluntly names as “sin” in Rom. 6 and 7 is *re vera*

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peccatum; and the reason St. David pled with God for mercy in the Psalter is that he grasped the marrow of Paul’s theology. The saints, then, are “sinners” in the precise “42os Augustine” sense that they bear in their souls, against their own renewed wills, the residual evil of vicious desire. This matches exactly what we found earlier in Luther’s scholia on Rom. 7 and, indeed, in the works of his maturity.

Having clarified the nature of the saints’ “sin,” Luther presses on to explain both the manner of its non-imputation and the rationale for the same. This brings us to the early roots of his theology of gift and grace. Parallel to his distinction between “sin” and its “fruit,” Luther distinguishes between “our righteousness from God” (Iustitia nostra ex Deo) on the one hand and its fruits in good works on the other. The saint’s iustitia ex deo consists in the inner reversal of the deepest inclinations of his heart. This reversal is brought about by the heart’s renovation through the infusion of grace. “Our righteousness from God” is itself “the very propensity toward good (Inclinatio ad bonum) and turning away from evil (declinatio a malo) which is given inwardly through grace.”845 And as “sin” brought forth its “fruit” in peccata actualia, so this inner righteousness—received as a gift by grace, renovating the heart, and thus reversing its affective propensities—brings forth its fruits in good works: opera autem sunt potius fructus Iustitie.846 This real renewal of the heart is the foundation-stone upon which Luther proceeds, in two successive attempts, to erect a nuanced spiritual theology of sin, confession, mercy, non-imputation, and progressive healing by Christ’s grace. As I now exposit each in turn, we do well to keep this real affective

845 WA 56.271.11-13: Sicut Iustitia nostra ex Deo Est ipsa ipsa Inclinatio ad bonum et declinatio a malo interius per gratiam data. Cf. LW 25.259.
renewal in mind: *Iustitia nostra ex Deo est ipsa ipsa inclinatio ad bonum et declinatio a malo interius per gratiam data.*

(1) The evil passions of sin that remain, that is the “concupiscence” unmasked by the 10th Commandment as “*peccatum*,” are truly sin and require the confession of 1 John 1:8. Of itself, as sin, it is by nature worthy only of damnation. But God forgives it ... through his non-Imputation, out of mercy, to all who acknowledge and confess and hate it and plead to be healed from it (ab *eo sanari*).\(^8\)

In other words, God mercifully forgives and/or declines to reckon the intrinsic guilt of evil desire to the kind of true penitents described earlier, despite the fact that this evil desire is at work within their hearts. As true penitents, the forgiven do not hide, but confess and hate their “sin” and therefore plead with God to be healed of it (*sanari*). That is, they beg for an increase of *gratia sanans* to carry on the renewing work—hidden to the saints, but evinced by their very yearning for grace—that God has begun in their hearts. Luther next contrasts this penitential spirituality of healing grace and undeserved mercy with its mistaken counterfeit: the “error” that “this evil can be healed through works.”\(^8\) As I argued above regarding the autobiographical conclusion to the scholia on Rom. 7, so here, Luther is not merely taking aim at alternative late medieval spiritualities/theologies. Rather, he writes as a man who tried valiantly to extinguish his *concupiscentiae* through the normally suggested means, and failed. This, I think, is why Luther appeals immediately not to Scripture, but to experience: “For *Experientia* testifies, that in whatsoever we work well, this *concupiscentia ad malum* is left behind (*relinquitur*), and no one is clean from it, not

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\(^8\) WA 56.271.21-2, cf. LW 25.259.
\(^8\) WA 56.271.24, cf. LW 25.259.
even an infant one day old.”

Job 14:5 (in the Old Latin rendering of the LXX known to Luther either through Augustine, e.g., c. Iul. 5.13.49, or perhaps through a living spiritual tradition in the O.E.S.A.) enters in at the tail-end of Luther’s confession, but the real weight in the argument is his appeal to this eminently monastic experience.

Pace Denifle, however, Luther does not find release from this experience of spiritual failure in a doctrine of invincible concupiscence; nor, relatedly, does he take refuge in a doctrine of sheer imputation and a *totus/totus “simul.”* The brute experience of illicit desire in the regenerate is for Luther an incontestable fact of the godly life. But while the unwanted presence of this “sin” (together with its unruly and vexatious operations) is intractable in this life, for the regenerate person this *concupiscentia*—“evil” and indeed “guilty” as it intrinsically is in Luther’s judgment—is certainly not invincible. Luther did not find consolation in the kind of “cheap grace” that proclaims free justification to the sinner who gives way to his evil desires rather than calling him to fight against them in repentance. Far from it. Instead, the battle-weary Augustinian friar found consolation in the battle-proven old Augustinian’s teaching that even the most furious sin-fighters are obliged to suffer in their “flesh” the very emotions, passions, desires, or affections which they hate with the pure and

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849 WA 56.271.24-7: *Et error est, Quod hoc malum possit per opera sanari, Cum Experientia testetur, quod in quantulumlibet bene operemur, relinquitur concupiscentia ista ad malum et nemo mundus ab illa, nec Infans vnius diei.* Cf. LW 25.259.

850 NBA I/18.834, PL 44.811: *Sed cum etiam sancti Iob testimonium tam loquaciter adhiberes, quare non tibi venit in mentem quod ait idem ipse homo Dei, cum de peccatis sermo eius esset humanis, ‘neminem mundum a sorde, nec infantem cuius est uni us diei vita super terram’?* Cf. WSA 1/24.464.

851 Jordan of Quedlinburg cites Job 14:5 in concert with Isa. 64:6, a vital proof-text for Luther’s doctrine of the “sinfulness” of the good works done by the regenerate, at OP sermo 374B, fol. 90b—90va; in Saak, 416, n. 235. Saak notes that here Jordan draws from his teacher Albert of Padua O.E.S.A. “virtually word for word.” For a brief introduction to Albert, see Adolar Zumkeller, O.S.A., “The Augustinian School of the Middle Ages,” 35.
holy *odium peccati* (Ps. 139:22, Rom. 7:15) that is only ever found in spiritually
renovated, law-delighting hearts (Ps. 1:2, Rom. 7:22). So long as they keep up the holy
war against their own old selves by not consenting to the affective *vetustas* they bear
within, the regenerate continue both in the process of healing (or renovation)
underway in their hearts and in the forgiveness of God. As Luther sets forth this
document of residual sin, renewing grace, and pardoning mercy, he alludes to *nupt.*
*conc. 1.25.28* for the first time in the scholion:

But it is the mercy of God that this (*hoc*, *viz.*, *peccatum* or *concupiscentia*)
remains and is not reckoned for sin to those who call upon Him and groan for
their liberation [cf. Rom. 8:23-6]. For such people also take care for works
easily, because they seek to be justified with all zeal. *Sic*, ergo, in ourselves we
are sinners and nevertheless we are righteous by God’s reckoning through
faith. For we believe the One who promises that he will liberate us, provided
that (*dummodo*) in the meantime we persevere, lest sin should rule [cf. Rom.
6:12]; but we bear with it, until He takes it away.\(^{852}\)

Note well Luther’s little *Sic ergo*! Evil affective “sin” remains in the saints, to be sure,
but they “groan” (*gemunt*) in the manner of Rom. 8:23-6 for liberation from this evil.
And since they are the sort of holy people who zealously seek to be justified—
*Iustificari*, in this case as in the Rom 4:6 scholion a rough equivalent for *sanari*—they
see to it that they do good works *facile*. For real saints, doing good works *manu* is the
easy part: for the duration of his theological career, Luther more or less takes this for
granted. The real issue is the complete renovation, healing, or liberation of the heart
itself from its evil affective vitiation, disease, or bondage. The reality of the saints’
renewal is not in question. But the present imperfection of this renewal, owing to the

\(^{852}\) WA 56.271.27-272.2: *Sed misericordia Dei est, Quod hoc manet et non pro peccato reputatur iis, qui Inuocant eum et gemunt pro liberatione sua. Tales enim facile et opera cauent, quia querunt Iustificari omni studio. Sic ergo in nobis sumus peccatores Et tamen reputante Deo Iusti per fidem. Quia credimus promittenti, quod nos liberet, dummodo interim perseueremus, ne peccatum regnet, sed Sustineamus ipsum, donec auferat ipsum.* Cf. LW 25.259-60.
indwelling *peccatum* the saints continue to groan about to God, requires God’s merciful non-reckoning of their residual evil desires *pro peccato*. That they still have “sin” in this quite restricted sense (and 1 John 1:8 requires their confession of this fact) is enough to render the saints *peccatores coram Deo*. But through God’s merciful “overlooking” of this sin, the saints are *Iusti per fidem*.

At just this point, the eschatological orientation of justification (which Holl did well to emphasize) enters the scene. The mercifully pardoned *Iusti* believe the God who promises to bring to completion the liberation he has already begun. In this text, faith in *deus promittens* does not entail the free bestowal of Christ’s alien righteousness in the present (as it will more or less consistently by 1520), but rather a Rom. 8:23-26-style “hope” for eschatological *liberatio* from one’s bondage to affective evil.\(^{853}\) This liberation has begun; and until it reaches its completion, what is left of the old dominion of sin cannot bring the saints into condemnation, sheltered as they are

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\(^{853}\) At some points in the Romans lectures, Christ’s alien righteousness (or the “exchange” theme) comes to the fore, as does the *promissio-fides* correlation. But I think Bayer is right to argue that Luther has not yet quite fit together these two pieces of the later doctrine of justification. For *iustitia aliena* in 1515, see, e.g., (1) the scholion on Rom. 1:1, WA 56.158.10-14, LW 25.136: *Deus enim nos non per domesticam, Sed per extraneam Iustitiam et sapientiam vult saluare, Non que veniat et nascatuer ex nobis, Sed que aliunde veniat in nos, Non que in terra nostra oritur, Sed que de celo venit. Igitur omnino Externa et aliena Iustitia oportet erudiri.* (2) On Rom. 2:15, WA 56.204.15-28, LW 25.188: *Cor enim credentis in Christum, si reprehenderit eum et accusauerit eum contra eum testificans de malo opere, Mox auertit se et ad Christum conuerit dicitque: Hic autem satisfecit, hic Iustus est, hic mea defensio, hic pro me mortuus est, hic suam iustitiam meam fecit et meum peccatum suum fecit.* Quod si peccatum meum suum fecit, iam ego illud non habeo et sum liber. Si autem Iustitiam suam meam fecit, iam Iustus ego sum eadem iustitia, qua ille. Peccatum autem meum illum non potest absorbere, Sed absorbetur in abysso iustitie eius infinita, *Cum sit ipse Deus benedictus in secula.* Ac sic ‘Deus maior est corde nostro’. Maior est defensor quam accusator, etiam in infinitum. Deus defensor, cor accusator. Que proportio? Sic, Sic, etiam Sic! ‘Quis accusabit aduersus electos Dei?’ *Nullus.* Quia ‘Deus est, qui iustificat. Quis est, qui condemnet?’ *Nullus.* Quare? Quia ‘Christus Ihesus est’ (qui etiam Deus est), ‘qui mortuus est, immo qui et resurrexit’ etc. ‘Si ergo Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos?’ (3) On Rom. 3:27, WA 56.267.1-7, LW 25.254: *Restat igitur in peccatis nos manere oportere et in spe misericordie Dei gemere pro liberacione ex ipsis. Sicut Sanandus, qui nimium festinat sanari, certe potest grauius recidiuare. Paulatim ergo sanari oportet et aliquas imbecillitates aliquamdiu sustinere. Sufficit enim, quod peccatum disspicit, etsi non omnino recedat. Christus enim omnia portat, si displiceant et iam non nostra, Sed ipsius sunt et iustitia eius nostra vicissim.*
beneath the mercy of God. But all this is conditioned by “Holl’s propter,” in this case a *dummodo interim*. The saints’ residual “sin” is not reckoned to their account—“provided that” they persevere in the way of renewal while awaiting their ultimate liberation from sin’s enslaving power. What does this perseverance entail? Patiently battling against the affective remnants of one’s old “self,” *ne peccatum regnet*. Luther’s allusion to Rom. 6:12 is unmistakable: *non ergo regnet peccatum*, admonishes the Apostle, *ut obediatis concupiscentiis eius*. Translated into Augustine’s moral-psychological terminology, Luther is saying that the saints remain sheltered by God’s non-reckoning of their “sin” so long as—and only so long as—they refuse to consent to its evil desires, the presence of which they are summoned to bravely endure (*Sustineamus*) till God clean takes it away.

In short, Luther’s edgy-sounding “in ourselves we are sinners, but by God’s reckoning we are righteous through faith” is not inimical to an Augustinian theology of renovation. On the contrary, it depends upon just such a theology; and apart from the spiritual reality that such a theology attests—viz., hidden, fragile, embattled, but nonetheless real holiness—Luther’s impressive (“simul”) *peccatores et Iusti* simply breaks down.

(2) In the next and long paragraph that follows, Luther elaborates the same theology of residual sin, ongoing healing by Christ’s grace, and merciful non-imputation in terms of the *Christus Samaritanus*. To wit:

It’s just like with a sick person: he believes the doctor who promises most certain health, and in the meantime, obeying the doctor’s order in hope of the promised health, he abstains from those things which are prohibited to him—lest he impede the promised health and increase the disease—until the doctor fulfills what he promised. Now this sick person, is he healthy? Indeed, he is sick and healthy at the same time. Sick in the truth of the matter, but healthy by
the certain promise of the doctor, whom he believes, who already reckons him
as healthy because he is certain that he will heal him, because he has begun to
heal him and he has not imputed to him sickness unto death. In the same way,
our Samaritan Christ took up the half-dead man to cure his sickness in the inn,
and has begun to heal him, having promised most perfect health in eternal life,
and not imputing sin i.e. concupiscences unto death, but prohibiting
meanwhile in hope of the promised health to do or omit those things by which
that health would be impeded and sin i.e. concupiscence increased. Now, then,
is he perfectly righteous? No, but *simul peccator et Iustus*; sinner in fact, but
righteous by the certain reckoning and promise of God, that he will liberate
from that (*ab illo*, sc. *peccatum*), until he perfectly heals. And for this reason,
he is perfectly healthy in hope, in reality however a sinner, but having the
beginning of righteousness so that he always seeks it more fully, always
knowing that he is unrighteous. Now if this sick person, loving his weakness,
does not will to cure it all, won‘t he die? *Sic* he who follows his *concupiscentias*
in the world. Or, if someone does not seem sick in his own eyes, but healthy,
and therefore rejects the doctor—this is the kind of person who is justified
through his own works and is healthy.  

In theological substance, Luther adds nothing new here. But the analogy is powerful.

For Luther, sin’s sick longings and impulses in the saints are pathological, lethal, and
absurd. To indulge them is—not just in terms of the metaphor, but quite literally—to
succumb to one’s inveterate bent toward insanity and self-destruction. For when the
regenerate Christian consents to his residual concupiscence, it is like a mad
convalescent fleeing from a skillful and trustworthy physician (who has promised
complete restoration to wholeness) in order to commit suicide. No less mad is the sick person who thinks he is well and refuses the care of the doctor altogether. “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick,” taught the Lord Jesus, to the outrage of the Pharisees: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mark 2:17).

The great thrust of Luther’s long paragraph, however, is the real sanatio begun and progressively carried forward to its completion by Christ’s grace. The Good Samaritan and wise medicus has taken the semivivus into the inn and begun to heal him. His graced patient is by no means out of the woods: precisely in his convalescence by grace, he remains a sinner sick with the deadly morbus concupiscentiae. But because Christ really has begun to heal him, his patient really does possess the initium Iustitiae. Furthermore, Christ has promised to finish the healing he has begun; and in the meantime, he does not impute the affective sin-sickness that remains in his patient as a sickness unto death.

*Simul peccator et Iustus,* indeed. But there is only one reason for the first term, and perhaps three for the second. The chronic disease of evil desire renders Christ’s patient a sinner *re vera.* But the same patient, at the same time, is healthy and righteous, because (a) Christ has begun to make him healthy and righteous; (b) Christ has promised to finish the job; (c) until he does so, Christ does not impute his patient’s remaining morbus, infirmitas, aegritudo, or “sin” as a sickness unto death, i.e., destruction or condemnation. Is there a forensic element in this picture? There is: for in itself, the deadly disease of evil desire, which originated in Adam’s treachery

855 Cf. Hamel, II/89-90. On Hamel’s reading of the Romans lectures, God declares the *partim/partim* sinner righteous for three reasons: (1) God knows that he will heal the sin-sick sinner completely in the end; (2) the man is a penitent who confesses his sin and humbly begs for righteousness; (3) God reckons Christ’s righteousness to his account.
and rebellion, is worthy of damnation. But to myopically focus on this theme at the expense of Luther’s emphatic stress on real healing through grace, and to then set the former over against the latter—as Grane ill-advisedly asserts—does real injustice to both the intricate details and the overall tenor of the passage.\textsuperscript{856} For Luther fits his non imputavit into a far more complex theological and spiritual vision than Grane recognized: so much so, that interpreting Rom. 4/Ps. 32—i.e., explicitly imputational and “forensic” texts—proves for Luther a vital occasion for expositing his Augustinian theology of sanatio through the grace of Christus medicus.

Thus we arrive at the folly of the “pig theologians,” and the spiritual wisdom and consolatory power of nupt. conc. 1.25.28.

3. Nupt. conc. 1.25.28 and die Sawtheologen

In the next few pages, Luther intersperses autobiographical remarks amidst highly charged polemic against the Bielish theology of nature, sin, grace, and good works. Its fierceness tells us much about Luther’s own sense of having been betrayed by a false (or non-catholic) theology, his anger toward hypocrisy in the Church, his pastoral concern for “the simple Christians” affected thereby,\textsuperscript{857} and his passionate

\textsuperscript{856} Grane (\textit{Modus loquendi}, 77) labors hard in defense of his claim that this text and others like it does not express “a gradually progressing justification,” warns the reader not to be “fooled” by Luther’s use of sanare language, and asserts: “It is not permissible to accentuate a sentence like ‘donec perfecte sanet’ in such a way that the sharpness of the ‘simul iustus et peccator’ is abolished.” Luther was speaking freely and in a metaphorical manner, and probably never imagined he’d have to protect his unguarded sayings from later misinterpretations. Then a few pages later (p. 80): “You must not be led astray by Luther’s ‘Augustinian’ way of speaking.” So Grane, whose assertions mark an important juncture in the scholarly misapprehension of Luther’s Augustinianism; even in the face of such patently sanative texts, Hermann’s “simul” possesses such axiomatic force that it functions as an exegetical deus ex machina to void each Lutherrede that contradicts it. And Grane was no mean scholar.

\textsuperscript{857} WA 56.276.16-19, LW 25.263.
commitment to his program of scriptural and patristic (that is, Augustinian, plus one quote from Ambrose) *ressourcement.*

“The scholastic theologians”—in this case, Scotus, Ockham, and Biel all fit the bill—teach inadequately about sin and grace, “for they dream that the entire original sin (*Originale totum*) is taken away just like actual sin, as if they were the kind of things that can be clear taken away in the blink of an eye, like darkness by light.”

The bad grammar of Luther’s plural “as if they” (*quasi sint*) conveys a good Augustinian theology of original sin. Since its antecedent is *peccatum originale,* the reader expects *quasi sit.* But the plural *sint* evinces Luther’s operating assumption about the nature of original sin as a bundle of vitiated and unruly desires; and when paired together with the important little adjective *totum,* both his own theology of baptismal grace and his complaint vis-à-vis the late medieval alternative he had once held himself are greatly illumined.

Biel (and his pupil Friar Martin in 1509/10) held that baptism took away “the whole original sin.” In 1516, does Luther now hold that baptism has no real effect on original sin at all? No, he does not. Instead, he asserts that *peccatum originale totum* is not taken away, i.e., original sin as *a whole* is not taken away. For the evil *concupiscentiae* of which it is comprised remain partially left over—hence the quick shift to the plural *quasi sint quaedam amouilibilia.* But Luther’s *totum* must be held closely together with this, because the evil desires that remain do so only in

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858 WA 56.273.6-8, cf. LW 25.261: Unlike the scholastic theologians, who spoke *ad modum Aristotelis,* “the ancient holy fathers Augustine and Ambrose spoke very differently, *ad modum Scripturae.*”

859 WA 56.273.3-6: *Aut ego nunquam intellexi, aut non bene satis de peccato et gratia theologi scholastici sunt locuti, Qui Originale totum auferri somniant sicut et actuale, quasi sint quedam amouilibilia in ictu oculi, sicut tenebrę per lucem.* Cf. LW 25.260-1.
fragmentary and residual form: the grace of baptism having broken, if not yet entirely obliterated, original sin’s dominion in the regenerate. For Luther, baptism wreaks havoc on original sin, but it does not sweep out its every affective remnant in the regenerate in the blink of an eye. The whole of it is not taken away, but neither is the whole of it left over. For concupiscientiae remain in the saints after baptism. And by 1515/16, Luther—after the manner of the “420s Augustine”—has come to speak frankly about evil desires in the saints as the remnants (or relics) of original sin itself. The conclusion follows rapidly from the premises. If concupiscence remains in the saints, then original sin—however debilitated, crippled, and overruled by the invasion of grace—remains a reality after baptism. And if “sin” is thus present, it must be dealt with one way or another if the sin-bearing saint is to stand in reconciled fellowship with the Holy One. Enter nupt. conc. 1.25.28—well almost, at any rate:

Blessed Augustine said most clearly: “sin concupiscence is forgiven in baptism, not so that it no longer is, but so that it is not imputed” (peccatum concupiscentiam in baptismate remitti, non vt non sit, sed vt non imputetur).860

The superscript in the excerpt reflects the fact that in the handwritten notes, concupiscentiam is added above the word peccatum. Here is what Augustine wrote:

Concupiscence of the flesh is forgiven in baptism, not so that it no longer is, but so that it is no longer imputed as sin (dimitti concupiscentiam carnis in baptismo, non ut non sit, sed ut in peccatum non imputetur).861

Plainly, Luther did not quote Augustine’s text with literal accuracy. Did Luther perhaps cite Augustine from his capacious memory, as he would with remarkable accuracy in the 1521 Antilatomus, holed up in the Wartburg without benefit of a

861 BA 23.116-8, cf. WSA I/24.46.
library, and in the event do so imprecisely? \(^{862}\) I do not know for sure. The first positive reference to *nupt. conc. 1.25.28* that I can locate in Luther’s works is found in the 1514 sermon “On the Conception of Blessed Mary the Virgin, and about Congenital Sin” to which I referred in the introduction to Part II of this book. (Notably, Luther does not cite it in the 1513 *Dictata* on Ps. 32.) \(^{863}\) In this sermon, Luther’s text differs from both our modern critical edition and the excerpt in the Rom. 4:7 scholion:

> Cum dicitur in baptismo originale peccatum dimitti, quomodo ergo tu dicis, quod remaneat et cum eo pugnandum esse? Respondet Divus Augustinus: ‘Dimittitur quidem peccatum gentilitium in baptismo, non ut non sit, sed ut non imputetur.’ \(^{864}\)

There may be a hint toward a solution in this sermon. The way Luther posits a serious theological question and then answers it with an authoritative text reflects, I think, the dialogical form of scholastic theology. Now, it was almost certainly in Lombard that Luther first encountered *nupt. conc. 1.25.28*, and this by the winter semester of 1509/10 at the latest, when he rejected it out of hand. Evidently by the time he preached this sermon in 1514, Luther had come to reverse his position. Does this mean he had already undertaken his intensive study of Augustine’s anti-Pelagian writings?

As I noted above, Hamel, Grane, and Leppin date Luther’s reading of vol. 8 of the Amerbach edition to the vicinity of 1515, and speak of a kind of “breakthrough” to an Augustinian *sola gratia* in the same year. In terms of Luther’s full digestion of Augustine’s theology of grace, this judgment is basically sound: and indeed it is, as I acknowledged above, a major premise underlying my decision to skip to the Romans

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\(^{862}\) Cf. Hamel, II/1, citing Melanchthon’s preface to the second edition of Luther’s works in 1546 (CR 6.159): *Omnia Augustini monumenta et saepe legerat et optime meminerat.*

\(^{863}\) WA 3.171-8 (gloss plus scholia), LW 10.145-51 (scholia).

\(^{864}\) WA 4.691.30-33.
lectures as the main focus of this second part of my study. The 1514 sermon shows it is at least possible that Luther had begun his readings in Augustine’s anti-Pelagian works one year earlier than is often assumed. Possible, but not necessary: for nupt. conc. 1.25.28 was a text already known to Luther from the Sententiae. And in addition to the dialogical form of the extract’s presentation in the sermon, there are strong enough verbal echoes to suggest that Luther drew his not-quite citation of Augustine from Sent. II d. 32.

Unlike Luther, when Peter cites nupt. conc. 1.25.28 near the end of d. 32 cp. 1 he does so accurately, with only the slightest variations: Dimittitur concupiscentia carnis in baptismo, non ut non sit, sed ut non imputetur in peccatum.865 However, from the first line of d. 32 cp. 1.1 (and in accord with his teaching in d. 30 cp. 8), Peter identifies original sin with concupiscence and vice versa:

1. Quomodo originale peccatum dimittatur in baptismo, cum et post sit illa concupiscentia quae dicitur originale peccatum. Quoniam supra dictum est originale peccatum esse vitium concupiscientiae, assignatumque quomodo a parentibus trahatur et originale dicatur, superest investigare quomodo baptismo dimittatur, cum etiam post baptismum remaneat concupiscentia quae ante fuerat: unde videtur vel peccatum originale non esse concupiscentiam, vel non remitti in baptismo.866

Not only the dogmatic question, but Luther’s very wording in the 1514 sermon approximates what Peter writes here in d. 32 cp. 1.1. Peter asks: “How is original sin forgiven in baptism, when also afterward there is that concupiscence which is said to be original sin?” Luther asks: “If it is said that original sin is forgiven in baptism, how then do you say that it remains and that one has to fight with it?” Peter goes on, in cp. 1.2-3, to explain that original sin is forgiven in two ways, viz., extenuatione sui et

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865 Sent. II d. 32 cp. 1.6 (Grott. I/513).
866 Sent. II d. 32 cp. 1.1 (Grott. I/511).
solutione reatus, “by its diminishment and by the releasing of its guilt.”

Neither does it”—i.e., concupiscence/original sin—“remain after baptism ad reatum, because it is not imputed in peccatum.” This marks the first (unnoted) reference to nupt. conc. 1.25.28 in d. 32 cp. 1, and interestingly enough this allusion follows on the heels of an explicit citation of sentences from the same passage that come after Augustine’s decisive remark on baptism and non-imputation. In cp. 1.4-6, Peter then defends his solution with numerous proofs from authority, above all Augustine, culminating in a catena of three lines taken from continuous sections of nupt. conc. (1.24.27, our 1.25.28, and 1.26.29). Read in light of the whole of d. 32 cp. 1, it is an at least plausible conjecture that Luther’s variations on nupt. conc. 1.25.28 in 1514/15—and thenceforth right up to 1546—stem from the fact that he read into it both (a) the identification of concupiscentia and peccatum originale, and (b) the distinction between the diminution of original sin’s powers and the absolution of its guilt, which Peter’s Augustinianism had already achieved in this very chapter. On this supposition, by Advent 1514 Luther has tucked away his glossed version of nupt. conc. 1.25.28—as a kind of pithy summary Sent. II d. 32 cp. 1 taken as a whole—in his memory, and he runs with it for the rest of his life.

I grant that this is a speculative and thus tentative historical hypothesis. But it does fit with the impression given the reader at this specific juncture in the scholia

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867 Sent. II d. 32 cp. 1.3 (Grott. I/511).
868 Sent. II d. 32 cp. 1.2 (Grott. I/511).
869 Sent. II d. 32 cp. 1.2 (Grott. I/511): Augustinus in libro De nuptiis et concupiscentia: ‘Manet quippe, ut ait Augustinus, in corpore mortis huius carnalis concupiscentia, cuius vitiosis desideriis non obedire praecipimus; quae tamen concupiscentia quotidie minuitur in proficientibus et continentibus.’ Sed licet remaneat concupiscentia post baptismum, non tamen dominatur et regnat sicut ante; immo per gratiam baptismi mitigatur et minuitur, ut post dominari non valeat nisi quis reddat vires hosti eundo post concupiscencias [Ecclus. 18:30]. Nec post baptismum remanet ad reatum, quia non imputatur in peccatum, sed tantum poena peccati est; ante baptismum vero poena est et culpa.
that Luther is writing furiously—i.e., both rapidly and angrily—and in process quoting authorities from memory. The reference to *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28 under consideration here is the first appeal to a non-scriptural authority in the Rom. 4:7 scholia. In the following pages, Luther refers once to “the books of blessed Augustine”\textsuperscript{870} in general and then—accurately enough with respect to its content, but nonetheless indefinitely—to “how beautifully and richly blessed Augustine has written in many books” about the *velle/perficere* distinction, “especially book 2 against Julian.”\textsuperscript{871} The next extensive excerpt, to *ep.* 167.5, turns up seven pages farther on in the WA.\textsuperscript{872} The slight changes in the excerpt itself (e.g., *baptismo* to *baptismate*, *dimitti* to *remitti*, and shifts in word order) also point in this direction. So does the very brevity of both the Augustine citation and the reference to Ambrose’s *de sacramentis* 4.6.28 which immediately follows it. Finally, there is the fact that *ad litteram* Luther misquotes Ambrose too, yet despite this successfully conveys the substance of Ambrose’s remarks.\textsuperscript{873} Here, it would seem, are two patristic texts that had deeply impressed Luther by 1515. He had digested their basic substance and committed them to memory. In this instance, he remembered them with an imprecision that falls short of the rigorous standards of modern scholarship.

Thinking along these lines, I suggest we take the old Luther’s frequent advice and attend to his reference to *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28 in terms of its *res* rather than its

\textsuperscript{870} WA 56.276.5-6, LW 25.263.

\textsuperscript{871} WA 56.281.1-4, cf. LW 25.268.

\textsuperscript{872} WA 56.289.1-12, LW 25.276.

\textsuperscript{873} Luther has (WA 56.274.2): *Et. b. Amb. ait: ‘Semper pecco, ideo semper communico.’* Ambrose, discussing the Eucharist and referring to 1 Cor. 11:26, wrote (PL 16.446): *Si mortem annuntiamus, annuntiamus remissionem peccatorum. Si quotiescumque effunditur sanguis, in remissionem peccatorum funditur; debo illum semper accipere, ut semper mihi peccata dimittantur. Qui semper pecco, semper debeo habere medicinam.* Luther quotes Ambrose’s last sentence in an obviously slightly divergent form, which just as obviously conveys the substance of what Ambrose wrote.
The question must be asked, despite the obvious variations between his text and Augustine’s, and apart from my proposed theory as to the provenance of those variations, whether Luther did in fact render its theological substance faithfully (as he did Ambrose’s). There are, I think, two reasons to judge in Luther’s favor in this regard, one quite simple and the other a tad more subtle.

First, when the two sentences are held alongside one another, a fairly impartial reader will find them to be virtually identical. It seems tedious to point this out. But since Denifle went to such great lengths to prove Luther’s divergence from Augustine, and since even more sympathetic readers of Luther have been influenced (or intimidated) by the dark shadow of Denifle’s non-Augustinian Lutherdeutung, I do think this simplest point of all needs to be urged in Luther’s defense. Luther has:

*peccatum/concupiscentiam in baptismate remitti, non vt non sit, sed vt non imputetur.*

Augustine has:

*dimitti concupiscentiam carnis in baptismo, non ut non sit, sed ut in peccatum non imputetur.*

Both hold that prior to baptism into Christ, concupiscence is the inherited original sin that naturally binds the vitiated filii Adae in chains of death and damnation. Both assert that this concupiscence/sin is forgiven in baptism. Both hold that this happens in such a way that “it”—whether concupiscence, “sin,” or both—though forgiven, nonetheless remains after baptism. Luther teaches that “sin” remains, but is not imputed: and by “sin,” he means *concupiscentia rea.* Augustine teaches that concupiscence remains, but is not imputed as (or for, or into) “sin”: and in his subsequent explanation of his meaning at c. *Iul.* 6.17.51 in 421, Augustine clarifies that the *mala concupiscentia* still present in the baptized is indeed intrinsically *rea.* I submit that this amounts to either a distinction without a real difference, or else a
simple identity of theological substance. In any case, just a few lines below his not-quite citation of *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28, Luther writes that grace begins to take “sin” away, “in order that it not be imputed henceforth for sin”—*vt non Imputetur ammodo pro peccato*, which is just a hair’s breath away from Augustine’s *ut in peccatum non inputetur*.\(^{874}\)

Second, whereas Denifle read all of Augustine’s later writings *contra Iulianum* in light of the Tridentine orthodoxy of the “410s Augustine”—which, to be sure, is reflected in *nupt. conc.* 1.23.25—Luther did just the reverse, and read texts from even the 390s in light of the “420s Augustine” whom he regarded as the real and catholic *b. Augustinus noster*. This is clear, for example, in the scholion on Rom. 6:2, where Luther offers a long extract from the 394/5 *ex. prop. Rm.* and interprets its references to *caro, lex peccati, desiderium peccati, concupiscentiae, desideria prava*, and Rom. 6:12’s “*peccatum*” in the stronger anti-Julian sense that Augustine will indeed find in these same terms in the 420s.\(^{875}\) At *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28, Augustine writes that the concupiscence of the flesh remains in the regenerate after baptism. As I have argued thus far, Luther well knows that Augustine sometimes identifies postbaptismal concupiscence as “sin,” and he prefers this “420s Augustine” because he finds him the more helpful interpreter of the literal meaning of St. Paul in Rom. 6—8 and Gal. 5, St. John in 1 John 1, St. David in the Psalter, etc. This Augustine, Luther has concluded by 1515, is in fact the orthodox and catholic Augustine. And as catholic theologians know—Augustine’s relation to Cyprian on the rebaptism of *traditores* or Thomas

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\(^{874}\) WA 56.274.9-11: *remissio quidem vera sit, Sed tamen non sit ablatio peccati nisi in spe i. e. auferenda et data gratia, que auferre incipit, vt non Imputetur ammodo pro peccato*. Cf. LW 25.261.

\(^{875}\) WA 56.320.11-29, LW 25.308.
Aquinas’ relation to Augustine on illuminationism being two cases in point—it is best
practice to cover the nakedness of our fathers, and in ambiguous cases to offer a
generous construction of their meaning.

This is the practice Augustine himself engaged in (whether wittingly or
unwittingly is hard to say) in c. Iul. 1 and 2 vis-à-vis a Greek father like John
Chrysostom, whose theology of sin and grace is, well, less “Augustinian” than
Augustine’s. Nearer to Luther’s time, Heiko Oberman has shown that Biel’s successor
at Tübingen, Wendelin Steinbach, did much the same thing in order to claim
Augustine and St. Paul—despite the excesses of their modus loquendi—for his defense
of human initiative in salvation over against the trenchant medieval Augustinianism of
Thomas Bradwardine and Gregory of Rimini. 876 “When disputing against the enemies
of grace and infused charity, Augustine seems to have spoken excessively (excessive) a
great number of times”—thus the Bielish Steinbach in 1513; but no matter, for the
incautious Augustine and the judicious Biel are really at one. In the same manner, but
in clear the other direction in terms of dogmatic substance, by 1515/16 Luther has
already arrived at the conclusion (as he will put in the first thesis of the 4 Sept. 1517
Disputation against Scholastic Theology) that

876 Heiko Augustinus Oberman, Masters of the Reformation, 91-110. Oberman (p. 98, notes 157 and
158) supplies three fascinating excerpts to this effect from Steinbach’s 1513 lectures on Galatians: (1)
Et sepe numero, cum sancti errorem aliquem funditus enervare volunt aut veritatem aliquam in luce
ponere, cui plerique contradicunt aut contradicere presumunt, quasi excessivo videntur uti sermon
aut nonnumquam subscuro, ne qualecmunque errandi reliquant occasionem. Ita Paulus, cum de
fide, que est inicium omnis boni et sperandarum rerum substancia, loquitur, quasi sola sufficiat loqui
videtur indecis (Opera Exegetica 1 p. 134 ll. 12-17); (2) Augustinus disputando contra inimicos gracie
et caritatis infuse sepe numero excessive locutus esse videtur, salvo nostro loquendi modo nunc solito
de merito congrui et condigni (ibid, p. 135 ll. 2-4); (3) Quod nisi attendatur in dictis Augustini et
Apostoli, videntur totum dare Deo, semoto libero arbitrio. Cuius contrarium uterque tenet. Sumus
enim adiutores Dei, et unusquisque propriam mercedem accipiet secundum suum laborem, 1 Cor 3
(ibid, 206 ll. 6-9).
To say that Augustine speaks excessively (excessive) against heretics is to say that Augustine lied almost everywhere.\(^{877}\)

Or, as he declares at table in 1538,

Augustine writes nothing penetrating about faith, except when he writes against the Pelagians: they woke Augustine up and made him into a man.\(^{878}\)

The old Augustine, *der Mann* awoken from his dogmatic slumbers and pushing the logic of the argument to its farthest point against the arch-Pelagian Julian—this, for Luther in 1515/16 right up to his death three decades later is the “catholic Augustine” *par excellence*: “the illustrious and distinguished *Doctor ecclesiae*,” as he stated with marked admiration in 1544, “who freed countless souls from multiple errors and (after the Apostles) conquered so many monstrosities of the heretics.”\(^{879}\) Or, as Risto Saarinen puts it with a touch greater reserve, for Luther “the aged Augustine who writes against Julian is the definitive doctrinal authority.”\(^{880}\)

This being the case, when Luther read a text like *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28 in 1515, he read it in light of what he regarded to be the orthodox, catholic, and scriptural “420s Augustine.”\(^{881}\) Concupiscence is sin; it is forgiven in baptism; it remains

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\(^{879}\) From the 1544 lecture on Gen. 41:1-7, WA 44.399.11-13, cf. LW 7.135.


\(^{881}\) Later in life, Luther uses the same tactic in the reverse direction to excuse what he came to regard as Augustine’s weak points (e.g., on imputation), and thus ensure both his own and Augustine’s catholicity in one fell swoop. See, e.g., WA Tr 1.130.1-6 (#316, Summer/Fall 1532): *De commentario Philippi in Rom. edito anno 32. dicebat: Augustinus si iam viveret, gauderet hunc librum legere, quamquam saepe eum perstrinxerit, sed S. Hieronymus, wenn der lebt, solt er wol dawider*
fragmentarisch in the regenerate: but it is not imputed to their account—provided, that is, that the baptized do not consent to its vicious impulses. For Roman Catholics after Trent to cry foul at this point is anachronistic: Girolamo Seripando’s grief in December 1546 speaks well to this point,\textsuperscript{882} as does the tragic witness of the theologians of l’abbaye de Port-Royal.\textsuperscript{883} But for modern Lutherans to celebrate novelty instead is a failure to appreciate the formal and—by the standard of the late Augustine, at any rate—material catholicity of Luther’s theology of original sin, baptism, and grace. It is, I think, only a failure of historical imagination (or perhaps catholic generosity) that would preclude one from seeing—mutatis mutandis, to be sure—that the superior general at Trent, the district vicar in Wittenberg, and the

\textit{schreyben wie ein ander parfusser munch. Ergo nisi sit singularis quaedam remissio peccatorum praeter illam communem, qua omnes indigemus, so ist erverlorn.} (cf. LW 54.44). If only Augustine could have read Melanchthon on Paul, he would have rejoiced to admit his error and embraced the Reformation theology of justification. Not so Jerome!

\textsuperscript{882} On Seripando, see Peter Walter, “Die bleibende Sündigkelet der Getauften in den Debatten und Beschlüssen des Trienter Konzils,” and Anthony N. S. Lane, \textit{Justification by Faith}, 60-5.

\textsuperscript{883} Anthony Lane (\textit{Justification by Faith}, 5 n. 4) relates that Otto Herman Pesch has suggested that Rome rehabilitate the “radical Augustinianism (of those like Jansen and Pascal) which was condemned after Trent,” referring to Pesch’s essay “The Canons of the Tridentine Decree on Justification. To Whom Did they Apply?” in K. Lehmann, ed., \textit{Justification by Faith: Do the Sixteenth-Century Condemnations Still Apply?} (New York: Continuum, 1997), 214 n. 76. On Jansenism, see Leszek Kolakowski, \textit{God owes us nothing: a brief remark on Pascal’s religion and on the spirit of Jansenism} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). If Jean Daniélou and Henri de Lubac could successfully rehabilitate Gregory of Nyssa and Origen as Catholic theologians, why in principle could not the same be done for Jansen and Arnauld—or Luther? This seemingly simple question raises historical, dogmatic, and ecumenical issues of immense complexity that cannot be dealt with here. For a start, in addition to Lehmann’s (ed.) op. cit., see Eero Huovinen, “Doctor Communis? The ecumenical significance of Martin Luther’s theology,” \textit{Lutherjahrbuch} 80 (2013), 13-30; Theo M. M. A. C. Bell, “Roman Catholic Luther Research in the Twentieth Century: From Rejection to Rehabilitation,” \textit{OHMLT}, 584-97; and Peter Manns, \textit{Vater im Glauben: Studien zur Theologie Martin Luthers}, ed. Rolf Decot (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1988), esp. chapters 6, 7, 9, 10, and 11. Though it must be admitted that reading Manns’ essays in 2015 at times feels like an exercise in nostalgia. In the ecumenical chill that has set in since the 1999 JDDJ, the mere 45 years since Jan Cardinal Willebrands, in his official statement to the Fifth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation at Evian in 1970, acclaimed Luther “notre maître commun”—i.e., \textit{doctor communis}, and precisely in \textit{articulo iustificationis}—seem to have grown longer.
bishop in Hippo might all have made for rather stout Jansenists had they lived in seventeenth-century Paris.

But let us press on farther in the scholion on Rom. 4:7 to see where Luther takes his variant text of *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28. He had appealed to Augustine, Ambrose, and the Bible against the “Aristotelian” theology of the scholastics, who made actual evil or good works the locus for evaluating one’s sinfulness or righteousness, and who did so because of (a) their theological commitment to the complete eradication of original sin in baptism (or sacramental penance)\(^{884}\) and (b) their positive assessment of the integrity of human nature and its faculties after the fall.\(^{885}\) For reasons rather elementary to a spiritually-minded and theologically informed late medieval ascetic in hard pursuit of true humility, this deeply puzzled Friar Martin:

> On this account, foolish me could not understand how I ought to repute myself a sinner like others and thus prefer myself to no one, since I was contrite and had confessed. For then, I was thinking that all sins had been taken away and evacuated, even intrinsically. For if it was because of past sins, which they say must always be remembered (and they speak the truth, just not enough), then I would think that they had not been forgiven: which, nonetheless, God has promised have been forgiven to those who confess. Thus I battled with myself...\(^{886}\)

Luther’s formation in late medieval “piety-theology” as an Augustinian friar had taught him to strive for humility. But his Erfurt training in late medieval *Scholastik* had

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\(^{884}\) WA 56.273.3-9: *Aut ego nunquam intellexi, aut non bene satis de peccato et gratia theologi scolastici sunt locuti, Qui Originale totum auferri somniant sicut et actuale, quasi sint quedam amouibilia in ictu oculi, sicut tenebrȩ per lucem, Cum Antiqui sancti patres Aug., Ambro. multum aliter sint locuti ad modum Scrip., illi autem ad modum Aristot. in ȩthicorum, Qui peccata et Iustitiam collocauit in opera et eorum positionem et priuationem similiter. Cf. LW 25.260-1.*

\(^{885}\) WA 56.274.11-18, LW 25.261-2; WA 56.275.17-22, LW 25.262.

\(^{886}\) WA 56.274.2-8: *Et ex hoc ego stultus non potui intelligere, quomodo me peccatorem similem çeteris deberem reputare et ita nemini me preferre, cum essem contritus et confessus; tunc enim omnia ablata putabam et evacuada, etiam intrinsece. Si enim propter præterita, que dicunt semper oportere recordari (et verum dicunt, Sed non satis), tunc non remissa esse cogitabam, que tamen Deus promisit remissa esse confitentibus. Ita mecum pugnaui...* Cf. LW 25.261.
eliminated in principle the most powerful rationale for refusing to prefer himself to others. After passing through the penitential stages of contrition and confession, the guilt of all postbaptismal sin was forgiven afresh in priestly absolution, its eternal poena being commuted to the temporal pains for which satisfaction must be rendered either in this life or in purgatory (unless, of course, mitigated or removed through indulgences). As for the concupiscentia which had been kindled into the fire of mortal sin through consent: it went back to being the sinless “tinder” which the grace of baptism had rendered it prior to one’s lapse into actual sin. Luther had taught this doctrine himself as sententiarius at Wittenberg in 1509/10. Because of it, he knew that when he left the confessional, he left it as one who was no longer a sinner.

At some point between 1510 and 1514/15, Luther realized he could no longer square this scholastic theology of sin and penance with either (a) the affective facts of his own monastic experience or (b) the spiritual wisdom embodied in at least some of the monastic theology he had been taught since his admission to the novitiate in the Erfurt Augustinian cloister in 1505. He needed to be humble, and to consider others better than himself. But after confession—a sometimes daily practice for Friar Martin—he knew, at the theological level, that he was no longer a sinner and therefore was in fact better than others who were. The suggested remedy was counterproductive: calling past sins to mind in order to engender humility only sent scrupulous young Luther into the self-obsessed spiral of despair that Staupitz was

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887 WA 9.75-6, on Sent. II d. 32. So, e.g., 9.75.16-19: illa concupiscentia in carne est nihil aliud nisi inoboedientia carnis ad spiritum quae de se non est culpa, sed poena, quia si esset aliquo modo culpa et non dimiti in baptismo diceretur, injuria fierit baptismo et gratiae dei. Indeed, ll. 21-23, after baptism concupiscence non est mala nisi occasionaliter inquantum ratio contra eam sibi in pugnam pro poena inoboedientiae primae relictam debet certare. Thus 76.1-4: Unde dicit Apostolus, quod concupiscentia non nocet his qui secundum Christum vivunt, quia non est malum deleta culpa, sed tantum pondus et inclinatio ad malum quam sic deus esse voluit in poenam Adae.
laboring to pull him out of. Thus specific aspects of scholastic theology pushed Luther to presumption, while specific strains within monastic piety led him to despair. As I argued above, Staupitz’s pastoral counsel to “look to Christ” proved indisputably vital both for helping the afflicted Luther find spiritual consolation and for midwifing the birth of Luther’s relentlessly (and joyfully) christocentric evangelical theology. But in this autobiographical confession from 1515, Luther acknowledges the Augustinian wisdom summed up in *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28 as the source of the simultaneously dogmatic and spiritual solution to his prior perplexity and folly:

888 In addition to a handful of bright flashes of Christ-centered joy in the Romans lectures (cited in an earlier footnote), Luther’s justly famous letter to his Augustinian confrère Georg Spenlein shows how deeply he had imbibed Staupitz’s theology of soteriological exchange through union with Christ by 8 April 1516. Note the spiritual dialectic of presumption and despair, and how Luther urges that the freedom and peace won through union with Christ ought to issue in Spenlein’s humble service of the brothers—for as a sinner, he is not better than them. This is the same complex of problems Luther discusses in the Rom. 4:7 scholion. WA Br 1.35.15–36.52, #11: Caeterum quid agat anima tua, scire cupio, utrumne tandem suam pertaesam iustitiam discat in iustitia Christi respirare atque confidere. Fervet enim nostra aetate tentatio praesumptionis in multis, et ipsis praecipue, qui iusti et boni esse omnibus viribus studeant; ignorantes iustitiam Dei, quae in Christo est nobis effusissime et gratis donata, quae sunt tam diu operari bene, donec habeant fiduciam standi coram Deo, veluti virtutibus et meritis ornati, quod est impossibile fieri. Fuisti tu apud nos in hac opinione, imo erreore; fui et ego, sed et nunc quoque pugnare contra istum errorem, sicut rei expugnavi. Igiter, mi dulcis Frater, disce Christum et hunc crucifixum, disce eum cantare et de te ipso desperans dicere ei: tu, Domine Ihesu, es iustitia mea, ego autem sum peccatum tuum; tu assumpsisti meum, et dedisti mihi tuum; tu assumpsisti, quod non eras, et dedisti mihi, quod non eram. Cave, ne aliquando tam puritatem aspires, ut peccator tibi videri nolis, imo esse. Christus enim non nisi in peccatoribus habitat. Ideo enim descendit de coelo, ubi habitabit in iustus, ut etiam habitationem in peccatoribus. Istam charitatem eius rumina, et videbis dulcissimam consolationem eius. Si enim nostris laboribus et afflictionibus ad conscientiae quietem pervenire oportet, ut quid ille mortuus est? Igitor non nisi in illo, per fiduciam desperationem tui et operum tuorum, pacem invenies; disces insuper ex ipso, ut, sicut ipse suscepit te et peccata tua fecit sua, et suum iustitiam fecit tui. Si firmiter hoc credas, sicut debes (maledictus enim, qui hoc non credit), ita et tu fratres indisciplinatos et et adhuc errantes suscipe, et patienter sustineas, atque ex eorum peccatis facias tua, et si quid boni habes, illorum esse sinas. Sicut docet Apostolus: suscipite invicem, sicut et Christus suscepit vos in honorem Dei; et iterum: hoc sentite in vobis, quod et in Christo Ihesu, qui, cum in forma Dei esset, exinanivit semetipsum etc. Ita et tu, si tibi melior videris, non rapinam arbitreris, ac quasi tuum solius sit, sed exinanias te ipsum, et obliviscere, qualis es, et esto quasi unus illorum, ut portes eos. Infelix enim istius iustitiae, quae alios sibi comparatos veluti peiores sustinere non vult, et fugam et desertum meditatur, qui patientia et oratione et exemplo praesenter eis prodesse debuit; hoc est talentum Domini abscondere, et conservis non tradere, quod debatur. Igitor si es lilium et rosa Christi, scito, quoniam inter spinas conversatio tua erit; tantum vide, ne per impatientiam et temerarium iudicium vel occultum superbiam tu spina fias.
Thus I battled with myself, not knowing that forgiveness (remissio) is true indeed, but that there is nevertheless no removal of sin (ablatio peccati) except in hope, i.e., that it is to be taken away and that grace has been given (data gratia), which begins to take it away so that (vt) it is not imputed henceforth for sin.889

This is a paraphrase of the excerpt from nupt. conc. 1.25.28 cited just a few lines earlier, in substance adding only (a) the notion that “grace” does indeed begin to take away the “sin” that remains after baptism/penance, and (b) the linkage (vt!) between this inchoate renewal by grace on the one hand, and the non-imputation of the remaining “sin” pro peccato on the other. Both additions are themselves eminently Augustinian, and together function to explain how the Ps. 32:2/Rom. 4:8 non imputare coheres with the robust theology of sanative renewal which Luther has been developing thus far in the scholion. “Grace”—in this context, gratia sanans/iustificans—is really given, and it is given to the end that the “sin” that remains after baptism (or penance) really begins to be taken away. So long as this process is underway, the “sin” that remains is not imputed to the penitent’s account: with Luther’s vt implying strongly that one’s inchoate renewal relates to the forgiveness or non-imputation of the “sin” that remains as the cause to its effect. But it is, I think, better to read this as another instance of Luther’s consistent conviction that the penitent’s abiding in statu gratiae through the actual exercise of the non consentire desideriis, concupiscentiis, etc. constitutes the conditio sine qua non for the non-imputation of the affective sin that remains for the fight.

889 WA 56.274.8-11: Ita mecum pugnaui, Nesciens, Quod remissio quidem vera sit, Sed tamen non sit ablatio peccati nisi in spe i. e. auferenda et data gratia, que auferre incipit, vt non Imputetur ammodo pro peccato. Cf. LW 25.261.
Regardless, here we have Luther presenting an accurate summary of Augustine’s mature theology of sin, grace, renewal, forgiveness, and (implicitly) non-consent as the solution to his dogmatic and spiritual conundrum. Against the temptation to despondency, he did not need to doubt the reality of the forgiveness bestowed upon him in the sacrament of penance: *remissio quidem vera*—*non imputetur*. But neither did Friar Martin have reason to boast of sinless perfection, finding a deep spiritual anchor for the monastic virtue of humility in the dogmatic redefinition of the penitent as *peccator re vera* on account of his residual sinful desires: *non vt non sit*. Reading the “420s Augustine” in 1515 thus gave Luther the dogmatic (and exegetical) equipment he needed as a monastic to continue in the path of deepening humility he had chosen in 1505, and to do so without losing the hope of true forgiveness in Christ that Staupitz was urging upon him with increasingly salutary effect at just about this time.

The following pages in the WA orbit around the explosive interaction of these same scholastic, monastic, and Augustinian themes. Luther had once been a Bielish “fool” himself (*ego stultus*). Now, in the first-person grammar of confession and the second-person grammar of mind-to-mind dogmatic combat, he attacks his erstwhile scholastic teachers with the zeal of a convert and the incisive substance of the *contra Iulianum* Augustine. *O stulti, O Sawtheologen!* Luther begins by summarizing a doctrine of merited justification common in its basic outline to Scotus, Ockham, and Biel.\(^{890}\) Each had taught that a sinner could merit the first grace of justification *de congruo* by doing what was within his power to do, to wit: keep the law by loving God

\(^{890}\) WA 56.274.11-14, LW 25.261.
above all things. In his *Collectorium* II d. 28, *e.g.*, Biel paired his version of the distinction between “half” and “full” merit together with a second, *viz.*, that of (a) keeping God’s commandments “insofar as the substance of the act is concerned” (*quoad actus substantiam*), on the one hand, and (b) keeping them “according to the intention of the law-giver” (*ad intentionem precipientis*) on the other. 891 Through his free decision, a sinner could keep the law in the first, weaker sense by virtue of his own natural powers, and thus earn the half-merit which—by the generous terms of God’s ordered *pactum*—deserved *de congruo* the infusion of justifying grace. This grace, in turn, would empower the justified person to act supernaturally, keep the law in its deeper sense, and thus merit eternal life *de condigno*. 892

Luther’s response is twofold. Its first part is rooted in the Pauline theology of law and grace explored by Augustine in *sp. litt.* (and for this reason, I think, more attended to in the scholarship). Luther observes that for Biel *et al.*, grace is not necessary for keeping the law—*quoad actus substantiam*, this can be done *ex naturalibus*—but “only for the fulfillment of a new exaction imposed by God above the law.” 893 This turns grace into a new law, *nova lex*, a fatal move which a theologian can only make if he fails to grasp the law’s true purpose in the economy of grace. To explain what the law can and cannot do, Luther cites Rom. 4:15 and 8:3: in the first place, “the law works wrath”—not grace—and in the second, “weakened through

891 Biel, *Collectorium* II d. 28 q. 1 a. 2 conc. 3 (W & H, II/539): *Homo per liberum arbitrium ex suis naturalibus potest divina praecepta quoad actus substantiam implere, sed non ad intentionem praeceptientis, quae est consecutio salutis nostrae.*

892 Biel, *Collectorium* II d. 28 q. 1 a. 2 conc. 3 and a. 3 dub. 1 (W & H, II/539-40).

flesh” as St. Paul says it is, the law cannot be fulfilled *sine gratia*. This theology of law (which exacts *impossibilia* from vitiated human beings) and grace (which heals such humans and thus empowers law-keeping) is in essence the familiar Augustinianism of *sp. litt.* and other anti-Pelagian writings from the 410s.

In the second part of his reply, Luther advances his argument with tools supplied by the “420s Augustine,” intensifying the theology of sinful concupiscence already germinally present in *sp. litt.* but brought to full flower in the works against Julian. In general, but also specifically for Augustine and Luther, the role played in one’s theology by both (a) the non-imputation of “sin”/concupiscence and (b) the necessity of inner grace to renovate human nature vitiated by this concupiscence expands in proportion to the extent that concupiscence itself is regarded as sinful. And vice versa: for a Pelagius, a Julian, or a Biel, the relative moral neutrality of concupiscence in the regenerate diminishes (or eliminates) the need for either kind of “grace,” broadly construed. Taking up late Augustinian cudgels against *die Sawtheologen* along just these lines, Luther’s first thrust consists in a forthright appeal to honest experience; but this becomes the point of departure for a concise elaboration of his maturing monastic/experiential and Augustinian/dogmatic theology of residual sin, healing grace, and merciful non-imputation:

... “the law works wrath” and “is weakened through flesh,” and it certainly cannot be fulfilled without grace. And they could have been admonished about their own most foolish *sententia* to be ashamed and to repent at least by their very own experience. Because, willy-nilly, they feel (*sentiunt*) base concupiscences in themselves. Therefore I say: Hey! Now, I beg you, get to work! Be men! Work, with your whole powers (*Ex totis viribus vestris*), so that these concupiscences will not be in you. Prove what you say, that it is possible to love God “*ex totis viribus*” by nature (*naturaliter*), without any grace. If you

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894 WA 56.274.18-275.2, cf. LW 25.262.
are without concupiscences, we will believe you. But if you dwell with and in these concupiscences, then neither do you fulfill the law. For the Law says: “Do not desire evilly” (non concupisces, Exod. 20:17), but “love God” (Deum diliges, Deut. 6:5). But he who desires and loves (concupiscit et diligit) something else, is he able to love God (Deum diligere)? And this concupiscence is always in us; therefore, the love of God (dilectio Dei) is never in us, unless it has begun through grace ( nisi per gratiam incepta); and the relic of concupiscence that still needs to be healed—because of which we do not yet “love God with a whole heart” [Luke 10:27]—through mercy is not imputed as sin, until the whole thing (totum) is taken away and until the love of God has been perfected (perfecta Dei dilectio) in those who believe and perseveringly knock right up to the end [cf. Luke 11:9-13].

Here, in polemical and dialogical form, is a compressed statement of Augustine’s mature theology of sin and grace. At its hearts stands both the lived experience and the dogmatic evaluation of concupiscentia. As we saw in the Rom. 7 scholia, Luther sometimes follows Augustine’s typical coupling together of Exod. 20:17 and Ecclus. 18:30 to explain the moral-psychological logic of their theory of refusing consent to the evil desires that remain in the regenerate. Setting this late ancient anthropology against his “modern” opponents, Luther now places the 10th Commandment’s universal prohibition of evil desire—which, Augustine had argued in sp. litt. 4.6, St. Paul cites with profound intention and care at Rom. 7:7—in sharp contrast with the

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896 Contra Origen et al., Augustine argues that “the letter that kills” (2 Cor. 3:6) refers to Exod. 20:17’s universal prohibition of evil desire: quod, si quis impleuerit nullum habebit omnino peccatum. nam hoc ideo eliget apostolus generale quiddam, quo cuncta complexus est, tamquam haec esset uox legis ab omni peccato prohibentis, quod ait: non concupiscis; neque enim ullam peccatum nisi concupiscendo comittitur. CSEL 60.158, cf. WSA I/23.146.
Great Commandment’s summons to wholehearted love for God (Deut. 6:5, Matt. 22:37-8, Luke 10:27, etc.; cf. section 6 below, on Augustine’s ep. 167). Scotus and Biel taught that fallen humans could love God super omnia if they did what laid within their natural powers to do: even if they did so “with clenched teeth,” as Dieter has it. But Luther insists that the very slightest holding-back of unadulterated, unrestricted, pure, and total love for God amounts to simply breaking the Great Commandment: and this, on the part of the regenerate heart. To quote Dieter once more, it is the “refused totality” of one’s love for God that makes a person a sinner. And the reason the regenerate fall short of this total love, is that they still—however slightly—infringe upon the 10th Commandment. For even if they do not “go after” their evil desires (Ecclus. 18:30, Gal. 5:16, 1 John 3:9), the regenerate still suffer their unwanted presence in their renewed but affectively divided hearts. And the infinitesimally smallest deflection of the regenerate person’s affective life from wholehearted love for God amounts per definitionem magni mandati to a total failure to keep the Great Commandment. Nothing less than complete and undivided love for God ex toto corde will do. If a person suffers (and at the same, perplexingly, possesses as his own) malae concupiscentiae in his heart, he breaks the command non concupisces, fails to exercise perfecta Dei dilectio, and therefore fails to fulfill the law.

Thus Luther, a little like Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kgs. 18), dares his imaginary Scotist or Bielish interlocutor to make good on his theological claim regarding the natural ability to love God super omnia. Prove that you have no evil

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897 Dieter, 96.
898 Dieter, 97.
899 For further on both Biel and Luther on this point, see Dieter, 94-107.
desire at all, and I'll believe your theology! Do what lies within your power to do, “so that these evil desires will not be in you”—Luther's \textit{vt non sint istȩ concupiscentie in vobis} mirroring in the plural Augustine's \textit{non ut non sit} at \textit{nupt. conc. 1.25.28}. Once one accepts (on the basis of Augustine's and Luther's shared scriptural reasoning) the major premise that the slightest concupiscence in the \textit{regenerate} person is law-breaking “sin,” and then admits (on the basis of his own experience) the minor premise that evil desires still exist within his heart, the conclusion follows that Scotus' and Biel's theorem regarding self-elicited love for God in the \textit{unregenerate} person is groundless, indeed, foolish and blasphemous (Rom. 9:30-10:4, Gal. 2:21, 3:1, 3:10, 5:1-6, Phil. 3:2-14). Together with their theorem, the superstructure of the half-merited first grace of justification which they built upon it tumbles to the ground. Some other solution is therefore needed. Rather than calling down fire from heaven, Luther invokes the mature theology of Augustine. Because concupiscence is always with the saints in this life, perfect love for God never is. But an imperfect love for God \textit{has} begun to take root in their hearts, through the inner operations of healing grace. Meanwhile, through the mercy of God, the \textit{reliquus concupiscentiae} is not imputed as sin; and this merciful non-imputation holds fast till the day when evil desire as a whole will be perfectly taken away, and perfect love for God will be given in its place. But this mercy holds fast only for those “who believe and perseveringly knock right up till the end”: a clear allusion to Luke 11:9-13 and with it, an entire monastic spirituality of yearning and begging for ever increasing supplies of grace.

Two final observations on this portion of the Rom. 4:7 scholion are in order before pressing on further.
(1) First, as Luther renews his attack on the “Aristotelian” theologians’ understanding of sin, he does so in a potentially confusing way. With nupt. conc. 1.25.28 still setting the tone, Luther writes that all the scholastics’ monstrous errors resulted from the fact that they failed to grasp the *quid sit* of either sin or forgiveness. They thus limited their definition of sin to “a certain minutest *motus animi*, just like righteousness.”

Luther promptly leaves sin aside to discuss righteousness, and in this context treats the scholastic—and in some cases also mystical—doctrine of the soul’s “*synteresis*,” viz., its ineradicable baseline orientation to the good, however weak and faint this *scintilla conscientiae* may prove to be in a given soul. This, Luther tells us, the scholastics also defined as a “small motion” (*paruulum motum*), though in this case toward God. In addition to the fact that Biel does not define synteresis as a *motus animi*, what is potentially confusing about this use of “*motus*”-language is the fact (as we have seen at some length) that Luther elsewhere adopts this very same

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900 WA 56.275.17-19: *Hęc portenta omnia ex eo Venerunt, Quod peccatum, quid esset, ignorauerunt, nec quid remissio. Quia peccatum artauerunt vsque ad minutissimum quendam motum animi sicut et Iustitiam.*


903 For Biel, synderesis is an inextinguishable spark of reason and/or conscience, seated in the intellect. See, e.g., *Collectorium* II d. 39 q. 1 (W & H, II/655): *Utrum synderesis, quae rationis scintilla dicitur, et conscientia sint in intellectu aut affectiva potentia*. Ibid., a. 2 conc. 1 (W & H, II/660): *Synderesis, quae est scintilla conscientiae, non est actus vel habitus in voluntate*. Ibid., conc. 3 (W & H, II/661): *Tertio conclusio: Synderesis, quae est aliquid intellectus, non est actus neque habitus*. However, as a nominalistic Aristotelian Biel rejects a real division of the soul into constituent faculties; thus he explains (a. 1, not. 1; W & H, II/656) that, *cum quasitetur, utrum synderesis et conscientia sint in intellectu aut voluntate, nihil aliud est quaerere quam: utrum sint actus, habitus vel passiones intellectivi vel affectivi*. This would seem to justify, to some extent, the imprecisions in Luther’s account of his opponents’ doctrine of synderesis.
language in its technical Augustinian and “Stoic” moral-psychological sense and identifies sinful concupiscence as that bundle of evil *motus animi*, i.e., psychologically experienced emotions, impulses, desires, affections, etc., against which the regenerate person must struggle to refuse the consent of his will. This being the case, if Luther thinks the scholastics define “sin” as *motus animi*, what’s the problem?

In this instance, it appears that the very same phrase means nearly the opposite of what Luther usually takes it to mean in positive presentations of his own position. For here, “*motus*” is not an essentially passive experience, but the (I think to our modern ears) more normal sense of motion as an active movement. More importantly, this is also the primary meaning of “*motus*” in high and late medieval interpretations of Aristotle: rich and intricate traditions which Dieter has superbly exposited and set in relation to Luther’s early thought.904 For in this passage, Luther takes the “scholastic” *motus animi* to mean an inner consensual or volitional movement or act of the soul, which Jacob Preus conveys well with his rather free English translation of Luther's Latin text as “some very minute activity of the soul.”905 Biel, citing Thomas’ *Summa Theologiae* I/II q. 109 a. 1 in the *Collectorium*, can in fact speak in the same breath of an inner psychological act as a *motus spirituale*, an *actus*, and an *actio intellectus et voluntatis*.906 This seems to be what Luther has in mind.

Two factors within the scholion itself argue for this interpretation. The first emerges from what Luther says about *synteresis*. The will (voluntas) has this basic

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904 Dieter, 276-346.
905 LW 25.262.
906 Biel, *Collectorium* II d. 28 q. 1 (W & H, II/529): ‘... omnes *motus corporales et spirituales* reducuntur in primum movens simpliciter, quod est Deus, ideo natura, sive corporalis sive spiritualis, quantumcumque perfecta, non potest in suum *actus* procedere, nisi moveatur a Deo.’ Ac per hoc omnis *actio intellectus et voluntatis* ‘et cuiuscumque entis creati dependet a Deo,’ ‘inquantum ab ipso *habet perfectionem*, per quam agit, et ‘inquantum ab ipso movetur ad agendum.’
orientation to the good: weak as it may be, *inclinatur ad bonum*. This faint but inexorable inclination to the good—Tauler would call it the soul’s *grunt*—is the “small motion toward God” that Scotus and Biel “dream is the *actum diligendi Deum super omnia*.” Now, if Luther’s analysis here leaves something to be desired—just to begin, Biel *e.g.* locates synteresis in the intellect, not the will; and for Thomas, Tauler, Biel et al., synteresis is not an act, but the orientation that guides the soul to act rightly if the soul so chooses—what matters for our purposes is that he ascribes two things to his opponents vis-à-vis righteousness that together help to explain his puzzling remark about their definition of sin as an evil *motus animi*. First, Luther asserts that for die Sawtheologen the soul’s orientation to the good is anthropologically basic. Therefore, a contrary bent or inclination to evil, such as is set forth in an Augustinian theology of original sin and *natura vitiata*, is logically excluded from the start. This is indeed the stuff of Biel’s doctrine of postlapsarian *natura integra*. For Biel, as for Luther the fledgling *sententiarus* in 1509/10, there is no room in the system for a definition of “sin” as an enslaving and pathological affective *motus animi* luring the unregenerate soul irreversibly toward evil, death, and damnation: apart, that is, from the intervention of radical Augustinian grace, for which the only *praeparatio* is *praedestinatio*. But in the second place, Luther asserts that the good inclination afforded *homo naturalis* by virtue of his *synteresis* is identical to the *act* of loving God.

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907 praed. sanct. 10.19, BA 24.522: *Inter gratiam porro et praedestinationem hoc tantum interest, quod praedestinatio est gratiae praeparatio, gratia vero iam ipsa donatio*. Cf. WSA I/26.165. See too *civ. dei* 13.14 (Bett. 532): “From [Adam’s] misuse of free will there started a chain of disasters: mankind is led from that original perversion, a kind of corruption at the root, right up to the disaster of the second death, which has no end. Only those who are set free through God’s grace escape that calamitous sequence.” Pereira (p. 157) speaks eloquently of the “pathology” of post-baptismal concupiscence/sin in Augustine’s theology: every child of Adam is “born addicted” to evil desire, and “one needs grace to overcome one’s self-destructive tendencies.”
above all things, which Scotus and Biel posit as within one’s power to achieve and therefore postulate as the “half-merit” requisite for earning the first grace of justification. This, I think, is one of the weakest points in Luther’s analysis: for how can the natural inclination toward the good (synteresis) be identical to the act of loving (actus diligendi) that one chooses to perform in accord with the inclination that guides him? But that is beside the point I am arguing for; or rather, in an odd way it supports it. For what counts is this: Luther’s identification of the good motus animi (or synteresis) with the elicited act of loving God argues that his similar claim about his opponents’ definition of sin as a bad motus animi should be interpreted in the same way, i.e., it too is a minute actus animi, an actual sin. This, of course, fits well with what we have seen to this point regarding Luther’s polemics against the scholastic reduction of “sin” to actual sinful deeds, be it earlier in the Rom. 4:7 scholion itself or twenty years later on in the Smalcald Articles.

Thence we arrive at the second reason to find Luther’s use of motus animi language at this juncture pretty anomalous. For as he carries on the argument, the fulcrum point for his polemic is the contrast between (a) the kind of Augustinian penitential spirituality Wicks has emphasized, with its twin foci on “sin” as a heart-deep affective disorder and “grace” as gratia sanans providing the remedy for this disease, and (b) a mistaken and, in Luther’s eyes, spiritually disastrous piety focused

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908 Biel, Coll. II d. 39 q. 1 a. 2 conc. 1 (W & H, II/660-1): Synderesis, quae est scintilla conscientiae, non est actus vel habitus in voluntate. Probatur: Quia synderesis est aliquid necessario dirigens, saltem in universali, ad operationem iustum et rectam; sed nihil tale pertinet ad voluntatem (nihil enim, quod est in voluntate, necessario inclinat); ergo non est aliquid pertinens ad voluntatem. – Consequentia nota. Maior patet ex conditionibus synteresi attributis. Nam inclinat ad bonum et remurmurat malo, et hoc necessario, quia scintilla inesextingibilis; igitur non potest non inclinare ad bonum, et ita necessario inclinat ad bonum. Minor probatur: Quia, cum voluntas sit potentia libera contingenter tendens in quodlibet obiectum, etiam ultimum finem, ut patuit I dist. 1, nihil ad ipsum pertinens necessario inclinat ad hoc vel ad aliud obiectum.
primarily on actual sin. “Our theologians have deflected sin to works alone.”\textsuperscript{909} “To be sure, they implore God’s grace: though not rightly, but only in order that the work of sin (\textit{opere peccati}) may be forgiven.”\textsuperscript{910} That, for Luther, is sheer folly, because the pathology of sin is so grave that forgiveness isolated from healing grace is not enough to deal with the problem at its root. Not incidentally, this makes for another point of contact between Luther’s opponents and Augustine’s. For neither Biel, Julian, nor Pelagius denied the importance of forgiveness, at least the first granting thereof in baptism and/or penance.\textsuperscript{911} But all alike downplayed or denied the necessity of \textit{gratia sanans} for renewed moral and spiritual being, life, and action (to say nothing of holy suffering). One way or another, for \textit{pelagiani antiqui et moderni} virtue could be attained—and thus merit accrued—without the help of healing grace, since human nature with its innate powers remained basically sound after Adam’s fall. Therefore, as Henri Strohl observed in the 1920s comparing Luther’s theology and Augustine’s vis-à-vis their respective opponents: at bottom “the adversary is the same.”\textsuperscript{912} This being so, when Luther attributes to his opponents the initially surprising definition of sin as \textit{motus animi}, the “psychological movement” in question must be understood as a

\textsuperscript{909} WA 56.276.6, cf. LW 25.263.
\textsuperscript{910} WA 56.276.15-16: \textit{Et licet gratiam Dei implorent, non tamen recte, Sed tantummodo pro opere peccati dimittendo}. Cf. LW 25.263.
\textsuperscript{911} While they differed on whether infants were baptized \textit{propter remissionem peccatorum}, Augustine and the Pelagians all agreed that sinners were freely forgiven in baptism. See e.g. \textit{gr. et pecc. or. 1.39.43} (for Pelagius); also Theodore de Bruyn, \textit{Pelagius’s Commentary on St Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. Translated with Introduction and Notes} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 8f on Rom 3.24ff: “Having been justified freely by his grace. Without works of the law, through baptism, whereby he has freely forgiven the sins of all, though they are undeserving. \textit{Through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.} By which he has redeemed us with his blood from death. Through sin we had been sold to death... For we were all condemned to death, to which [Jesus] handed himself over, though it was not his due, so that he might redeem us with his blood.”
\textsuperscript{912} Henri Strohl, \textit{Luther jusq’en 1520}, 181, cited in Pereira, 29 n. 11.
freely willed and consensual *peccatum actuale*, however minute, inward, and hidden this sinful act of the will may be in a given case.

(2) This leads to the second point I wish to highlight in this portion of the Rom. 4:7 scholion, namely, the predominance of Luther’s late medieval Augustinian spirituality, with its interrelated emphases on: first, unfeigned humility, which is evinced by confession of one’s sinfulness and the principled lack of assurance arising therefrom; second, incessant warfare against one’s evil desires; and consequently third, a desperate—if not quite despairing—longing for healing grace or “justification.”

This present earthly life is not a life of sinless perfection, but “a life of being cured from sin” (*Vita curationis a peccato*); and the Church, following the Augustinian interpretation of Luke 10:25-37, is “the inn and infirmary for those who are sick and need to be healed.”

913 Perfect *sanitas* and *iustitia* await the new heavens and new earth that St. Peter teaches about in 2 Pet. 3:13. Righteousness dwells there, not here, but in the meantime “it prepares for itself a dwelling place by healing sins.”

914 What kind of sins? In context, Luther clearly refers to residual evil desires in the saints’ hearts, which *gratia sanans* progressively heals. Because his opponents teach only about external good works—and do so on the supposition that virtue is attainable by doing what lies within one’s natural ability to achieve—their doctrine necessarily produces “proud people” (*superbos*) who, convinced of their own righteousness, are not

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914 WA 56.275.28-276.3, cf. LW 25.263.
concerned to declare war on their evil desires. And this, laments Father Martin, has now led in the Church to a great falling away (recidiuatio) after confessions:

For they do not know that they need to be justified (Iustificandos), but are confident that they have been justified (Iustificatos se esse confidunt) and thus, through their own security, are overthrown without any effort on the Devil’s part.

Students of the “reformational” Luther will, I think, quickly perceive the deep irony here. In 1515, the spiritual malady that Luther sees pervading the Church is not too little assurance, but too much of it: and that, on the false basis of one’s own righteousness. The real problem Luther diagnoses in the Bielish penitent is that he leaves the confessional presuming that he has been “justified,” blissfully unaware of his deep need to be continually justified further and—for this very reason—terrifyingly susceptible to the great sin of spiritual pride. Martin Luther, fretting over souls being confidently assured of their justification? Yes indeed, for at this point in his development iustificari primarily means sanari—not forgiveness, nor non imputatio peccati—and to teach an absolved penitent to think that he no longer needs to be healed of the evil affective disease that afflicts him is nothing less than to spoon-feed a deadly poison into his already sin-sick soul.

Instead, penitents ought to be taught how, through “groaning” (gemitum, cf. Rom. 8:23-6), to humbly seek “healing grace” (gratiam sanantem) and acknowledge that they are “sinners.” For then, rather than swelling with pride, they will solicitously “declare war” on their concupiscentiis, sigh endlessly to God in prayer, and

915 WA 56.276.6-7, 9-11, cf. LW 25.263.
916 WA 56.276.11-14, cf. LW 25.263.
917 On the equivalence of iustificari and sanari, see WA 56.268.9-15, LW 25.256, cited above.
918 WA 56.276.8-9, cf. LW 25.263.
rightly beg God for that “grace” which not only pardons sin but heals the forgiven sinner’s heart. This “sin”-confessing penitence, explains Luther, is the way of all the saints (omnes sancti), “just as David prophesied in Psalm 31,” i.e., Ps. 32:6. In v. 5, David confesses his delictum and iniustitiam to God, and praises God for forgiving the impietatem peccati mei. In v. 6, he declares that “for this”—pro hac, i.e., the impiety of one’s sin—“every saint (omnis sanctus) will pray to you.” Thus Luther finds David prophesying in the Psalter that every saint confesses that he is a sinner. These later verses in the Psalm form the immediate context for the earlier vv. 1-2, which St. Paul cites as a proof-text for his doctrine of justification in Rom. 4:5-8. Once again, we find Luther urging that the context in the prophetic Psalm must inform a proper interpretation of the apostolic gospel.

In 1515, Luther is also ever eager to attest the harmony of St. Paul and Augustine, and thus continues: “Therefore, all the saints confessed that they were sinners, Vt patet in libris b. Augustini.” In his footnote to this line in the WA, Johannes Ficker suggests that Augustine’s writings “in general” are to be understood. On the basis of my argument thus far, I propose both that a more specific reference to Augustine’s writings against Julian—überhaupt, to be sure—is in order, and that with his confessing sinner-saints Luther intends neither more nor less than what Augustine argued regarding the real but embattled holiness of Rom. 7-patterned sancti in these books against Julian.

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919 WA 56.276.10-11, 15-6, cf. LW 25.263.
920 WA 56.276.3-5, cf. LW 25.263.
921 WA 56.276.5-6, cf. LW 25.263.
Thus far the young Luther expanding upon *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28 within the broader contours of an Augustinian theology of renewal, and putting it to work over against a—if not the—dominant theology and piety of his day.

4. *Impletio legis, gratia sanans, and Brautmystik*

In a rich *corollarium* farther on in the Rom. 4:7 scholia, Luther develops his major theme of healing grace amidst allusive adumbrations of his evangelical theology of justification, for he sets it in relation both to real law-keeping and to the monastic theology of Christ’s mystical union with the soul. He first rehearses the now familiar doctrinal and spiritual contentions against the late medieval theology and piety in which he was reared and trained. According to Biel, Johannes von Paltz, the Erfurt philosophers, and sundry other moral optimists of the period, graceless *filii Adae* are able—by virtue of their incorrupt natural powers—to keep the law according to its substance through a freely elicited act of the will. Indeed, they may do so not merely in the sense of an “external operation,” viz., an external good work or pious deed, but “for God’s sake and from the heart.” And if they do so, they merit *de congruo* the first grace of justification.922

The anti-Pelagian Augustine had taught Luther to know better: “The will, if it were allowed, would never do what the law commands: for it is unwilling (*Inuita*) toward the good and prone toward evil.”923 That is to say, the fallen, vitiated, self-enslaved will, unaided by God’s gift of healing grace: for Luther quickly adds that grace transforms the law-averse will and “makes it willing and cheerful (*libentem ac*...
hilarem) toward the law."924 This marks yet another succinct statement of Augustine’s theology of the will’s renovation through grace: a gratia sanans so powerful in its renewing effects that the very same will that once shuddered in aversion to the law now delights in it. Following the insightful lead of Andreas Wöhle,925 I argued in chapter 2 that this will-renewing “joy in God’s law” comprises the inner spiritual marrow of Luther’s mature theology of the Spirit’s nature-renovating gift; and in chapter 3 we saw its centrality in Luther’s exposition of Rom. 7. I shall return to it below, in section 5 of this chapter.

First, we need to attend to the unique way in which Luther develops the Brautmystik he inherits from Bernard and Staupitz vis-à-vis his own pressing concern with residual sin in God’s law-delighting saints. In the course of elaborating a doctrine of justification in Christ through union and exchange that is very similar to the one he will famously celebrate in the 1520 tractate on The Freedom of a Christian, Luther shifts back and forth between emphases on the “external” and “internal” goods bestowed upon the soul (or the Church) through union with Christ. Referring back to the contrast between intrinsic and extrinsic justification in the first lines of the Rom. 4:7 scholion,926 Luther follows up his clear statement of the will’s inner renovation into joyful law-keeping with a claim that jars the reader because it seems to tug in the opposite direction:

924 WA 56.279.19-21: Quamdiu enim Inuita est ad legem, auersa est a lege ac ideo non implet. Ergo opus habet gratia, que eam faciat libentem ac hilarem ad legem. Cf. LW 25.267.
925 Andreas H. Wöhle, Luthers Freude an Gottes Gesetz.
Therefore there is need for grace, which makes the will willing and cheerful toward the law. Therefore I rightly said that all our good is extrinsic to us (Extrinsecum nobis), because it is Christ.\footnote{WA 56.279.20-24: Ergo opus habet gratia, que eam faciat libentem ac hilarem ad legem. Ideo Recte dixi, quod Extrinsecum nobis est omne bonum nostrum, quod est Christus. Sicut Apostolus dicit: 'Qui nobis factus est a Deo Sapientia et Iustitia et sanctificatio et redemptio.' Cf. LW 25.267.}

Luther supplies 1 Cor. 1:30 as a proof-text to this effect: Christ became for us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.\footnote{WA 56.279.23-24, LW 25.267.} This is why Luther states that Jesus Christ is himself all our good. Thus while Christ is (pro) nobis, he is—as the Son of God in our flesh, the real living Person who is the Church’s Bridegroom—necessarily Extrinsecum nobis. But as soon as Luther has quoted 1 Cor. 1:30 to explain the “external” nature of omne bonum nostrum, he shifts swiftly back to its “internal” reality: “These things”—i.e., wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—“are in us (in nobis sunt), but only through faith and hope in Him.”\footnote{WA 56.279.24-25: Quæ omnia in nobis sunt non nisi per fidem et speram in ipsum. Cf. LW 25.267.} This, I suggest, goes a long way in explaining the at first puzzling “therefore” that links the two sentences cited above. The gratia that transforms the vitiated will in its inmost affective being is “external” to the believer in the sense that it comes to him from without, ab extra. But through faith and hope in Christ, this grace does indeed enter into the depths of the believer’s soul. For grace—omne bonum nostrum—is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:30), and Christ dwells in the Church through faith (Eph. 3:17): “In the Song of Songs, all the Church’s praise is of Christ, who dwells in her through faith.”\footnote{WA 56.279.25-6: omnis Laus Ecclesie in Canticis Christi est in ipsa per fidem habitantis. Cf. LW 25.267.}

We thus arrive in decidedly Finnish territory. In discussing the same apparent tension between gratia ab extra and gratia in nobis in chapter 2, I pointed to an article...
by Eero Huovinen that illuminates this point well. For the moment, I wish to highlight the second of the two inseparable functions or roles that the indwelling Christ (or “grace”) plays vis-à-vis both the residual vitiation and intrinsic guilt of indwelling sin. In the first place, “grace” as *gratia sanans* heals the will and restores it to cheerful law-keeping. But in the second, “grace” as the indwelling Christ—the mystical Bridegroom of the Song—covers the poverty, emptiness, and ugliness of his Bride with the free gift of his righteousness. Indeed, for Luther this mystical theology of union with Christ and joyful exchange fleshes out the spiritual “mechanism” (if you will) that lies beneath the Augustinian (*nupt. conc. 1.25.28*) theology of sinful desire’s non-imputation which has dominated the Rom. 4:7 scholia to this point. Mystical union and forensic non-imputation, the mellifluous Bernard and the polemical Augustine, King Solomon’s erotic poetry and the Apostle Paul’s epistolary dogmatics, are thus united to form a dogmatic whole that coheres intimately with Luther’s penitential spirituality:

In the Song of Songs, the Church often confesses that she is naked and is described as having no other *desideria* except for the Bridegroom, saying: “Draw me after You, we will run to the odor of your ointments” [*1:4*]. Always she seeks, always she desires, always she praises the Bridegroom. By this, she shows plainly that she herself is empty and poor within herself (*intra se*), and that her own fullness and righteousness is outside herself (*extra se*). For if the confessions of the saints are only to be understood as referring to past sins, and in the present they are pure, then why do they confess not only past sins, but also present ones? It’s because they know that sin is in them, but that for Christ’s sake it is covered and not imputed: so that they may declare that all their good is outside themselves in Christ (*extra se in Christo*), who nevertheless is in them through faith (*per fidem in ipsis est*).932

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931 Eero Huovinen, “Der *infusio*-Gedanke als Problem der Lutherforschung.”
932 WA 56.279.27-280.4: *Sic Ecclesia in Canticis se nudam sepius confitetur et non nisi sponsi desideria scribitur habere, dicens: ‘trahe me post te, in odore vngentorum tuorum curremus’. Semper petit, Semper desiderat, Semper commendat sponsum. Quo manifeste sese vacuam et pauperem ostendit intra se esse, et extra se esse plenitudinem et Iustitiam suam. Si enim solum pro preteritis...*
The Bride’s plaintive cries of longing in the Song for the Bridegroom attest her own emptiness and poverty. For Luther, the Bride’s frank recognition of her ugliness supplies further scriptural proof for his advanced Augustinian doctrine of the residual sinfulness of the saints. Real honest sancti desire Christ’s beauty, riches, fullness, and righteousness all the more earnestly precisely because they know that the “sin” still dwelling within them makes them unrighteous, empty, poor, and misshapen. But propter Christum, this sin is not imputed to their account: and extra se in Christo, all his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption has become their very own good. Yet the Christ for whose sake the saints are forensically pardoned, the Christ in whom the saints find their righteousness extra se, is the Christ who dwells within them through faith.\(^{933}\)

5. An “Augustinian” phrase, c. Iul. 2, and Luther’s covenant theology circa 1515

In the strength of this excursus toward a “Finnish” mystical theology of justification through union and exchange, Luther now returns to his major themes of true

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peccatis intelligendę sunt confessiones sanctorum et in presenti esse puros Vt quid non solum preterita, Sed etiam praesentia confitentur? Nisi quod sciunt in se esse peccatum, Sed propter Christum tegi et non imputari, Vt omne suum bonum extra se in Christo, qui tamen per fidem in ipsis est, protestentur. Cf. LW 25.267.

\(^{933}\) In the sequel (WA 56.280.8-9), Luther reprises this mystical theology of righteousness in Christ through a christological reading of Ps. 45:1-4, concluding: Nos regnum eius [viz., Christi], Sed pulchritudo in nobis non est nostra, Sed ipsius, Qua tegit nostram fæditatem. A few pages prior to the text under consideration here, Luther develops the same theology in an exposition of Ps. 32:1-2. There he employs a rich christological interpretation of Ruth 3:7-9 plus Ezek. 16:8, Ps. 45, and Ps. 63:7 (WA 56.278.1-10, cf. LW 25.265): Tegitur, inquam, per Christum in nobis habitantem, Sicut in figura dixit Ruth ad Boos: ‘Expande pallium tuum super famulam tuam, quia propinquus es.’ ‘Et leuato pallio proiecit se ad pedes eius’ i. e. anima proiecit se ad humanitatem Christi et tegitur ipsius iustitia. Item Ezek. 16.: ‘Et expandi amictum meum super te et operui ignominiam tuam.’ Et psalmo 62.: ‘Et in velamento alarum tuarum exultabo.’ Item psalmo 44.: ‘filie regum in honore’ i. e. decore tuo, vnde honorantur a te et tu in illis. Et ‘Specie tua et pulchritudine tua intende’ etc., dimisso itaque malo opere et residuo peccati i. e. fomitis non imputato, donec sanetur.
repentance and healing grace. Once again, he is worried about spiritual laziness; only this time, a text Luther clearly regards as pseudo-Augustinian is part of the problem:

Hence also many hand themselves over into sluggishness and security by virtue of confidence in that word, which blessed Augustine is supposed to have said: “A great part of righteousness, is wanting to be righteous.”

*Magna pars iustitiae, velle esse iustum:* the way Luther introduces the phrase suggests that it was something of a proverbial commonplace, a stock-in-trade maxim of monastic lore. As it happens, he was right to doubt its Augustinian provenance. In the WA apparatus, Ficker points to Augustine’s *ep.* 127.5; but though the gist of its sense is there, the phrase itself is not. Where then did it come from?

In antiquity, two intriguing possibilities emerge. In the course of treating confession and repentance in book 2 of his *Sententiae*, Isidore of Seville (c. 560-633) writes: “Now, it is a great part of righteousness (*Magna iam iustitiae pars est*) for a man to know himself, that he is depraved, in order that he may be more humbly subject to divine virtue by God’s help, from whom he recognizes his own infirmity.”

Like his predecessors Prosper of Aquitaine and Fulgentius of Ruspe, Isidore gathered and organized patristic florilegia, including to be sure numerous texts from Augustine himself. His *Sententiae* served as a basic reference work for early medieval theologians.

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935 Augustine, *ep.* 127.5, PL 33.485: *Iusta vero vita, cum volumus, adest, quia eam ipsam plene velle, iustitia est; nec plus aliquid perficienda iustitia, quam perfectam voluntatem requirit. Vide si labor est, ubi velle satis est.*

936 Isidore, *Sententiae* 2.13 (CCSL 111.120.1-3): *DE CONFESSIONE PECCATORVM ET PAENITENTIA.* 1. *Ex eo unusquisque iustus esse incipit, ex quo sui accusator extiterit. Multi autem e contra semetipsum peccatores fatentur, et tamen semetipsum a peccato non subtrahunt. 2. Magna iam iustitiae pars est seipsum nosse homo quod prauus est, ut ex deo diuinae virtuti subdatur humilius, ex quo suam infirmitatem agnoscit. 3. Bene se indicat iustus in hac uita, ne iudicetur a Deo damnatione perpetua. Tunc autem iudicium de se quisque sumit, quando per dignam paenitentiam sua praua facta condemnat.*
and, as such, was a major precursor to Peter Lombard’s more famous textbook by the same title.\textsuperscript{937} The broadly Augustinian and monastic ethos of penitential humility-piety is unmistakable in Isidore’s text, which resonates deeply with Luther’s spiritual teaching. Isidore’s \textit{magna iustitiae pars} may lie near the origins of a phrase that came to circulate in late medieval monasteries under Augustine’s name and eventually reached Luther through (say) Johannes Greffenstein, the Erfurt Augustinian novice-master, as early as summer 1505.\textsuperscript{938}

Farther back of Isidore’s \textit{magna pars} are two instances in the letters of Seneca. In \textit{ep. 34} he writes: \textit{pars magna bonitatis est velle fieri bonum}, “a great part of goodness is wanting to become good.”\textsuperscript{939} Then, in \textit{ep. 71}, he likewise writes: \textit{magna pars est profectus velle proficere}, “it is a great part of making progress to want to make progress.”\textsuperscript{940} Now, what is especially intriguing about these two \textit{magna pars} phrases in Seneca is their substantial similarity (when combined together) to an adage in Bernard’s \textit{ep. 91} that became quite popular in subsequent medieval piety:

\begin{quote}
Minime pro certo est bonus, qui melior esse non vult, et ubi incipis nolle fieri melior, ibi desinis etiam esse bonus.
\end{quote}

To be sure, that man last of all is good who does not want to be better, and at the point where you begin to not want to become better, there you cease even to be good.\textsuperscript{941}

\textsuperscript{938} On Greffenstein and Luther’s novitiate, see Brecht, \textit{Road to Reformation}, 57-61; Saak, 633.  
\textsuperscript{939} Seneca, \textit{epistulae morales ad Lucilium} 34, par. 2, LLA 335.PH (Tuebner, O. Hense, 1938), p. 110.  
\textsuperscript{940} \textit{ep. 71}, par. 35, \textit{ibid.} p. 252: \textit{Instemus itaque et perseveremus. Plus, quam profligavimus, restat, sed magna pars est profectus velle proficere. Huius rei conscius mihi sum: volo et mente tota volo.}  
We know that Bernard’s aphorism made a deep impression on brother Martin. Sometime in the period 1513-16, he inscribed it on the inside of the front cover of his copy of the *Opuscula Anselmi*, and it factors critically in his 1516 scholion on Rom. 12:2. In itself, however, this gets us nowhere with respect to explaining the provenance of the pseudo-Augustinian *magna pars iustitiae* known to Luther.

But the plot thickens. In a fifteenth-century sermon series attributed to the Czech reformer Jan Hus (c. 1369-1415), Bernard’s aphorism and the crucial line from Seneca’s *ep.* 34 appear in tandem:

> Unde Bernhardus in quadam epistola: “Minime pro certo est bonus, qui melior esse non vult; et ubi incipit nolle fieri melior, ibi desinit esse bonus.” Unde Seneca in Epistolis: “Magna pars bonitatis est velle fieri bonum.”

The modern editor of this text thinks it unlikely to originate from Hus himself, though its author was certainly Czech and possibly a Hussite. Much of its substance appears to have been drawn from the *Postilla studentium* of Konrad Waldhauser (c. 1320/25-1369), a leading preacher in Bohemia and a predecessor of the Hussites. Had Luther read either Waldhauser’s *Postilla* or the fifteenth-century sermons based thereupon? Probably not, given the strong animosity toward Hus and the Bohemians prevalent amongst German Catholics in the early sixteenth century for both theological

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944 *Dicta de tempore magistro Iohanni Hus attributa*, sermo 60 (dominica XXI post trinitatem), CCCM 239A pag 1284.
specter of heresy) and political (war) reasons. Luther himself did not begin to realize the affinity between Hus’ theology and his own until John Eck pinned him in a Bohemian corner at the Leipzig debate in summer 1519. By February 1520, Luther confided to Spalatin: “I have taught and held all the teachings of Johannes Huss, but thus far I did not know it.”

In 1515/16, St. Paul, Augustine, Staupitz, Tauler, and Bernard supplied the resources that fueled Luther’s explosive theological development; and if Bohemian theology ever did enter his field of vision, I suspect it did so as the dreaded Hussite heresy and not as a potential comrade-in-arms. All to say: Luther did not acquire the pseudo-Augustinian aphorism from a Czech source. This, however, does not diminish the importance of the Czech sermons for our purpose. For what counts is this: Bernard is the premier monastic theologian, and Seneca nearly supplies the exact phrase as it appears in Luther, once *bonitatis/bonum* are exchanged for *iustitiae/iustum*. Their convergence in an obscure fifteenth-century Czech sermon suggests exactly the kind of widespread, commonplace, proverbial, and piety-theological provenance for the *magna pars iustitiae, velle esse iustum* that Luther’s way of framing its appearance in the Rom. 4:7 scholion reflects. In short: the saying was “in the air,” and at some point Luther heard it attributed to Augustine.

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945 Luther to George Spalatin, 14 Feb. 1520 (#254), WA Br 2.42.22-3, LW 48.153. Luther continues (ll. 23-9): “Johannes Staupitz has taught in the same unintentional way. In short, we are all Hussites without knowing it. Even Paul and Augustine are Hussites ad verbum. See the monstrous things into which we fall, I ask you, even without the Bohemian leader and teacher. I am so shocked that I do not know what to think when I see such terrible judgments of God over men, that the most evident evangelical truth was already publicly burned more than one hundred years ago and regarded as condemned. Neither is one allowed to confess this. Woe to the earth! Farewell.”

946 We find a typical statement of Luther’s own prejudice in a 1514 sermon, where he sets the contemporary contrast between Catholics and Hussites in parallel to the biblical contrast between Jews and Samaritans. WA 4.614.22-25: *Et perinde fuit ut hodie nobiscum et Bohemis in administratione eucharistiae non convenit. Atque ita exprobrabant eis nomen exosum Samaritanorum, ut nos hereticum Boemicum nuncupamus obiurgando quenquam et demonibus refertum.*
But now to the aphorism itself. Luther dislikes it if interpreted within the theological and penitential framework of die Sawtheologen, for thus understood it encourages spiritual sloth. The decisive question is this: what qualifies as “wanting (velle) to be righteous”? Luther says his opponents locate it in the minute self-elicited act (actum elicitum minutissimum)\(^9\) that I discussed in section 3 above. Here, Luther’s discussion is less technical and more overtly pastoral in nature. The Bielish theology of penance and half-merited justification is spiritually pernicious for two reasons. First, it summons the penitent to a once-off mustering of his spiritual efforts in order to make sacramental penance efficacious (facientibus quod in se est, deus non denegat gratiam) by keeping the law. But St. Paul and Augustine have shown that this is impossible, for the law works wrath (Rom. 4:15) and, weakened as it is by the flesh, it cannot accomplish justification (Rom. 8:3). In the second place, Sawtheologie encourages spiritual laziness after one has in fact done what was in his power to do and thus received the infusion of justifying grace. For after the momentarily heightened spiritual intensity involved in eliciting the inner act of loving God super omnia, the justified person relapses into spiritual relaxation. This, for Luther, is a delusional and dangerous pitfall, for it encourages fiducia and securitas at the very moment when the pastor ought instead to instruct the penitent to continue in the way of repentance and to go on humbly begging for increased supplies of healing grace.

The pseudo-Augustinian aphorism short-circuits this laborious and lifelong process. For if “wanting to be iustus” is interpreted as eliciting the small act of the will requisite for iustificatio; and if this minimal velle is thought to be not only adequate

\(^9\) WA 56.280.12, cf. LW 25.267.
for getting into a state of grace, but itself a *magna pars iustitiae*; then the “justified” penitent, possessed as he is of a great part of righteousness, has no reason to regard himself a sin-sick person in need of *gratia sanans* for the deepened healing of his soul and the progressive increase of his righteousness. So Luther:

They equate this “wanting” with the minutest elicited act: but then it relapses and begins nothing (*nihil incipientem*), and they go out from it snoring most securely.⁹⁴⁸

That is to say: Bielish penitents elicit the act, go to confession, come out “safe”—and take a break, at just the moment when they ought rather to begin to seek healing, humility, and holiness afresh. Now, for earnest brother Martin—his head full of monastic wisdom about never ceasing to “begin” (*ubi incipis nolle fieri melior, ibi desinis etiam esse bonus; proficere, hoc est semper a novo incipere*)⁹⁴⁹ and his heart set on the pursuit of holiness—the pastor of the Church who counsels a penitent soul in this way does nothing less than plunge him into the spiritual destruction of security, sloth, and presumption.

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⁹⁴⁹ WA 56.441.21 (on Rom. 12:2) and 486.7 (on Rom. 13:11). As noted above, at Rom. 12:2 Luther is quoting Bernard’s ep. 91. At Rom. 13:11, Luther has just cited a different place in Bernard to the same effect (*Sermo 2 in Vigilia nativitatis Domini*, PL 183.90), and is continuing himself in the same vein of humility-oriented monastic theology (ll. 1-14): *De quibus B. Bernardus: ‘Qui non assidue festinat ad penitentiam, facto dicit se non indigere penitentia.’ Si non penitentia, ergo nec misericordia; si non misericordia, ergo nec salutre. Quod non potest facere, nisi qui sit sine peccato sicut Deus et angeli. Ideo Bene Apostolus Christianis loquens exhortatur, vt surgant, cum tamen non essent Christiani, nisi surrexissent, Sed quia stare in via Dei, hoc est retrocedere, Et proficere, hoc est semper a novo incipere; Vnde Ecclesiasticus Non dixit: Cum proficerit, Sed ‘cum consummaverit homo, etiam tunc incipiet’. Sicut Sanctus Arsenius orabat Deum quotidiem: ‘Adiuva me, Domine, Vt incipiam tibi viuere.’ Sicut enim Apostolus de scientia dixit, Quod ‘si quis sibi videtur scire, nondum cognouit, quomodo oporteat eum scire’, ita de singulis Virtutibus inferendum: Qui se putat apprehendisse et incepisse, nescit, quomodo oporteat eum incipere.* In addition to the biblical texts, note that Luther cites Arsenius’ saying from the *Vitae Patrum*: standard reading in the Augustinian cloister. On Bernard’s aphorism vis-à-vis Luther’s Ockhamist theory of motion, see Dieter, 311-12, 317-18.
But *abusus non tollit usum*, and Luther thinks the pseudo-Augustinian aphorism is patient of an orthodox and spiritually wise interpretation. Indeed, when read properly in light of a genuinely Augustinian theology of real renewal and embattled holiness, the aphorism can be ratcheted up a notch further: “True it is that willing is righteousness, but it is not a great part but the whole righteousness (*tota Iustitia*) which one can have in this life.”\(^{950}\) This *Velle* is not, however, the stuff of Biel’s elicited act, but of St. Paul’s imperfectly renewed will in its Rom. 7-style struggle against the desires of the flesh:

Not *that* [i.e., the Bielish *Velle*], but what the Apostle calls for below: “To will (*Velle*) lies at hand for me, but to complete (*perficere*) I do not find” [Rom. 7:18b]. For this whole life is a time of willing (*volendi*) righteousness, but never of completing (*perficiendi*) [righteousness]. But [completion is] in the future life.\(^{951}\)

Grane discusses this text at several turning points, and pits Luther and Augustine against one another. For Augustine, *velle esse iustum* refers to the grace-renewed will successfully resisting the residual concupiscence which holds it back from perfection. For Luther, it speaks of the Christian’s unconditional agreement with God’s will, on the basis of which he confesses he is a total sinner and takes refuge in Christ’s alien righteousness and God’s merciful *reputatio*.\(^{952}\) To will to be righteous is to recognize that one cannot fulfill the law *ex viribus suis*—whether or not he is aided by grace—and therefore to long and pray for “grace,” which Grane equates with mercy,

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\(^{950}\) WA 56.280.14-15: *Verum est, Quod Velle esse Iustitiam, non est magna pars, immo tota Iustitia, que in hac vita potest haberi.* Cf. LW 25.268.


forgiveness, and/or non-imputation. It is to confess one’s sin, renounce one’s righteousness, and trust in Christ’s instead. In short, for Grane’s Luther “wanting to be righteous” amounts to a near equivalent of the “total simul,” and as such it expresses a non-sanative, imputational theology of justification.

Now, for Grane—who asserts this interpretative axiom fairly early in his argument—Luther’s novel reinterpretation of the traditional velle esse iustum supplies the key to grasping why his seemingly Augustinian exegesis of Rom. 7 is in reality of another kind altogether: the hands are the hands of Augustine, but the voice is Paul’s and Luther’s. To take the most important instance, when Grane sets his hand to explain the long excerpt from c. Iul. 3.26.62 which effectively comprises the scholion on Rom. 7:18, he insists we remember that Luther has basically altered the meaning of Augustine’s velle esse iustum. In light of Luther’s revision of the aphorism’s meaning, it becomes clear that his intended agreement with Augustine’s facere/perficere distinction and its theory of consent is only apparent; and therefore, Luther’s agreement with the Augustinian theology of real inchoate Heilung, for which refusing to volitionally “complete” the desires that one’s flesh “does” against one’s grace-renewed will is an integral component, is only apparent too. For Luther, non-consentire means saying Nein to one’s self and giving way to God’s judgment—i.e., just what Grane asserts “wanting to be righteous” means. But for Augustine, non-consent—and by extension, velle esse iustum—means “that the already justified

953 Grane, Modus loquendi, 80-1.
954 Grane, Modus loquendi, 60.
955 Grane, Modus loquendi, 59-60.
person resists the inclinations which are still present even after the forgiveness of original sin.”

In fact, Luther himself intends exactly the position which Grane urges as the merely apparent Augustinian alternative. This is why he refers *infra* to Rom. 7: if you want to understand the aphorism, Luther is saying, you need to read Paul on *velle*. As an eager student of the “42os Augustine,” to want to be righteous—or simply to want righteousness—is for Luther to want to be *perfectly or completely* righteous, without remainder. This finds paradigmatic expression in St. Paul’s desire—his “wanting”—to bring to whole-hearted completion that delight in the law which already truly characterizes his renovated heart (Rom. 7:22) *to the extent* that it has been renovated into *spiritus* by the Spirit’s grace. But in this life, so long as Paul’s residual flesh remains to be reckoned with in the combat—for it “does” things (*facere*) against his holy will—his renewed will can at best “do” (*facere*) imperfectly the holy spiritual actions it longs to execute in the flawless perfection of love. Constricted in his spiritual affections by the contrary desires of the flesh, Paul cannot yet “complete” (*perficere*) the things he longs for and delights in, though he emphatically refuses to permit his flesh to bring its desires to completion either. So far Augustine—and Luther. For in Luther’s *modus loquendi augustinianus*, “wanting to be righteous” (Rom. 7:18b: *velle adiacet mihi*) names the graced possibility in the present age that ruefully compensates for the present impossibility of “completing the good” (Rom. 7:18c: *perficere autem bonum, non invenio*). This entire life is a time of grace-produced *wanting* to be unreservedly righteous. Only in the life to come will the saints bring

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their present longings to completion in the perfections of glory. It is this Augustinian eschatological reserve, not some alleged indifference to real growth in holiness, that explains why Luther can modify the pseudo-Augustinian aphorism in what seems to Grane’s twentieth-century eyes an innovative direction: velle iustitiam is not just pars iustitiae, but tota iustitia. In fact, Luther’s insistence that velle esse iustum is—under the conditions of the present life—the apex and sum of Christian righteousness is of a piece with his broad program of Augustinian ressourcement, as exemplified above all in his exegesis of Rom. 7.

The context bears this out plainly. Not coincidently, it includes the sweeping reference to c. Iul. 2 that I mentioned in passing above, on the heels of which Luther composes a rich statement of his Augustinian theology of indwelling sin, healing grace, and merciful non-imputation as they intersect in the spiritual experience of the true monastic:

“To will (Velle) lies at hand for me, but to complete (perficere) I do not find” [Rom. 7:18b]. For this whole life is a time of willing (volendi) righteousness, but never of completing (perficiendi) [righteousness]. But [completion is] in the future life. Therefore, to will (Velle) is to show by all powers, pursuits, prayers, works, sufferings that we desire righteousness (desideremus Iustitiam), but that we do not yet have it perfectly. Regarding these matters, see blessed Augustine writing most beautifully and richly in many books, especially book 2 against Julian, adducing St. Ambrose, Hilary, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Basil, Nazianzus, Irenaeus, Reticius, Olympius. Therefore the mother of hypocrites and cause of hypocrisy is security itself. Thus God leaves us in this sin, in the tinder, in concupiscence (in peccato isto, in fomite, in concupiscentia), so that he may keep us in the fear of Him and humility, in order that thus we may always flee to his grace (gratiam): always frightened lest we sin, i.e., always praying, lest He impute it to us and permit sin to rule (peccatum dominari sinat [Rom. 6:14]). To be sure, by the very fact that we do not fear, we sin. Obviously, since this evil in us is sin per se, because on its account we do not fulfill the love of God above all things. By this alone does it become venial and is not imputed, that we groan for it and—lest God perhaps should damn us because of it (propter ipsum), lest he impute it to us—we anxiously implore his mercy (misericordiam) and pray that it be taken away through his grace (gratiam) and
thus confess that we are sinners because of it (ex ipso) and regard ourselves as sinners by weeping, by repenting, by grieving, by shedding tears. For when this fear and anxiety cease, straightway security sets in; when security sets in, straightway the imputation of God in peccatum returns. For this reason: God has decreed (statuerit) that he wills to not impute [sin] only to the person who groans and fears and assiduously implores his mercy. By this most merciful counsel (consilio), our most godly God drives us to weariness of this life, to hope of the future life, to desire for his grace (desiderium gratiȩ suȩ), to hatred of sin, to penitence, etc.957

In the first place, contra Grane, Luther clearly does not limit velle esse iustum to confessing one’s sinfulness and accepting God’s judgment. “To will” in the full-bodied Pauline sense of the term—omnis viribus—means to evince one’s deep longing as homo spiritualis for the perfect righteousness he cannot yet attain, and to do so concretely through the central practices of monastic piety: pursuits (studiis: either spiritual endeavors broadly or monastic studies more narrowly), prayers, works, sufferings, weeping, grieving, groaning, repenting, tears, abasement, confession, humility, the fear of God. The influence of Luther’s spiritual Sitz im Leben upon the text is unmistakable: “wanting righteousness” evidently entails the kind of hard

957 WA 56.280.15-281.21: Verum non illud Velle, Sed quod infra Apostolus vocat: ‘Velle mihi adiacet, perficere non Inuenio.’ Tota enim hȩc Vita est tempus volendi Iustitiam, perficiendi vero nequaquam, Sed futura vita. Velle itaque est omnibus viribus, studiis, orationibus, operibus, passionibus ostendere, quod desideremus Iustitiam, nondum autem perfectum habeamus. De quibus Vide pulcherrime et locupletissime in multis libris b. Augustinum, precipue li. 2. contra Iulianum, allegantem S. Ambro., Hila., Cyprian, Chrisost., Basilium, Nazianz, Hireneum, Reticium, Olimpum. Mater igitur hipocritarum et Causa hipocrisy est ipsa securitas. Deus enim ideo nos in peccato isto, in fomite, in concupiscientia derelinquit, Vt nos in timore sui et humilitate custodiat, vt sic ad eius gratiam semper recurramus, Semper pauei, ne peccemus i. e. semper orantes, ne nobis imputet et peccatum dominari sinat. Immo eiopso peccamus non timendo, Quipe cum hoc malum in nobis per se sit peccatum, quia non implemus imperium ipsum dilectionem Dei super omnia. Hoc solo autem fit veniale et non imputatur, Quod pro ipso gemimus, et ne forte Deus propter ipsum nos damnet, ne nobis imputet, misericordiam ipsius solliciti imploramus et auferri per gratiam eius oramus ac sic peccatores nos ex ipso confiteamur ac pro peccatoribus nos habeamus flendo, penitendo, dolendo, lachrymando. Cessante enim isto timore et sollicitudine mox ponitur securitas, posita securitate mox redit Imputatio Dei in peccatum, eo quod statuerit Deus nulli velle non imputare nisi gementi et timenti ac assidue misericordiam suam imploranti. Quo consilio misericordissimo nos psissimus Deus cogit ad tedium huius vitae, ad spem futurę vitae, ad desiderium gratię suę, ad odium peccati, ad penitentiam etc. Cf. LW 25.268.
spiritual work—and intense spiritual sufferings—which by 1515 Luther himself had zealously undertaken for some ten years as an observant Augustinian friar.

In the second, and in line with his apt if broad appeal to Augustine contra Iulianum, Luther sets out his dogmatics of sin and grace, holiness and mercy. The “sin” that God wisely leaves his saints in, is evil desire: fomes/concupiscientia. This malum is “obviously” peccatum per se: not because it eliminates real holiness in the saints altogether, but because it keeps them back from the perfect dilectio Dei super omnia that the law demands and that their own renewed hearts desire to fulfill. But this painful state of affairs is actually to the saints’ great advantage, for the ongoing presence of evil desire humbles them. This counteracts the most dangerous vice of all, spiritual pride, and keeps them in a state of fear before God. Thus forestalled from lapsing into laxity and securitas, the saints’ “sin” spurs them on to seek increases of “grace.” By this “grace,” Luther means gratia sanans: for it actually takes away (auferrī) the sin that remains in the saints, and stops whatever bits of it God in his wisdom has left behind for their humiliation from gaining the upper hand (dominari, an allusion to Rom. 6:14). To be sure, the saints are frightened by the real and present danger of falling into sin; but empowered by this grace, they do not actually succumb to the evil affective impulses which they are forced to suffer. So long as they keep up the fight, groaning against sin and begging God for both gratia and misericordia—that is, for healing grace and pardoning mercy—God declines to impute the “sin” that thus remains to their account. What is intrinsically damnable sin becomes pardonable, veniale, by God’s mercy—but only under certain conditions. The non-imputation of the saints’ sinful concupiscentia is contingent upon their continuance in the way of
real holiness begun by God’s grace. Since their healing is real but fragile, their attainment of mercy is precarious and uncertain. If humble fear gives way to presumptuous security, God reverses his judgment of mercy and imputes what had once been venial sin in *peccatum*. Residual affective “sin,” grace-produced healing and renewal, merciful non-imputation contingent upon the refusal of consent to the sin that remains: these are the consistent Augustinian components of Luther’s theology of holiness circa 1515/16.

One final point remains to be considered. The spiritual usefulness of “sin” for killing pride, inducing humility, and driving the penitent to seek grace—think of St. David, or St. Peter—is classic Augustinian wisdom: *virtus*, Augustine never tired of lecturing Julian, *infirmitate perficitur* (2 Cor. 12:7-10). But in the last sentences of the above-cited paragraph, there are hints of the way Luther is restating this Augustinian inheritance in terms of the late medieval “covenant” or *pactum* theology he had read in Biel. For the conditional relationship that obtains between the sinner-saint’s penitence, non-consent, and “yearning for grace” on the one hand, and God’s merciful non-imputation on the other, is itself the result of God’s free determination. He might (*de potentia absoluta*) have decreed otherwise: but in his mercy, God has chosen not to impute sin when the appropriate conditions are met; and having resolved to act thus (*de potentia ordinata*), his decrees are very trustworthy (Ps. 93:5). “God has

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958 See *e.g.* c. ep. Pel. 3.7.18, c. Iul. 2.4.8, 4.2.11, 4.3.28. Cf. Thomas F. Martin, O.S.A., “Paul the Patient: Christus Medicus and the “Stimulus Carnis” (2 Cor. 12:7): A Consideration of Augustine’s Medicinal Christology”; Hombert, *Gloria Gratiae*, 310-12.

decreed (statuerit) that he wills to not impute [sin] only to the person who groans and fears and assiduously implores his mercy."⁹⁶⁰

Against prevalent caricatures of Ockhamist covenant theology, it should be said that this resolution on God’s part is not arbitrary in a capricious sense: for it is the fruit of his wise and merciful counsel (consilium), and he is a God piissimus.⁹⁶¹

Furthermore, as students of the Dictata have long recognized, Luther is refashioning these theories in several respects. For one thing, he does not describe the condition for obtaining mercy in terms of a half-merit: that door, as we have seen, is firmly shut for Luther once he has digested the bracing Augustinian doctrine of fallen human nature as vitiated in all its powers. For all the flaws in his interpretation, Grane is still helpful in this regard: contra Gabrielem, the sinner contributes nothing to his justification apart from his sin; and if he does what lies in his power to do, additional sin is the only possible outcome. But in the present instance, the doctrinal and spiritual context for Luther’s nascent covenant theology is not the prima gratia of initial justification—as for Biel’s doctrine—but rather the question of how a graced or justified person remains a beneficiary of God’s mercy and grace once he has already received it. For Luther, such a person is in fact capable of acting in the spiritually requisite manner—refusing to consent to residual sin, begging for increased grace in prayer, pleading for mercy, etc.—because gratia sanans really has begun to heal and restore his wounded soul. And as I argued in chapter 2, such Spirit-empowered non-consent to residual

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⁹⁶¹ WA 56.281.19-20: Quo consilio misericordissimo nos piissimus Deus cogit ad tedium huius vitæ, ad spem futūre vitæ, ad desiderium gratiæ suæ, ad odium peccati, ad penitentiam etc. Cf. LW 25.268. At civ. dei 10.1.3 (Bett. 373), Augustine explains that since pietas often refers in vernacular Latin to the works of mercy commanded by God, “from this custom of speaking it has come about that even God himself is said to be pious.”
“sin” very much remains the *conditio sine qua non* for abiding in a state of grace (and gift) for the duration of Luther’s theological career.

I will return to this matter in Part III below. But to head off the charge of synergism which I anticipate from some corners, I wish to be clear about two points. First, from 1515 right into the 1540s, Luther holds that the conditions which the renewed person must fulfill to remain in God’s grace lie outside the reach of his natural powers to accomplish. The believer depends entirely on renovating grace—*gratia sanans* in 1515/16, *donum Spiritus Sancti* later on—in order to fight and conquer residual sin’s allurements (not to mention the world’s and the devil’s) and to hold fast to Jesus Christ. The Christian warrior triumphs over sin and temptation, not *ex suis viribus* but *ex gratia*. But grace really does empower him to triumph, renewing the faculties of his vitiated soul in order that he may believe, hope, and love, come what may. Second, the very fact that the regenerate person has received this gift of new life in Christ is itself the outworking in time of God’s eternal election: for against Biel *et al.* and with the old Augustine, predestination is the only preparation for grace. In 1515/16, this *sola gratia* is meant to be a fearful reality: for in line with Augustine’s doctrine and the medieval consensus, no Christian—apart from a few notable exceptions, e.g., St. Mary or Paul—may know whether or not he is in the number of God’s elect. The *Prädestinationsanfechtung* that might result from contemplating this fearful reality was, of course, one of the knots that tied up Luther’s anxious soul. But in the lectures on Romans, he still views this uncertainty, and the fear it produces, largely positively, for it is a potent remedy for spiritual pride. Despite the marked

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962 *praed. sanct.* 10.19.
Staupitzian reorientations in his own spirituality and pastoral practice, away from “speculation” into the hidden mystery of one’s election and toward the manifestation of God in Christ crucified, this fearful and humbling element in Augustine’s spiritual theology of predestination remains a component of the older Luther’s teaching as well. Once the promissio-fides correlation has given birth to reformational assurance—according to Bayer, in early summer 1518—the gospel sets the believer free to rest in the grace of forgiveness and justification in Christ. But this assurance of grace through God’s promise in Christ, and the freedom it bestows, only holds true of the present moment. No believer knows whether he will persevere in true faith to the end, perseverance itself being a free gift of God’s grace that flows from the hidden font of his eternal predestination. Since present regeneration and justification may be lost, the godly Christian lives poised between fear and hope, and the riddle of predestination remains unresolved till the wayfaring pilgrim passes by grace through death into glory.

For these reasons, Luther goes on in the next pages of the scholion to explain the deep identity of presumption and despair as twin forms of self-obsessing egoism, and to commend instead the “royal road” (regia via) that passes safely between those shoals of destruction.963 This is the path of humility—humilitas fidei—which takes root in the heart that fears God and hopes in his mercy at the same time.964 Luther’s regia via reflects an ancient monastic exegesis of Num. 20:17 and 21:22 which he

963 WA 56.281.22-284.8, LW 25.269-71; for regia via, WA 56.283.7.
964 Explaining Paul’s paradox 1 Cor. 5:7—cleanse out the old leaven, because you really are unleavened—Luther writes (WA 56.282.9-15): *Quis enim eorum intelliget ista duo simul, quod sint azymi et tamen expurgandum sit eis fermentum vetus? Nisi quia vnum in re vera, Sed aluid propter humilitatem fidei in timore, in spe et non-Imputati one Dei consistit. Fermentum habent, Sed dolent pro eo et gratiam Inuocant ideoque Azymi sunt reputatione Dei, qui eis fermentum non imputat, * Sed expurgandum relinquit. Cf. LW 25.269.
probably acquired from Bernard. It does not disappear after the reformational Durchbruch: we find it, for example, in the 1532 lecture on Ps. 2:11 and the 1544 lecture on Gen. 38:26. When Luther ends his 1537 lecture on Gen. 12:20 with the exhortation and prayer “that in patience and hope we may work out our salvation, Amen,” his allusion to Phil. 2:12 is not adventitious. Neither is the plea with which the old Doctor brought his lectures on “the dear Genesis” to a close on 17 November 1545, just a few months before his death: “Pray God for me, that He may grant me a good, blessed last hour.” This is not pious rhetoric. The gospel of free justification in Christ did not free Luther from the fear that he might not continue in this grace. For Luther, young and old, stood firmly within the medieval consensus in dogmatics and in piety that a great “if” hangs over the Christian life. The believer must accept this “if,” fear God, and humbly work out his salvation (Phil. 2:12)—trusting to be sure that God’s grace is at work in him, both to will and to work for his good pleasure (Phil. 2:13). But for Luther as for Augustine, the resolution of this “if” does not ultimately lie in the believer’s hands, but in God’s, hidden in the mystery of predestination.

966 On David’s “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling,” Luther comments: Christ commands “that we travel upon the royal road, and that we fear and hope at the same time.” WA 40/2.288.29-30 [A], cf. LW 12.75.
967 WA 44.334.3-10: Utrunque enim prohibuit Deus, et desperationem et praesumptionem, declinationem ad sinistram et ad dextram. In dextra non est praesumendum: in sinistra non est desperandum. Regiae viae insistendum est, peccator non abiiciat fiduciam misericordiae: iustus non superbiat. ‘Bene placitum enim est Domino super timentes eum, et in eis qui sperant super misericordia eius’, odit superbos et praesumptuosos, et eos diligit, in quibus timor aliquid spei et praesumptionis retinet, non in nobis ipsis, sed in misericordia Dei. Cf. LW 7.44. See too WA 44.822.9-14, LW 8.329-30 (on Gen. 50:19-23) from 1545, cited in chapter 2 above.
968 WA 42.493.11-12, cf. LW 2.323.
969 WA 44.825.11-12, cf. LW 8.333.
6. Virtue, Vice, and Imputation: Augustine’s Ep. 167

The last Augustine citation in the scholia on Rom. 4:7 is the longest and, in a way, the most decisive for my argument: a paragraph from one of Augustine’s letters to Jerome (ep. 167 by the modern enumeration, ep. 29 by Luther’s). The letter concerns the interpretation of James 2:10: “For whoever has observed the whole law, but offends in one point, has become guilty of all.” Written in 415, it reflects—without actually discussing—the anti-Pelagian controversy in its first phase, and directly engages Jerome’s distinct controversy with Jovinian. To the philosophical ear, St. James’ teaching appears to resonate with the extreme Stoic version of the commonplace ancient doctrine of the unity of the virtues, i.e., the necessity of possessing all virtue to possess any virtue at all (qui unam uirtutem habuerit, omnes habet eique nulla est, cui una defuerit). Augustine is keen to address this philosophical doctrine critically, and to reshape it in light of his (by 415) well-established theory of virtue as ordered love and his maturing understanding of the flaws or vices that continue to mar the saints’ holiness even as they make real progress in this love. In his usual manner, Grane asserts that Luther was wrong to cite Augustine’s letter in defense of his theology; but he does well to associate the tenor of the passage with Luther’s Antilatomus, for the same scriptural texts and arguments surface there in great abundance, as does the same paragraph from ep. 167.

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970 For the text, see CSEL 44.586-609, WSA II/3.95-104. Luther excerpts material from paragraph 4.15.
971 This is Augustine’s own pithy summary of the Stoic doctrine, as stated at ep. 167.3.10 (CSEL 44.596); cf. ep. 167.2.4-5, 3.10-12, 4.14.
972 Grane, Modus loquendi, 82-3. For ep. 167 in the Antilatomus, see WA 8.89.35-90.5, LW 32.204. Note well that Vercruyssse (“Die Stellung Augustins in Jacobus Latomus’ Auseinandersetzung mit Luther,” 12) refers to Latomus’ interpretation of ep. 167 as “cumbersome.”
The Augustine citation is nestled in the midst of the second to last corollary in the scholion, which canvasses the familiar themes of righteousness, residual sin, and mercy or non-imputation in their interrelation. Luther first reiterates his contrast between scriptural and philosophical definitions of *iustitia*. “The philosophers and lawyers”—I think it safe to say that here Luther lumps scholastic theologians together with the *philosophi*—“assert that it is a quality of the soul, etc.” By contrast, in the Bible righteousness “depends more on the imputation of God than on the being of the thing (*esse rei*).” True righteousness as scripturally defined is not to be found within the soul, as the fruit of infused grace transforming the *qualitates animae* from vice to virtue. Rather, righteousness depends on God’s reckoning an unrighteous person as righteous in his sight.

For that person has righteousness, not who has the quality alone—indeed that one is a sinner altogether and unrighteous—but whom God, on account of the confession of his own unrighteousness and the plea for the righteousness of God, mercifully repletes and wills to be held righteous before him. Therefore, we are all born in iniquity i.e. unrighteousness, we die, but by the reckoning alone of the God who has mercy [Rom. 9:16], through faith in his Word, we are righteous.

Read out of context, Luther plays right into Grane’s hand; and Grane seizes the opportunity. Against the philosophical definition of righteousness as a real “quality” inhering in the being of the transformed soul—together with all the niceties of sins merely venial and works truly meritorious that follow from it—Luther sets the Pauline gospel of *iustitia* through mercy and imputation alone, passively received by faith in

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973 WA 56.287.16-18, cf. LW 25.274.
974 WA 56.287.18-19, cf. LW 25.274.
975 WA 56.287.19-24: *Ille enim habet Iustitiam, non qui qualitatem solam habet, immo ille peccator est omnino et Inius tus, Sed quem Deus propter confessionem inustitiis suet et implorationem Iustitiae Dei misericorditer reputat et voluit Iustum apud se haber. Ideo omnes In iniquitate i.e. Iniustitia nascimur, morimur, Sola autem reputatione miserentis Dei per fidem Verbi eius Iusti sumus. Cf. LW 25.274-5.*
the Word. For the justified person is a confessing sinner (peccator est omnino et Iniustus!) and all his righteousness is alien to his being and imputed to his account and unknown to him, except by faith. Grane concludes his comments upon the present text thus: “The righteousness of God, with which He makes us righteous, has no footing in the person himself (keinen Anhalt am Menschen selbst hat), neither in his works nor in his properties.” This being so, the last word goes to the simul peccator et iustus taken in its post-Hermann sense, which Grane suggests Luther himself viewed as a kind of “summary” of Rom. 1-4.976

But let us attend to the immediate context of Luther’s decidedly “Lutheran”-sounding claims in this text. First, looking back and recalling Luther’s sustained polemics against self-righteous monastics in this scholion, we need to clarify the intended referent of the person whom Luther calls “a sinner altogether and unrighteousness.” This person is not the justified sinner, nor the appropriate subject of the “simul” as Luther actually held it (and to be clear, the phrase does not appear in this corollary in so many words; Grane imports it as a heuristic tool, in the event unhelpfully). Luther is once again describing the Luke 18:9-14-style contrast between the specious righteousness of the Pharisee and the real justification of the publican.977

The person “who has the quality alone,” i.e., the self-righteous person who knows that his grace-infused soul possesses the qualitas iustitiae and therefore does not confess

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976 Grane, Modus loquendi, 83.
that he is a sinner, *immo ille peccator est omnino et Iniustus*—that kind of person above all is a sinner full stop. Thus the person who “has the quality alone,” and who presumes that his possession of this quality justifies him before God, does not have righteousness at all. If the self-righteous is unrighteous in the core of his rotten heart, who then is the truly righteous person? Precisely the heart-broken penitent whose character and actions Luther has already described at some length, and sketches again here: the true monastic, who confesses his unrighteousness, begs for God’s righteousness, and trusts in the Word that promises this mercy as a free gift of the merciful God.

In light of this penitential monastic theology, notice the central role that “Holl’s *propter*” plays in this text. It is because of the penitent’s confession and plea that God grants him mercy, and the humble soul that prays in this truthful way cannot be a *peccator omnino*. Indeed, the more he humbly insists on the reality of his sinfulness, the more he evinces (perhaps to his own irritation) the reality of his renewal in holiness. Luther’s true penitent confesses that he is a sinner, trusts in God’s mercy, and does not presume that he has righteousness on account of the fact that a virtuous *qualitas* inheres in his soul. But the spiritual fact that he does not rely on possessing “a quality alone” to establish his righteousness *coram deo* does not mean that he has no righteous qualities at all. To the contrary: his humble confession of sin is the first and foremost proof of his regeneration out of the deceitfulness of his inherited flesh into the truthfulness of the renewed *spiritus* that is brought to life in Christ.
In the second place, we need to look forward from Luther’s focus on original sin in the last sentence of the above-cited paragraph to the catena of scriptural proof-texts for the universality and depth of human sinfulness that follows it. Luther’s *omnes In iniquitate i.e. Iniustitia nascimur* reflects the language of Ps. 50:7 Vg. (*in iniquitatibus conceptus sum, etc.*) and the apposition of *morimur* with *nascimur* strongly signals St. Paul’s teaching in Rom. 5:12-21 and 1 Cor. 15:20-22. These are, of course, classic scriptural loci for Augustine’s theology of original sin. Within the excerpted paragraph itself, this again shows that for Luther the object of God’s merciful non-imputation *in the saints* is not actual, but original sin in the residual form it assumes as their “flesh.” On account of its unwanted operations in and as their flesh, the saints truly confess that they are sinners, refuse to rely on their own righteousness, and take refuge in the promise of God’s mercy in Christ. This is the force of Luther’s last sentence; and it explains why he proceeds to catalogue scriptural proofs in demonstration of original sin and, therefore, of the continuing sinfulness of regenerate saints: “Therefore, let us heap up authorities from Scripture, in which all are asserted to be in sins,” *omnes in peccatis* matching the earlier *omnes In iniquitate i.e. Iniustitia nascimur.*

The catalogue of proof-texts is impressive, and anticipates similar collections in the 1518 *Heidelberg Disputation*, the 1521 *Defense and Explanation of All the Articles*, and the great *Antilatomus* of the same year: Gen. 8:21, Ex. 34:7, Rom. 3:20, 1 Kgs. 8:46, Eccl. 7:20, Job 7:20-1, 9:2, 9:15, Ps. 32:6, 143:2, 130:8, 72:14, Isa. 64:6, Jer. 30:11, 1 Tim. 1:15,

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978 WA 56.287.25-6, cf. LW 25.275.
Rom. 7:19 ("etc."), Phil. 3:13, James 3:12, 1 John 1:8, Rev. 22:11. In passing, Luther acknowledges Job 27:6 and 1 John 5:18 (cf. 3:9) as counter-texts. St. John’s *qui natus est ex Deo, non peccat etc.* is especially important for the reasons I explored above in chapter 2: for Luther, the flesh-bearing and thus “sinful” regenerate person does not consent to the impulses of his flesh, and therefore does not sin. This first Johannine text immediately precedes the second, Rev. 22:11, with which Luther concludes his catalogue. Between them both, the overall stress on sinfulness (in particular, with respect to our origin in vitiated Adam) gives way to a marked emphasis on the reality of regeneration (1 John 5:18) and the necessity of progressive justification (Rev. 22:11). As I have argued throughout this book, it is this dual emphasis on residual sinfulness and real renewal in righteousness “*simul*” that occupies Luther’s prodigious energies both spiritually and dogmatically, and this as penitent and mystic, pastor, exegete, and catholic reader of Augustine all in one. So it is that after citing St. John’s *qui iustus est, iustificetur adhuc*, Luther shifts promptly to Augustine’s *ep.* 167 as an illuminating comment on his scriptural catena, three verses of which factor in the Augustinian excerpt itself:

Hence blessed Augustine, Epist. 29 to blessed Jerome: “Virtue is the charity (*Virtus est Charitas*) by which that which ought to be loved, is loved (*diligitur*). This is greater in some, less in others, in others there is none at all; but the fullest love [or: virtue], which could no longer be increased, is in no human being so long as he lives here. However, as long as it is able to be increased, assuredly that which is less than it ought to be is from vice (*ex vitio est*). Because of this vice (*Ex quo vitio*), ‘there is not a righteous person on earth who does good and does not sin’ [Eccl. 7:20]. Because of this vice (*Ex quo vitio*), ‘no living person will be justified in God’s sight’ [Ps. 143:2]. On account of this vice (*Propter quod vitium*), ‘If we say that we do not have sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us’ [1 John 1:8]. On account of this vice (*Propter quod vitium*), regardless of how much we advance, it is necessary for us to say:

979 WA 56.287.27-288.32, LW 25.275-76.
‘forgive us our debts’ [Matt. 6:12], though already in baptism everything said, done, thought has been forgiven.” That’s Augustine.980

It is indeed: Luther’s text compares quite favorably with a large portion of §4.15 as it stands in our best modern edition.981 To evaluate whether (and to what extent) Luther was right to appeal to it in support of his theology, we need first to grasp what Augustine himself was arguing for. In the lines that immediately precede the excerpted material, Augustine tells Jerome that he is about to explain what he embraces in his theory (notio) of virtue (§4.15).982 Then in the paragraphs that follow the excerpt, Augustine returns to the problem raised by Jas. 2:10 and/or the Stoic doctrine of virtue. His solution turns on relating his virtue theory to Rom. 13:9-10 and Matt. 22:37-40, i.e., the “Love Commandment” in both its Pauline and dominical forms: Plenitudo legis caritas est, qua deus proximusque diligatur. The “fullness” of the law is love. But love in its fullness, caritas plenissima for God and neighbor, is precisely what Augustine—in the preceding §4.15 excerpted by Luther—has just forsworn as a possibility in this life. For Augustine, this helps explain the meaning of Jas. 2:10 in a way that embraces the real element of truth in the Stoic virtue theory: anything less

980 WA 56.289.1-12: ‘Virtus est Charitas, qua id, quod diligendum est, diligatur. Hec in aliis maior, in aliis minor, in aliis nulla est, plenissima vero, quæ iam non possit augeri, quamdui hic homo viuit, est in nemine; quamdui autem augeri potest, profecto illud, quod minus est quam debet, ex vitio est. Ex quo Vitiö “non est lustus in terra, qui faciat bonum et non peccet”. Ex quo Vitiö “non justificabitur in conspectu Dei omnis viuens”. Propter quod vitium “si dixerimus, quia peccatum non habemus, nosmet ipsos seducimus et veritas in nobis non est”. Propter quod vitium etiam, quantumlibet profecerimus, necessarium est nobis dicere: “dimittte nobis debita nostra”, cum iam omnia in baptismo, dicta, cogitata, dimissa sint.’ He c ille. Cf. LW 25.276.

981 CSEL 44.602. Apart from slight changes in spelling and punctuation, I count three variations: 1. Luther’s version of Eccl. 7:20 differs slightly from Augustine’s: the latter’s “there is not a righteous person on earth who will do good and will not sin” shifting to “there is not a righteous person on earth who does good and does not sin.” 2. In the 1 John 1:8 citation, Augustine has nos ipsos decipimus and Luther nosmet ipsos seducimus. 3. In the final “propter quod” which comes on the heels of 1 John 1:8, to Augustine’s propter quod Luther adds the clarifying propter quod vitium.

982 CSEL 44.602: ut generali ter breuiterque complectar, quam de uirtute habeo notionem, quod ad recte uiuendum adtnet, uirtus est caritas, qua id, quod diligendum est, diligitur.
than the richest and most perfect love renders the flawed lover guilty of the whole law, because acting thus he sins against the total love on which all the commandments depend (§5.16). At the same time, Augustine suggests that this scripturally revised theory of virtue enables the theologian to avoid the most notorious implication of the Stoic doctrine, viz., the equality of all vices and sins. “Why then are sins not said to be equal? Is it perhaps because one does more against love who sins more gravely, and less against love who sins more lightly?” *et hoc ipso admittat magis et minus*, to wit, varying degrees or intensities of love in different persons or actions, and therefore diverse gradations of guilt, can be admitted with scriptural faithfulness and philosophical coherence. The “man of apostolic grace”—St. James—can therefore truthfully say that we all offend in many things (Jas. 3:2) and that failing in one point renders one guilty of the whole law (2:10) without contradicting the fundamental commitments of Augustine’s Pauline theology of sin and grace, flesh and spirit, present hope and future perfection in glory. The emptier (*inanior*) one is of love, the fuller (*plenior*) he is of iniquity, and vice versa; only in the future glory, when nothing more remains of the present weakness (*ex infirmitate*), will the saints be exceedingly perfect in love (§5.17).}

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983 CSEL 44.603, cf. WSA II/3.102.
984 CSEL 44.604: *cur ergo non dicantur paria peccata? an forte quia magis facit contra caritatem, qui grauius peccat, minus, qui leuius, et hoc ipso admittat magis et minus, quo fit quidem omnium reus, sed grauius peccans uel in pluribus peccans magis reus, leuius autem uel in paucioribus peccans minus reus tanto maiore scilicet reatu, quanto amplius, tanto minore, quanto minus peccauerit, tamen, etiam si in uno offenderit, reus omnium, quia contra eam factit, in qua pendet omnia? quae si uera sunt, eo modo et illud absolutur, quod ait homo etiam apostolicae gratiae: in multis enim offendimus omnes; offendimus enim, sed alius grauius alius leuius, quanto quisque magis minus ue peccauerit, tanto in peccato committendo maior quanto in diligendo deo et proximo minor et rursus tanto minor in peccati perpetratione quanto maior in dei et proximi dilectione, tanto itaque plenior iniquitatis quanto inanior caritatis et tunc perfectissimus in caritate, quando nihil restat ex infirmitate*. Cf. WSA II/3.102-3.
Augustine's *ex infirmitate* at the end of §5.17 corresponds conceptually to *ex vitio* in Luther's excerpted §4.15. *Vitium* can be translated either as “defect” or as “vice” depending on contextual considerations and, perhaps at times, the translator’s theological commitments. In terms of its conceptual substance in Augustine’s thought, this is really a case of six of the one or a half-dozen of the other, as the close connection between *vitium* and *infirmitas* itself suggests: after all, a basic meaning for *virtus* is simply “power,” and to lack moral strength and to suffer moral weakness is to be marred by *vitium*, vice. It is due to a lack of what is owed in a human person’s being, affections, and actions—a defect, weakness, wound, or *vitium*—that he falls short of the moral power and excellence of “virtue” and is therefore possessed of “vice” to varying degrees. In any case, in §4.15 Augustine plainly draws a contrast between the *virtus* of love, on the one hand, and its lack or imperfections *ex vitio* on the other. Whatever is lacking in the regenerate person’s love; whatever is less than the fullness of love which he hopes his small beginnings in the present will one day become by grace in glory; whatever is less than the *plenitudo legis* which is *caritas*, and therefore “less than what is owed” (*quod minus est quam debet*)—is from vice (*ex vitio est*).

Augustine then reinforces his position with the four proof-texts on sin that form the heart of the paragraph, introducing the first two (Eccl. 7:20, Ps. 143:2) with *ex quo vitio* and the second pair (1 John 1:8, Matt. 6:12) with *propter quod vitium*. Real progress is made in the Christian life of holy love for God and neighbor. But on account of the “vice” (§4.15) or the “weakness” (§5.17) that remains in the saints—in St. Paul’s terms, their “flesh,” “law of flesh,” or “sin”—perfection in righteousness, *plenitudo legis*, is in this life unattainable.
Now, in §4.15 and in light of Jas. 2:10, Augustine does not shy from drawing the conclusion suggested by his virtue theory and intimated by his carefully chosen catena of proof-texts from the Bible. On account of the *vitium* that remains in the saints, there is not a righteous person on earth who does good and does not sin; no one living will be justified in God’s sight (this is one of the occasional forensic instances of *iustificari* that one does come across in Augustine); Christians who claim sinless perfection deceive themselves; and regardless of how far one has advanced in the way of love, he never outgrows the need to pray for daily forgiveness through the Lord’s Prayer. But apart from the fleeting affirmation of complete forgiveness in baptism that concludes the excerpted material from §4.15, in *ep.* 167 Augustine does not enter upon the question why the *vitium* that restricts and mars the wayfaring saint’s love—and thus makes him guilty of the whole law, which requires nothing less than wholehearted love—nevertheless does not make him guilty in God’s sight. In the language of the Psalm, if *ex vitio* no saint living will be justified before God, how then is the saint forgiven, accepted, or justified before God? As we now know, Augustine elsewhere engages this question with great interest: and it is just such texts, above all from the writings against Julian, that especially interest Luther in his lectures on Romans.

If we turn now to examine the role of *ep.* 167.4.15 in the Rom. 4:7 scholion, three things are readily apparent: (1) first, that Luther adopts Augustine’s theory of love vis-à-vis the fullness and fulfillment of the law; (2) second, that Luther bites the bullet and names as “sin” the lack of perfect love which Augustine usually—though not always—refers to as *vitium*, weakness, flesh, evil desire, the law of sin, etc.; and I
note that in §4.15, Augustine combines both usages by virtue of his citations of Eccl. 7:20, 1 John 1:8, and Matt. 6:12; (3) third, that Luther draws once again on his “420s Augustine”-inspired theology of residual sin’s non-imputation to resolve the question begged by—but left unanswered in—Augustine’s letter to Jerome. Earlier on in this scholion, when Luther made his broad-brush reference to c. Iul. 2, we saw each of these three points on display in concert: the “tinder” of evil desire left in the regenerate is “sin” per se, argued Luther, “since propter ipsum we do not fulfill the love of God above all things”\(^985\) (#1 and #2); but to those real saints who confess that they are sinners ex ipso, and pray for healing grace to take away and pardoning mercy to overlook the tinder, concupiscence, vice, and indeed “sin” that remains in their flesh, God does not impute it in peccatum (#3).\(^986\) In the comments that immediately follow the excerpt from ep. 167, Luther exhibits the same grasp of the Augustinian theory of virtue as love in its relation to the law; the same intensification of the logic of this theory (or perhaps, as Steinmetz has it, “the more perfect embodiment of a tendency”\(^987\)) vis-à-vis the Bielish doctrines of natura integra, self-elicited love for God super omnia, and half-merited justification; and the same nascent attempt to think through the implications of fusing together a handful of interrelated Augustinian

\(^{985}\) WA 56.281.9-11: Quippe cum hoc malum in nobis per se sit peccatum, quia non implemus propter ipsum dilectionem Dei super omnia. Cf. LW 25.268.  
\(^{986}\) WA 56.281.11-21, LW 25.268.  
\(^{987}\) Steinmetz, Luther and Staupitz, 15. To be clear, Steinmetz was not discussing this precise issue, but rather the general question of the nature of Luther’s “Augustinianism.” In his lucid discussion, Steinmetz distinguishes five senses of the term “Augustinian” (and “Pelagian”), the fifth being “not so much agreement with the teaching of Augustine and Pelagius in their original form as the embodiment of a theological tendency which in special cases may go beyond their original thinking. In one sense it is possible to say that Thomas Aquinas is more Augustinian than Luther on the question of merit, if the standard is fidelity to the original teaching of St. Augustine. But one can also hold, without taking an absurd and indefensible position, that Luther is more Augustinian than Thomas, if the frame of reference is the more perfect embodiment of a tendency. It all depends what you mean by ‘Augustinian.’”
inheritances (viz., his virtue theory, his eschatological reserve, his doctrine of grace, and his theology of non-imputation) with his own fresh reading of the Bible. The outcome is novel in certain real but limited respects, for at bottom Luther is advancing the logic already present in ep. 167 and nupt. conc. 1.25.28 etc. Here it is:

From this it is plain to see that there is no such thing as venial sin ex substantia et natura sua, but neither is there merit. Because even good works, since the tinder and sensuality resist, do not happen with as great a concertedness and purity as the law requires: for they do not happen by our whole powers (ex totis viribus), but only by the powers of spirit, with the powers of the flesh fighting back (tantum ex viribus spiritus repugnantibus viribus carnis). Therefore, even when we work well, we sin, unless God through Christ covers this imperfection for us and does not impute it; thus it becomes venial through the mercy of the God who does not impute it, on account of faith and groaning for this imperfection, which is taken up in Christ. 988

Note well that Luther’s comments begin with the back-reference to §4.15: Ex quo patet, Quod etc. Employing a typical mode of scholastic argumentation, Luther aims to elucidate the implicit implications of an authoritative text in order to draw further conclusions from it. In this case, he does so by placing one set of Augustinian data in relation to another. If in the event Luther fails to reproduce Augustine’s doctrine exactly—more on this shortly—he may nonetheless achieve “the more perfect embodiment of a tendency” by carrying Augustine’s argument forward to a more robustly “Augustinian” conclusion: just as, for example, Thomas Aquinas’ understanding of the persons of the Holy Trinity as “subsistent relations” may be seen

988 WA 56.289.14-21: Ex quo patet, Quod nullum est peccatum Veniale ex substantia et natura sua, Sed nec meritum. Quia etiam bona opera, quia renitente fomite et sensualitate, non tanta flunt intensione et puritate, quantum lex requirit, cum non ex totis viribus fiant, Sed tantum ex viribus spiritus repugnantibus viribus carnis. Idcirco enim bene operando peccamus, nisi Deus per Christum nobis hoc imperfectum tegeret et non imputaret; fit ergo Veniale per misericordiam Dei non imputantis, propter fidem et gemitum pro ista imperfectione in Christo suscepta. Cf. LW 25.276.
as a deeply “Augustinian” theology based upon the argument in *trin.* 5-7 and at the same time advancing beyond it.

Now to the matter at hand. On the surface, Luther’s denial of a real distinction between venial sins and mortal, his rejection of merit, and his claim that the regenerate person sins even when he does a good work—all hugely controversial positions from 1518 on—stand in manifest opposition to Augustine’s doctrine; for Augustine upheld the first two interrelated points, and at the least never affirmed the third in so many words. But there’s the rub: in Luther’s first sentence, he is making the claim that what Augustine wrote in *ep.* 167 about love, virtue, vice, the law, and sin itself leads to the evident conclusion that no sin, in its essence, nature, or definition, is pardonable in and of itself. For anything less than perfect love is a vicious falling short of the fullness of virtuous love that God requires of his humans in his law. However great in love a regenerate person may become by God’s grace, since in the conditions of this present life he cannot but fall short of the fullness of love, he therefore fails to fulfill the law. And to fail to fulfill the law is the essence of “sin” *ex substantia et natura sua*, regardless of how slight a deviation from the law’s perfection a given failure may in fact amount to. For it is not the slightness of the flaw in one’s love that renders it an intrinsically “venial” sin, but the nature of the relation that obtains between that flaw and both (a) the flawed lover’s will, i.e., does he consent to and acquiesce in the imperfections of his love, or does he suffer these imperfections unwillingly; and (b) the mercy of God in Christ, for God does not impute this “sin” *in peccatum* to those who believe and groan for help, and “Christ succors them from the fullness of his
purity, and covers over this imperfection of theirs." For the same reasons, Luther rejects merit and hazards the claim that the regenerate sin when they do good works: and while the conclusions are novel, the reasons themselves are drawn straight from Augustine. The wholeheartedness, the concertedness (intensio), the unblemished purity of perfect love required by the law is lacking in the best of works: for the regenerate person’s heart is divided in its “powers” between spirit and flesh, the new and holy vires spiritus fighting to love in purity and the old sinful vires carnis vexatiously fighting back. This is Augustine’s spiritual theology of real but embattled holiness, complete with one of his choice proof-texts for the same (Gal. 5:17); and when Luther now states that the righteous “sin” even when they do good works, his rhetorically charged and seemingly novel claim is in fact a pointed restatement of Augustine’s spirit/flesh “simul.” Because of their residual flesh, ex vitio/infirmitate, the saints continue to fall short of the perfection of love. They therefore “sin” even when they do the good works of love, for they do not love ex totis viribus with as great an intension and purity as the law requires (and as grace will one day free them to accomplish in glory). “On account of this vice, regardless of how much we advance, it is necessary for us to say: ‘forgive us our debts’”—so Augustine; so Luther. No good deed is without “sin” in this precise and mutually agreed upon sense (in rei veritate and sometimes also in verba, not least when Augustine takes his words directly from the Bible). No sin is intrinsically venial: this is, I think, a justifiable conclusion to draw from a close reading of ep. 167, especially at those points in the argument where Augustine weaves his virtue theory together with Rom. 13:10 and Jas. 2:10. No good

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989 WA 56.289.29-31: ... succurrit eis Christus de plenitudine puritatis suae et tegit eorum hoc imperfectum. Cf. LW 25.277.
deed, therefore, is intrinsically meritorious. On the contrary, the saints themselves stand in constant need of the mercy of God in Christ; and this mercy is theirs to have, so long as they refuse to consent to the “sin” which—having been instructed by Ps. 143:2, Eccl. 7:20, 1 John 1:8, and Matt. 6:12—they do not refuse to confess before God.

Therefore, even when we work well, we sin, unless God through Christ covers this imperfection for us and does not impute it; thus it becomes venial through the mercy of the God who does not impute it, on account of faith and groaning for this imperfection, which is taken up in Christ.990

If Luther's conclusion marks a material advance beyond the combined force of Augustine’s ep. 167 and the theology of sin, grace, and mercy formulated with increasing clarity in the works against Julian—and I have given reasons to think that it does not—I submit that it is an “Augustinian” advance nonetheless.

7. Conclusion to Part II—Augustinus si anno gratiae 1515/16 viveret, gauderet Lutherum in Romanos legere?

In a Table-Talk from 1532, Luther declared that Augustine would have rejoiced to read Melanchthon’s recently published commentary on Romans: so great was the church father’s love for the truth that Master Philipp’s strong criticisms of his exegesis surely would not have prevailed over his joy at discovering the fullness of the truth of the gospel.991 By 1532, the differences between the evangelicals’ exegesis of St. Paul and Augustine's had in fact grown in both number and significance: but in 1515/16, substantial points of divergence distinguishing Luther from Augustine are not so easy

990 WA 56.289.18-21: Idcirco enim bene operando peccamus, nisi Deus per Christum nobis hoc imperfectum tegeret et non imputaret; fit ergo Veniale per misericordiam Dei non imputantis, propter fidem et gemitum pro ista imperfectione in Christo suscepta. Cf. LW 25.276.
991 WA Tr 1.130.1ff (#316, Summer/Fall 1532; cf. LW 54.44): De commentario Philippi in Rom. edito anno 32. dicebat: Augustinus si iam viveret, gauderet hunc librum legere, quamquam saepe eum perstrinxerit.
to discern. How might Augustine have responded to Luther’s reading of his anti-Pelagian theology circa 1515/16? Or for that matter, how might Augustine have taken to Luther’s own distinctive theology, deeply indebted as it was to Augustine’s but rich with other influences (the Bible, Bernard, Peter Lombard, Tauler, Biel, Staupitz, humanism, *experientia*, etc.) and thus necessarily advancing beyond it? Turning Luther’s 1532 saying at table into a question posed to his own early theology is a fascinating and massively intricate thought experiment; and it probably leads whoever dares ask it out of the realm of historical theology and into the sphere of confessional dogmatics. All the same, the question is irresistible: Had Augustine lived in 1515/16, would he have rejoiced to read Luther’s comments on Romans?

I think he would have, and I shall return to this question in the conclusion of this book. 992 But my argument in Part II has not concerned the hypothetical question

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992 At *civ. dei* 10.30 (Bett. 419), in the course of polemizing against Apuleius, Plotinus, and Porphyry, Augustine pauses to credit the last-named Platonist for daring to correct their common master in a particular point of the doctrine of metempsychosis: “We have here a Platonist departing from Plato, for the better. Here we have one who saw what his master failed to see; and though he was a disciple of a teacher of such eminence and authority, he did not shrink from correcting his teacher, because he preferred the truth to the man.” I think Luther was right to believe that Augustine too preferred the truth to the man, and to think that in playing the Porphyry to Augustine’s Plato in certain points of doctrine, he was himself carrying out the theological task in a profoundly Augustinian way. This formed a major plank in Luther’s defense of the catholicity of the Reformation. See esp. *On the Councils and the Church* Part I, where Luther appeals to several Augustinian texts (as well as Bernard) to demonstrate the patristic credentials for the *sola scriptura* Princip. For example, after appealing to *ep.* 82.1.3 to Jerome (PL 33.277: *solis eis Scripturarum libris qui iam canonici appellantur, didici hunc timorem honoremque deferre, ut nullum eorum auctorem scribendo aliquid errasse firmissime credam… Alios autem ita lego, ut quantalibet sanctitate doctrinaque praepollean, non ideo verum putem, quia ipsi ita sensorunt; sed quia mihi vel per illos auctores canonicos, vel probabilis ratione, quod a vero non abhorreat, persuadere potuerunt.*) and *trin.* 3.2 (*Noli meis litteris quasi Scripturis canonicos in servire, sed in illis et quod non credebas cum inveneris incunctanter crede, in istis autem quod certum non habebas nisi certum intellechis noli firme retinere*), Luther states: “St. Augustine must have felt many shortcomings in the fathers who preceded him, because he wants to be free, and to have all of them, including himself, subjected to the Holy Scriptures” (WA 50.524.12-525.6, LW 41.26). He then argues: “What should we do now? If we should take the churches back to the teaching and ways of the fathers and the councils, there stands St. Augustine to confuse us and thwart our plan because under no circumstances does he want reliance placed on the fathers, bishops, councils, be they as holy and learned as they can be,
whether Augustine would have rejoiced to read Luther, but the historical question whether Luther succeeded in his (as it happened, heart-gladdening) reading of Augustine. With *ep. 167*, the last Augustine citation in the scholia on Rom. 4:7, I rest my case that he did. In the scholia on Romans 7 and 4:7, Luther not only read Augustine with the highest esteem, but in the event did so with insight and skill. He understood Augustine’s anti-Pelagian theology well. But humanist though he was, he was no *Patristiker* in the modern sense (but neither, for that matter, was the great Erasmus). For one thing, he read Augustine’s works generally in light of the positions that the old *doctor gratiae* came to take in the works against Julian, which Luther believed to evince the real marrow of scriptural orthodoxy and thus to represent the “real” Augustine. But even more importantly, Luther read Augustine in order that he might read the Bible, pray, teach, preach, write, and pastor in the Church as a true theologian in his own right. In other words, like most readers of Augustine prior to quite recent developments in the history of thought, Luther read the great church father as a committed Christian and as one apprenticed to the catholic tradition of theology. This does mean that there are nuances, details, and developments in Augustine’s works which Luther—just like Fulgentius, Bernard, Peter Lombard, Thomas, Bradwardine, Rimini, Staupitz, Cranmer, Contarini, Peter Martyr, Calvin, Seripando, Davenant, Jansen, Pascal, Owen, *et al.*—overlooked, nuances which the

or on himself. Instead, he directs us to the Scripture. Outside of that, so he says, all is uncertain, lost, and in vain” (WA 50.525.31-6, LW 41.27). Cf. the 1539 *Preface to Luther’s German Writings*, WA 50.658.21-8, LW 34.285: Und folge hierin dem Exempel S. Augustin, der unter andern der erst und fast allein ist, der von aller Vetern und Heiligen Buecher wil ungefangen allein der heiligen Schrifft unterworffen sein, Und daruber kam in einen harten straus mit S. Hieronymo, der jm furwarff seiner Vorfaren buecher, Aber daran er sich nichts keret. Und hette man solchem Exempel S. Augustini gefolget, der Babst were kein Antichrist worden, und were das unzeliche unzifer, gewurerm und geschwuerm der Buecher nicht in die Kirchen komen und die Biblia wol auff der Cantzel blieben.
modern patristics scholar will carefully observe and account for. But perhaps this also means that there are aspects of Augustine’s theology and spirituality which Luther (and not only Luther) grasped with a depth of insight, sympathy, regard, and affection that the modern researcher, as a reader detached from the object of his study, cannot attain. If love sometimes diminishes the perspicuity of one’s sight, detachment—not to mention hostility—tends rather to blind it altogether than to purify it. Regard is not the enemy of historical knowledge, and Augustine urges that it is essential for real knowledge of the truth. Rigorous and ecclesial historical theology, combining aspects of both kinds of scientia, will best lead holy Church into wisdom when it is undertaken as a work of friendship, truth, and love in the midst of the sanctorum communio.

In the next and last Part III of the present work, I shall have first to set this positive conclusion to Part II in relation to the works of Luther’s maturity which I exposited in Part I, in order to assess what is new and what is old in his mature—and persistently Augustinian—dogmatics of holiness.
PART III

RECONSIDERATIONS
5. THE BIG PICTURE (1514—1546): CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LUTHER’S THEOLOGY OF HOLINESS

1. Can this chapter be written?

Is it advisable, or even possible, to give an account of the “big picture” of Luther’s theology that reckons seriously with the complexities of his development over time?

Thomas Kaufmann has written of the “theological problem” posed by that scholarly convention which contrasts the young Luther and the old. Not unusually, the problem began in Luther’s own lifetime: first Roman Catholic polemicists, then dissenting voices from within the churches of the Reformation looked for inconsistencies in Luther’s positions over time in order either to discredit him or, as in Agricola’s case, to defend their own doctrine as authentically “Lutheran.” Kaufmann documents how already in the 1520s, Luther began to distance aspects of his maturing theology from positions he himself had held not long before, or else—to put a more charitable construction on Luther’s recollections—to explain his real meaning and intention over against his opponents’ mistaken or malign misinterpretations of his teaching. Since for Luther the pursuit of doctrinal truth is a life and death struggle between the clear Word of Jesus Christ and the obfuscating lies of the Devil for the soul of the Church, this sometimes rose ex necessitate to the level of setting forth a “definitive” confession that would demarcate the genuine doctrina evangelii from deviant traditionalist, sacramentarian, and enthusiastic alternatives. Thus, for

994 Heiko A. Oberman, Luther: Man between God and the Devil.
example, the 1528 *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper* against Zwingli and Oecolampadius: which, despite Luther’s adamant and repeated protestations of finality, he then followed up first with the *Smalcald Articles* in 1536/7 and then, in 1544, the *Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament*. (Neither should the 1527 Visitation Articles, the 1529 Catechisms, nor Melanchthon’s work in 1530/1 be overlooked in this regard.) At other times, Luther offered authoritative advice about which of his works ought to be read in perpetuity. His canon varied: the Catechism, *de servo arbitrio*, the 1531 Galatians, or the 1537-40 sermons on John; or perhaps none of his works at all, just die Bibel and Master Philipp’s surpassing *Loci*. At still others, Luther narrated his gradual progress as a theologian out of the darkness of “the Pope” and into the light of the gospel—most famously, in the 1545 Preface to his Latin works:

> Above all else, I beg the sincere reader, and I beg for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, to read those things judiciously, yes, with great commiseration. May he be mindful of the fact that I was once a monk and an utterly mad papist when I began that cause... So you will find how, in these my earlier writings (*scriptis prioribus*), I conceded much and with great humility to the pope, which in my later writings and in these times (*posterioribus et istis temporibus*) I hold and execrate as the highest blasphemy and abomination. You will, therefore, pious reader, ascribe this error, or, as they slander, contradiction (*antilogiam*) to the time and to my inexperience. At first I was all alone and certainly most inept and unlearned in conducting such great affairs.996

Thus in several genres the interpretive paradigm of the “young” versus the “old” Luther originates in Luther’s own “Selbsthistorisierung.” Plainly, as such it is not a value-neutral periodization (though one might justly question whether there ever is such a thing) but an aid to reading Luther’s earlier works with discrimination in light

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996 WA 54.179.22-5, 34-6-180.2, cf. LW 34.328. The WA apparatus suggests that Luther has in mind the 1523 *de antilogii et contradictionibus Lutheri* of Johannes Fabri.
of what he later came to regard as sound catholic and evangelical doctrine. For the aged Luther engaged in identity formation via self-retrospection, “young” means immature, incomplete, undependable, and at times just plain wrong, while “old” means wise, orthodox, truthful, and trustworthy. The pastors and theologians who decisively shaped the processes of confessionalization in the Lutheran territories (c. 1530—80) looked to this “old Luther” as the premier Luther, and that quite specifically as a teacher of Christian doctrine. For them, “Dr. Luther, of holy and blessed memory” was a—probably the, if Lutherans are honest—doctor ecclesiae.997

Kaufmann argues that this pretty much held up through the ascendancy of Lutheran Orthodoxy in the seventeenth century. Confessional theologians showed little or no interest in a disjunction between the “two Luthers,” and in general evinced the same strong affinities for the old doctor that characterized the initial period of confessionalization. Eighteenth-century pietists like Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff and Gottfried Arnold first stirred interest in the religious experience of the “young Luther”

997 Kaufmann, “Der ’alte’ und er ’junge’ Luther,” 188-9. Perhaps the most important example of this is the preface to the Solid Declaration in the 1577/80 Formula of Concord. Its first sentence reads: “By the Almighty’s special grace and mercy the teaching of the chief articles of our Christian religion (which had been hideously obscured by human teaching and regulations under the papacy) was, through Dr. Luther of blessed and holy memory, purified and elucidated anew on the basis of God’s Word. He condemned the errors, abuses, and idolatry of the papacy” (BSELK, 1304, cf. BC, 524). Farther on: “We confess our adherence to the publicly recognized writings that have been regarded and used as creeds or common confessions in all the churches of the Augsburg Confession at all times: before the disputes arose among those who had confessed their adherence to the Augsburg Confession and during the time when, everywhere and in all articles of faith, they had remained in agreement with the pure teaching of the divine Word as Dr. Luther of blessed memory had explained it” (BSELK, 1308.29-10.5, BC, 526-7). Etc. Cf. A Sincere Admonition by Martin Luther to all Christians to Guard against Riot and Rebellion (1522), WA 8.685.4-11, LW 45.70-1: “First of all, I ask that men be silent about my name and call themselves not Lutherans, but Christians (nicht lutherisch, sondern Christen). What is Luther? After all, the teaching is not mine. Neither was I crucified for anyone. St. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 3, would not allow the Christians to call themselves Pauline or Petrine, but Christian (Paulisch oder Petersch, sodern Christen). How then could I, a poor stinking sack of maggots, come to have men call the children of Christ by my wretched name? Not so, dear friends; let us abolish all party names and call ourselves Christians, after him whose teaching we hold.”
as opposed to the right confession of the old. Then in the nineteenth century, this
divergence between Orthodoxy and Pietism/Enlightenment (via Kant and
Schleiermacher) evolved into two competing factions within the nascent field of
modern Lutherforschung. The orthodox Theodosius von Harnack (1862/86)
championed the search for “the whole Luther” and aimed to explain “the earlier
Luther on the basis of the later.”998 But I think Köstlin’s was probably the greatest
exposition of Luther’s theology which assumed the fundamental diachronic unity of
his thought and focused on the “old Luther” (and the Lectures on Genesis) in the
systematic presentation of his dogmatics. Later in that brilliant and fateful century,
Theodosius’ renowned son Adolf (1886/90) ridiculed his father’s work and instead
focused on what he called the “glorious episode” of 1519—23, when

... power (Macht) was given to Luther, as to none before, to form his Ego into
the spiritual/intellectual center-point of the nation (sein Ich zum geistigen
Mittelpunkt der Nation zu bilden) and to summon his century into the lists
armed with all weapons
to fight in autonomous reason’s battle against tradition, authority, medievalism, etc.999
(In addition to their plain silliness from the dogmatic standpoint, I find these
disturbing words to read after the great darkness of 1933-45.) Karl Holl, under the
influence of Wilhelm Dilthey’s ideas about the decisive formation of geniuses in their
youth, carried forward the junior Harnack’s emphasis on the epoch-making genius
and heroic individualism of the “young Luther” into the mainstream of twentieth-
century Luther scholarship. Relatedly, as James Stayer has shown, leading students of
Holl like Emmanuel Hirsch and Erich Vogelsang were to become ardent National

998 Kaufmann, “Der ‘alte’ und der ‘junge’ Luther,” 190-1, citing the senior Harnack’s Luthers
Theologie 1/12.
Socialists in the 1930s who undergirded their fascist politics with the religious icon of the “German Saviour” which the junior Harnack (himself a liberal) and Holl (a vigorous opponent of the Weimar Republic, who died in 1926) had paved the way for in their dispassionate works of history.\footnote{James M. Stayer, \textit{Martin Luther, German Saviour: German Evangelical Theological Factions and the Interpretation of Luther, 1917—33} (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000). Cf. Heiko A. Oberman, “The Nationalist Conscription of Martin Luther,” in idem, \textit{The Impact of the Reformation: Essays by Heiko A. Oberman} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 69-78; Thomas Kaufmann and Harry Oelke, eds., \textit{Evangelische Kirschenhistoriker im “Dritten Reich”} (Gütersloh, 2002).}

More recently, in a suggestive essay that echoes Köstlin’s great work, Gordon Rupp defends the “inner coherence and consistency” of Luther’s thought and lavishes effusive praise on the Genesis lectures (“one of the most impressive of [Luther’s] theological feats”).\footnote{Gordon Rupp, “Miles Emeritus? Continuity and Discontinuity between the Young and the Old Luther,” in \textit{Luther: Theologian for Catholics and Protestants}, ed. George Yule (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1985), 75-86, here 78 and 84.} Bernhard Lohse’s introduction to Luther’s theology proceeds from a similar conviction of consistency and continuity amidst traceable developments.\footnote{Lohse, \textit{Martin Luther’s Theology}, 8-10.} Other scholars, interested on historical and dogmatic grounds in the relatively uncharted territory of Luther’s \textit{Leben und Werk} after 1530 or so, have begun the project of understanding the old Reformer on his own terms.\footnote{H. G. Haile, \textit{Luther: An Experiment in Biography}; Brecht, \textit{The Preservation of the Church}; Mark U. Edwards, Jr., \textit{Luther’s Last Battles: Politics and Polemics, 1531-46} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Helmar Junghans, ed., \textit{Leben und Werk Martin Luthers von 1526 bis 1546}, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983); Heiko A. Oberman, “Teufelsdreck: Eschatology and Scatology in the ‘Old’ Luther,” \textit{The Impact of the Reformation}, 51-68; Graham White, \textit{Luther as Nominalist: A Study of the Logical Methods Used in Martin Luther’s Disputations in the Light of Their Medieval Background} (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola, 1994); Christine Helmer, \textit{The Trinity and Martin Luther}; Mickey L. Mattox, “Defender of the Most Holy Matriarchs”: \textit{Martin Luther’s Interpretation of the Women of Genesis in the Enarrationes in Genesin, 1535-45} (2003); Bielfeldt, Mattox, and Hinlicky, \textit{The Substance of Faith: Luther’s Doctrinal Theology for Today}; John A. Maxfield, \textit{Luther’s Lectures on Genesis and the Formation of Evangelical Identity} (Kirksville, Missouri: Truman State University Press, 2008).} But this is hardly a trend. In his compelling biography, Volker Leppin has reasserted that the real action is
in the young Luther and some of the most visible and influential Finnish studies gravitate to the earlier period when most of Luther’s explicit references to deification are to be found. The festivities of 2017 will probably serve to reinforce the instinctive modern bent toward the young innovator, the rebel, and his (we are told) epoch-making cry for “freedom.” For his part, Kaufmann sensibly urges that talk of the “young” and the “old” Luther, if used at all, ought to be tethered to a more objective chronological periodization (as in Brecht’s three-volume biography: 1483—1521, 1521—32, 1532—46). Because Luther’s thought progressed, sometimes but not always dramatically, over time, and because much if not all of his theology was occasioned by the tumultuous circumstances in which he lived and carried out his theological work, responsible historical research is wise to attend to the particular moment rather than the universal story, a text rather than der ganze Luther, the tree rather than the forest—or maybe just a single leaf. In process, the real “theological problem” lies in tracing the material shifts and developments in Luther’s theology over time, and in discerning the motives and occasions for the same.

1004 Volker Leppin, Martin Luther, 13.
1005 This is unfortunate, in that it makes the Finns’ important thesis too easy for their unsympathetic critics to reject as vorreformatorisch. For two important examples of this weak spot in the Finnish project, see Tuomo Mannermaa, “Why is Luther So Fascinating? Modern Finnish Luther Research,” in Braaten and Jenson, eds., Union with Christ, 1-20; and Simo Peura, Mehr als ein Mensch? There are, certainly, major exceptions. To pick only two works by the same theologians, consider Mannermaa’s school-founding Der im Glauben gegenwärtige Christus, which focuses on the 1531 Galatians; and Peura’s essay “Christ as Favor and Gift: The Challenge of Luther’s Understanding of Justification” (Union with Christ, 42-69), an exposition of the 1521 Antilatomus. Peura’s 1989/90 essay “Die Teilhabe an Christus bei Luther” is an interesting case in point: after a close and useful reading of Luther’s 1535 lectures on Gen. 1-3 (which I engaged in chapter 1 above) Peura turns mainly to texts from the 1510s and 20s to establish his arguments regarding participation in Christ and theosis. This gives the impression that these themes are not so readily available in the works of Luther’s maturity.
1006 Kaufmann, “Der ‘alte’ und er ‘junge’ Luther,” 193-4, 204-5. Kaufmann’s emphasis.
In this, Kaufmann breathes the spirit of the age; and I have no choice but to draw my breath from the same air as he, uneasy as I am with our collective and I suspect shortsighted rebound from the confident universalism of the prior age to the despairing particularism and perspectivalism of the present moment. For if the limitations of the present which we inhabit, and the distance that separates us from Luther (or any other historical person or event) in the past, means that “the whole Luther” is inaccessible to us—and this I take as granted—the more advanced historicists are wrong to think that there is no Luther “there” at all, i.e., that the real Luther is simply beyond our ken. For though God alone knows the whole truth of our stories, he does know it (1 Cor. 13:12), and he makes it known piece by broken piece to those who receive both the humility and the courage to ask for it. The Psalter, and Augustine’s Confessions, might have taught us this, and kept us from both our former arrogance and our present despair. By analogy, I believe something similar takes place in good historical-theological work: however imperfectly, Luther’s story, and the story of Luther’s theology, may be known and told. This work is at once an intellectual and spiritual discipline, and it requires not only technical skill but deep regard for the objective reality of an actual human person who lived in a past that the historical theologian can enter into only indirectly at best, through the medium of the textual data (and gifts they are) which attest in the present the reality or truth of that past.1007

1007 See Prof. David Steinmetz’s forthcoming essay on “Doing History as Theologians.” Cf. John Webster, Word and Church: Essays in Christian Dogmatics (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 1-6, whose reflections on theological reason in the sphere of dogmatics apply, mutatis mutandis, to historical theology as well. Webster argues that theology is “rational,” not in the modern post-Kantian sense of “a critical epistemological directive” but in the ancient sense of “an obedient following of given nature.” Therefore: “Christian theology is not a spontaneous undertaking, but ordered towards a positum.” In dogmatics, the positum to which the theologian responds is the sheer and “devastatingly eloquent” reality of God in Jesus Christ, attested in Holy Scripture (4). So
Above all, the historical theologian can read these texts with sobriety, humility, and patience; and the closer he or she sticks to the letter, the better he is positioned to listen in on conversations, debates, teachings, and kerygma that once possessed spirit and life.

This is hard to do well. It is much, much harder than if I were to set out (as many others have done before) to paint the “whole Luther” as a kind of hidden self-portrait, either as a guarantor of true doctrine or as a genius of religious experience. Like the questers for the historical Jesus whom Schweitzer unsettled, that picturesque path has often resulted in very clever books that explain eloquently what their authors saw reflected back to them in the water at the bottom of the wells they sought to drink from. Thus Ebeling’s Luther might more accurately be subtitled Einführung in meinen Denken, whereas Bayer’s introduction to Martin Luthers Theologie is qualified by the more forthright eine Vergegenwärtigung. The whole Luther, Luther’s dramatic story and complex theology “wie es eigentlich gewesen” (Ranke), is as such beyond our grasp; and a Luther conveniently useful to the intents and purposes of the “pure historian” is to a real extent unavoidable. Kaufmann is therefore right to insist that in the historical approach to the Reformer, there is no alternative to the work of painstakingly “reconstructing the afflicted, fissured, notoriously overworked figure of
a wrongly condemned heretic” from the material we have at hand and from the perspectives we can never quite overcome.\textsuperscript{1008} A salutary confession, that, which gives rise to a sobering methodology.

But even so: if confession and truth go hand-in-hand, might it not be possible to go about this arduous work with hope, thankfulness, and even joy, provided that the historical theologian—as a servant of Jesus Christ and his Church—repents? and therefore, prays? The penitent historical theologian forsakes fashionable “academic” despair and abandons the vain modern presumption of mastery; for these, as Augustine, Newman, Polanyi, and Newbigin knew, are but the two possible outcomes for little humans who try to know big things in a divine way (Gen. 3:5). His work is just one modulation of holy abiding in the \textit{sanctorum communio} through faith, hope, and love: one limited but vital form for invoking the presence of the Spirit of truth in order to serve in a truthful Church. The spiritual conditions for the possibility of knowing historical truth are not beyond the reach of confessing reason chastened and sanctified by grace (cf. John 3:27, Jas. 1:17). And if it must be confessed from the outset that “the big picture” of Luther’s (or Thomas’, or Augustine’s, etc.) life and theology cannot be represented with the flawless precision of a Baroque masterpiece, perhaps we will find that a more impressionistic portrait, precisely by refusing the pretension

\textsuperscript{1008} Kaufmann, “Der ‘alte’ und der ‘junge’ Luther,” 204-5. For a similar but more hopeful judgment, cf. Mickey Mattox, “Martin Luther’s Reception of Paul,” 107-8: “Luther should be thought of as a figure fully in historical motion, one who, to be sure, retained a certain Augustinian and yes, evangelical orientation throughout his career, but who nevertheless must be met ever and again as a man who remained an extraordinarily insightful and creative thinker, one who broke through to new insights throughout his career.” This being so, scholars must attend with patient care to “the flesh and blood of a man who continued ever to develop, one who remained a moving, and elusive, historical target.”
of mastery in representation, is able to attest the truth in a smaller and therefore more genuinely human way.

In this impressionistic chapter on the “big picture,” I wish to be clear from the start that I harbor no such pretentions of systematic mastery of and/or over Luther’s theology of holiness conceived as a whole. In right proportion, exercised within the spiritual context of repentance and hope, I am convinced of the usefulness of the skepticism of that historical mentalité and method which Kaufmann represents. But this new and in many respects welcome emphasis on the limits of our knowledge has limits of its own; and for both historical and dogmatic reasons it is necessary to give some account of how the pieces fit together into a whole. For we limit not only the scope, but the depth of our historical knowledge of Luther’s theology when we restrict our researches to only one period of his life, or one text from his pen, or one portion from one text. It is, of course, useful to know (for example) what Luther’s theology was like in 1515/16, and what sources influenced his teaching during that formative period. This is what I have attempted to describe in Part II of this book. But if this knowledge is not set in relation to where Luther eventually took his early theology, it remains incomplete: rather like intensively studying an acorn without bothering to take a look at the oak it grows into. On the other hand, if we study only the “exciting” and controversial Luther of the 1517—25 period, or (as I did in Part I) the later and to many readers less inspiring works of his last decade, our inattention to the roots of the Reformer’s subsequent theology in both his own prior stages of development and in

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the tradition of the Church will frustrate our knowledge of his ripening, mature, and last theology.

My object in the rest of this chapter is to overcome these pitfalls by following Rupp’s and Lohse’s leads and attending to both the continuities and the discontinuities that mark the development of Luther’s theology from the 1510s to his death in 1546. To this end I must also, as Kaufmann rightly asserts, attend to texts from the middle-period in Luther’s theological career, i.e., the 1520s. Of course, this requires that I select which texts to focus on: and such selection is itself an act of interpretation, which peculiarly exhibits my limitations both as a knower and as a sharer of historical knowledge. It would seem that try as we may, our limits just cannot be avoided! But I will do the best I can, and select short but rich excerpts from writings that are well known and generally regarded as representative of Luther’s theology in that decade of his life. After briefly demonstrating the fundamental “Augustinian” continuity of Luther’s dogmatics of sin, grace, and holiness in section 2, I will draw upon texts from spanning from 1518 to 1544 in section 3 in order to illumine the continuities and discontinuities that characterize the enduringly Augustinian Luther’s theology as it assumes its mature creational shape and its relentless focus on the glad tidings of the gospel. This will afford us a textually sound and historically rich understanding of what first the maturing (in the 1520s) and then the old Luther (in the 30s and 40s) set forth in his dogmatics of residual sin, free grace in Jesus Christ, and the renewing gift of the Holy Spirit as those realities intersect in the lives of saints sojourning toward the courts of God’s glory.

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1000 Kaufmann, “Der ‘alte’ und er ‘junge’ Luther,” 194.
As to dogmatics: if Luther is to be received in some real sense as a common teacher of the Church (Willebrands), it is a matter of first importance to establish what it is that he actually taught. Since the risen and exalted Jesus Christ, through his Word and Spirit, is himself the sole Teacher—capital “T”—of the Church (Deut. 18:15-20, Matt. 15:6-7, 17:5, 23:8-12, Luke 24:25-49, John 1:14-8, 1:33, 3:29-35, 5:39-40, 8:31-2, 14:26, 15:26, 16:13-15, 17:17, 1 Cor. 2:7-16, Col. 1:18, 1 John 2:20, 27, 4:1-6, Rev. 1:16), spiritual exegesis is the master of dogmatics. But in support of this magisterial and miraculous act of listening to the Bible, historical theology has its own role to play as a servant useful in all God’s house (2 Tim. 2:21). I happen to live in an age that worships the young and the sexy and forgets and marginalizes the old. In addition to being wicked, this is a way of great folly, for “gray hair is a crown of glory” (Prov. 16:31). As an historical reader of theologians in the tradition, I am just as interested in (say) the young Augustine’s Platonism as in the old Augustine’s theology of grace. But as a pastor and teacher in the Church, I listen to the old Augustine with a greater intension and a deeper regard. For he has acquired wisdom: past errors have been overcome, new light from the Scripture has shone forth, and Monica’s newly converted wild child, puffed up by the vanity of philosophy (1 Cor. 8:1-3, Col. 2:8), has grown up into a *Vater im Glauben* (Eph. 4:12-16). The same holds for the way I approach Thomas Aquinas or John Owen; the same for how I approach Luther. His early battles with the Devil, his breakthroughs into scriptural truth and evangelical freedom and joy, the drama of his controversy with the Papacy, the courage of his stand at Worms: these are all objects of great fascination to me, and of real importance for any historical account of Luther’s life and thought. But as a teacher of Christian doctrine in the
Church, I want to listen to the wise old pastor who has read and preached the Word of
God, counseled souls, taught theology, and engaged in controversy with demons and
men for some twenty or thirty years. What Rupp wrote of the Genesis lectures in
particular is true, I think, of his writings generally in the 1530s and 40s: into them
Luther “crammed the experience of a lifetime, and the great affirmations about the
gospel of grace.”\footnote{Rupp, “Miles Emeritus,” 84.}

Paying careful historical attention to how Luther gained this experience—and with it, \textit{sapientia experimentalis}—over the course of his career is essential for grasping the mature positions he eventually arrived at; and it is this old
Luther, not the young hero, who stands the best chance of sharing wisdom with the
catholic Church. Then, all that remains is the risky task of evaluating, on the basis of
Holy Scripture, whether what the old Doctor held and confessed as evangelical truth is
in fact true. But more on this in the conclusion to this book.

To begin, let us compare two sermons, one from 1514, the other from 1546.

\section*{2. The Basic “Augustinian” Continuity}

(i) In part II, I had occasion to refer briefly to Luther’s 1514 sermon “On the Feast of
Blessed Mary the Virgin, and about Congenital Sin.” From what I can gather, it marks
the first time Luther excerpts \textit{nupt. conc. 1.25.28} with approbation. In it, the thirty-one
year old preacher and theologian also incorporates two further direct references to
\textit{Divus/b. Augustinus}, which I will pass over here,\footnote{WA 4.692.15-17 and ll. 24-5.} as well as vital Augustinian
exegesis and doctrine that will occupy our attention shortly. In 1527, when Stephen
Roth prepared Luther’s \textit{Festpostille}, he incorporated a long excerpt from this early
treatment of the doctrine of original sin, baptism, and grace into the 8 Dec. sermon
“Am tage der Empfengknus Marie der mutter Gottes.” Roth entitled this excerpt, which he translated into German, “Von der Erbsünde” (pp. 282ff), and that does capture the central issue at stake in this fairly typical late medieval homily on the Feast of St. Mary’s Conception (typical apart from Thomists, that is). In the original sermon of 8 Dec. 1514, Luther quite logically devotes his first two paragraphs to the question *quid sit peccatum originale.* Formally, his thesis suggests the more optimistic theory of Anselm, Scotus, and Ockham; materially, however, it resonates with the mature Augustine and Peter Lombard. Perhaps, then, it reflects the mediating position held by Thomas and Biel: and if it does, it would seem Luther got the shape of his doctrine from the latter (*Coll. 2 d. 30 q. 2*), though he has now infused it with the Augustinian substance he has recently become acquainted with through his readings in the Amerbach *Opera* vol. 8. Thus Luther first states that “by the consensus of all the doctors, original sin is the lack of original righteousness (*carentia*

1014 See Heiko Oberman, *Harvest*, chapter 9: “Mariology,” 281-322. On p. 285, Oberman explains that in the aftermath of the disputed Council of Basel (1439), the Dominicans vociferously opposed its decision in favor of Scotus’ and Ockham’s (rather than Thomas’) Marian speculations and indeed “used such strong language that they did not refrain from calling it the synagogue of Satan, whose diabolic first-born was the definition of the Immaculate Conception.” Oberman cites I. de Turrecremata’s *Tractatus de veritate conceptionis* p. xiii c 18, ed. B. Spina et (De) Cataro OP (Romae, 1547), 276-7, as cited in Meinolf Mückshoff, “Die Mariologische Prädestination im Denken der Franziskanischen Theologie,” *Franziskanische Studien* 39 (1957), 457. In passing, I note the curiosity that leading Roman Catholic polemicists against the Reformation often saddle Scotus and Ockham with a great deal of responsibility for the late medieval disintegrations in intellectual and social life that paved the way for, and then fully matured within, the deleterious theology, ecclesiology, and social, economic, and political culture of sixteenth-century Protestantism en route to Modernity. It is ironic, I think, that Luther held the opinion finally dogmatized in 1854, and that (say) Brad Gregory evinces at once such little gratitude for John Duns Scotus’ decisive contribution to the development of that dogma and such little regard for the awkwardness posed by the fact of the Angelic Doctor’s opposition to the same. Cf. Acts 17:11, *ST* 1 q. 1 a. 8 ad. 2.
1015 WA 4.690.3-4: *Primo notandum erit, quid sit peccatum originale, ut intelligere queamus, quomodo diva virgo ab illo sit praeservata.*
originalis iustitiae) by which we have been punished through the first sin of Adam in paradise.” But our young Prediger then fleshes out his “consensus” position in the bracing terms of Augustine and Peter.

Adam was created just and holy by God, without any propensity (propensionem) toward evil, pride, anger, or libido, being ordered rather toward the good alone, to chastity, gentleness, charity, and humility. Then, it was as easy for him to preserve naturaliter all the virtues he had received in his creation as it is for us to see, hear, drink, eat, walk, touch, and speak now. Had Adam stood fast, he would have done all possible good works with pleasure and ease (voluptate et facilitate), free of all the labor, temptation, danger, sin, and difficulty we now experience. And he and Eve would have reproduced children of a like holy nature as themselves: original righteousness would have been the natural inheritance of the filii Adae. For in the unfallen sexual act, husband and wife would not have experienced an evil inclination toward one another (non sentiebant malam inclinationem adinvicem), such as all people now feel; and thus the God-ordained natural process for the propagation of the human race would have been free from the contagion of sin.

This is all preparatory for Luther’s discussion of the holy and spiritual conception of Jesus Christ by the Spirit in Mary the Virgin’s womb, and for his intricate speculations as to Mary’s own conception. But first, Luther sets forth what Oberman calls the “strict Augustinian” doctrine of the first sin and the ensuing vitiation of human nature by original or (as in this sermon’s title) “congenital” sin. When Adam ate from the forbidden Tree, “immediately that original righteousness

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1017 WA 4.690.4-6.
1018 WA 4.690.6-23.
perished and was corrupted.” Instead, all manner of evil desires (*omnia mala desyderia*) began to sprout up and grow (*pullulare et succrescere*) in just the opposite direction of Adam’s lost purity and holiness, viz., “toward pride, libido, *concupiscentiam carnis*, etc.” Now Adam had flesh “infected” by sin; and all the children generated from his fallen flesh are born with the same sin-sick flesh. Citing Gen. 6:5 and 8:21 and Matt. 15:19 and 12:34, Luther defines this congenital sin-disease in terms of an affective propensity toward evil (*ad malum propensus*). All sins come forth “from the evil inclination of our heart” (*ex mala inclinatione cordis nostri*), and “it is from the abundance of the heart (*ex abundantia cordis*) that the mouth speaks.” In short, original sin is nothing but “that malice and propensity for evil (*propensio mali*), which all people experience in themselves both toward pride and toward the anger and libido that is born in them.”

Thus far the robust Augustinian doctrine of original sin, as to both its definition as an evil affective infection corrupting the fallen human heart and its natural propagation through the fallen sexual act. In the next two paragraphs, Luther turns to present the good news of the remedy for the fallen sons and daughters of Adam; and atonement through Christ’s cross, the healing grace of the Good Samaritan, and *nupt. conc.* 1.25.28 stand at the center of this gospel. Here is the relevant portion of the sermon:

3. Now it has been established that no one will be saved unless he becomes pure from this sin. Therefore, God has given commandments by which he

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1019 WA 4.690.24-5.
1021 WA 4.691.1-8.
1022 WA 4.691.8-10: *Patet ergo, quod peccatum originale non sit aliud nisi tota illa malitia et propensio mali, quam sentiunt omnes homines in seipsis tam ad superbiam quam iram libidinemque natam.*
prohibits this sin, and he wills that we should be righteous again, just as Adam was before sin. Now, since we are not able to do them, he therefore handed over Christ to die for us [cf. Rom. 8:32], in order to set us free from this original sin and all the sins that come forth from it through Christ’s blood [cf. Rev. 1:5, Gal. 5:1, also Zech. 9:11, Matt. 26:28, Rom. 3:25, Eph. 1:7, Col. 1:20, Heb. 2:14-15, 9:12, 10:19, 13:20, 1 Pet. 1:18-19, 1 John 1:7, etc.]. To that end, he teaches us to believe in him and to pray for the grace (gratia) by which such sin is purged. Just as he says in the last chapter of Mark: “He who believes and is baptized” (16:16). For when we are baptized and believe, we receive grace (gratiam), which fights against the evil propensity (propensionem) in us and takes the birth-sin by storm. Then good and upright desires (desyderia) toward submission and chastity, toward gentleness, begin; and good works come about. Thus it is written in John 15[:5]: “I am the vine, you are the branches etc.” And to this end he has given the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer, so that we may be exercised daily in faith and prayer, always praying for his grace (gratiam) against the birth-sin. For as long as we live, we are not without the birth-sin, evil desires (desyderia) always remain in us, which incite us toward sins, against which we must fight. Just as Peter teaches, saying at 1 Pet. 2[:11]: “Beloved, I adjure you etc.” Thus it [sc. grace] must always be exercised and prayed for, even unto death: then indeed the whole flesh is put to death.

4. Since it is said that original sin is forgiven in baptism, how then do you say that it remains and that one has to fight with it? The divine Augustine responds: “The birth-sin is indeed forgiven in baptism, not so that it longer is, but so that it is not imputed.” Just as that Samaritan in Luke chapter 10[:33-5], when he poured oil and wine into the wounds of the half-dead man, he didn’t heal him immediately, but set him in the inn. So through baptism all sins are taken away, but in this way, that God does not impute: but not, then, that they no longer exist, rather they are going to be healed and they have begun to be healed. But in death, absolutely all sins will be healed. Therefore, as often as you feel that you are being moved toward impatience, pride, libido and other evils, so often you must know that you are feeling the fatal wounds of the birth-guilt, which the devil inflicted in Adam’s flesh (whence your own flesh was propagated); and right away you must consider how you ought to resist and pray the Lord Jesus, so that this sin will not prevail over you, but will be conquered through his own grace (gratiam). Thus Paul says, Gal 5[:17]: “The flesh lusts against the spirit etc.” Rom. 13[:14]: “And make no provision for the flesh, in its desires (desideriis).” For he who thus fights with his own vices (vitiis)—to such a one, not only is it not imputed by God, however much he lives in it, but he will even merit the crown [cf. 1 Cor. 9:24-7, 2 Tim. 4:8, Rev. 2:10], and he will be set free from them [cf. Rom. 7:24, 8:21]. But they who do not fight, but consent (consentiunt) to them, they return completely into the birth-sin and become such as they were before baptism.  

This will, I hope, sound familiar, for its substance is virtually identical to the
“Augustinian” theology of sin, mercy, grace, and holiness that I exposited in Part II on
the basis of Luther’s Romans lectures. And not just the substance! The same words
and phrases, the familiar verses from St. Paul, Christus Samaritanus with his healing
oil and wine, and last but not least, the excerpt from nupt. conc. 1.25.28: one would be
hard pressed to differentiate between the presentation of these doctrines in this festal
sermon from Dec. 1514 and that of the lectures on Rom. 4:7 in late 1515 and 7:17 in early
1516.\footnote{See esp. WA 56.272.3-273.2, LW 25.260 (on Rom. 4:7), WA 56.351.11-22, LW 25.340 (on Rom. 7:17).} I offer here a brief recapitulation.

The original, birth, or congenital “sin” inherited from Adam is a bundle of
wretched desires or vices, an irresistible propensity in the unregenerate person toward
evil, “flesh.” God in his law forbids this root sin, and all the actual sins that proceed therefrom; he summons Adam’s children to become pure and righteous just as Adam had been before the disaster of his rebellion. But because of the vitiation of human nature in Adam, no one can keep God’s law by his own resources. No one can purify his own heart. Seeing that we could not lift a finger to save ourselves, God in his great love and mercy handed over Christ to die for us (cf. Eph. 2:1-5, Rom. 5:6-11, 8:32).

Through his blood, we are set free from all sin, original and actual: in this instance, Luther seems to have the guilt and curse of sin especially in mind, for his language evokes the nexus of atonement/redemption through Christ’s cross and the freedom of the blood-washed redeemed in texts like Rev. 1:5, Rom. 3:24-28, Gal. 2:15—5:1, etc. The gift of redemption in Christ is received through faith and baptism; and in addition to being set free from the bondage of guilt (cf. Col. 2:14), the baptized receive the “grace” that fights against their inherited evil desires and indeed takes them by storm. Here, “gratia” means gratia sanans: the gift of union with Christ (John 15:5), the Samaritan who heals the sin-wounds of the man left for dead beside the road through the bestowal of those good and upright desyderia which renovate the heart itself and begin to reverse its inveterate bent toward evil. Now, the Christian, as 1 Pet. 2:11 and Rom. 13:14 make clear, has a role to play in this ongoing healing process. Once the grace of regeneration has brought the dead to life, the reborn person must—and may—fight against the deadly desires that vexatiously remain as his “flesh” right up to the point of death. The main way of carrying on the fight against one’s residual flesh is by begging for increased supplies of healing grace; enlivened, renovated, and empowered by this grace, he is able as “spirit” to refuse consent to the vicious desires that constitute his
“flesh” (Gal. 5:17). Whenever he feels himself being moved (moveri) by evil desire, he must redouble his efforts, fight back, and pray. So long as he keeps up this holy war against his own old self, God in his free mercy declines to count against him the sinful desires that remain within him: thus Luther’s constant interpretation and use of nupt. conc. 1.25.28 from 1514 on. If, however, the Christian consents (consentire) to the desires he still experiences or feels (sentire) in his flesh—then, the erstwhile believer becomes one with his flesh, returns completely to his birth-sin, forfeits God’s gifts of mercy and healing grace in Christ, and becomes just as he was before his baptism.

In sum: atonement through Christ’s blood; healing grace to renovate the deepest affections of the heart; the merciful non-imputation of the affective “sin” that remains after baptism; the contingent nature of this mercy, which depends upon the condition that the graced person refuses to consent to the residual sin that makes this mercy needful;—these are the characteristic elements of Luther’s Augustinian theology of holiness c. 1514—16.

(2) Now let us turn to the last sermon Luther ever preached in Wittenberg. On 17 Jan. 1546, Luther was sixty-two years old: a little over thirty-one years had passed since he had preached de peccato gentilitio on the feast of St. Mary’s conception in late 1514. In the interim, Luder had become Luther; the Church in Europe had bitterly divided over the teaching of this “drunken German,” as Pope Leo X is reputed to have called him; the Reformer had made his stand at Worms, and Leo had excommunicated him as an obstinate heretic; all manner of theological breakthroughs, writings, conflicts, etc. had taken place; the peasants had revolted and the princes had slaughtered them; brother Martin had married sister Katharina as a work of corporal
mercy, grown to love her deeply, and had six children, two of whom had died; first his
spiritual father, Staupitz, and then Hans Luder had died too; Luther had broken with
Karlstadt, Erasmus, Oecolampadius, Zwingli, Agricola, and Bucer; Leo, Adrian VI, and
Clement VII had come and gone, and Paul III sat in St. Peter’s chair; the emaciated
monk had grown into the fat doctor; the long-anticipated general council, which
Luther had called for in 1520, had just gotten under way at Trent in Dec. 1545; und so
weiter. In short, almost everything had changed about Luther’s life, and not a little
had changed in his theology too. Nonetheless, as his swansong in the Stadtkirche
shows, the baseline content of Luther’s dogmatics of sin, grace, and holiness had
remained virtually the same.

The epistle reading for the day (the second Sunday after Epiphany) is Rom.
12:3ff, but Luther will eventually focus on v. 6 and the analogia fidei. First, he
summarizes Rom. 1—15 in short order. It is St. Paul’s custom to teach the great chief
articles of Christian doctrine first, that is, “about the law, sin, faith, how one is to
become righteous before God and live eternally.”1025 This teaching concerns faith in
Christ, viz. how “we are redeemed through the blood and death of the Son of God,”1026
and it occupies the Apostle in Rom. 1—11. Then Paul turns, in Rom. 12—15, to instruct
“the good tree” brought about through this faith regarding the good fruits and works it
ought to bring forth (Matt. 7:17).1027 He does this because he does not want us to be

1025 WA 51.123.8-10 [A], cf. LW 51.372.
1026 WA 51.124.8 [A], cf. LW 51.372.
1027 WA 51.124.1-3 [A], cf. LW 51.372.
*falsi Christiani*, but real and true believers in Christ. Since God’s Son has redeemed us by his blood,

... we ought to consider that we should live in a godly way, as those who do not belong in this transitory life, but in heavenly life [cf. 2 Cor. 4:17-18, Phil. 3:20]. After faith [cf. Gal. 3:23-5], we should not become the world, as he says a little before: “Be renewed in the sense of your mind” (Rom. 12:2). “Amongst yourselves” (cf. Phil. 2:5), that is, who are Christians.

Take to heart God’s great and free mercies in Christ crucified (Rom. 12:1), and 

*Renovamini sensu mentis* (Rom. 12:2). This is the right order to be observed in the pursuit of true gospel holiness, as opposed to the cultivation of merely moral virtue. But St. Paul, and the dying Luther as his expositor, is keen to urge the imperativeness of this renewal as it is concretely evidenced in good works. These Paul describes in great detail from Rom. 12:3 forward, first with respect to the corporate life of the baptismal Church (Rom. 12:3-21), then in regards to the Christians’ relation to the magistrate (Rom. 13). Finally, he admonishes the strong in faith to bear with the weak (Rom. 14—15:7). These, proclaims Luther, are the works of real Christians: that is, the good fruits brought forth by those who are being renewed in the depths of their souls, since Jesus Christ has enriched them (2 Cor. 8:9) and transferred them from the dark kingdom of the devil and of this world into his own kingdom or Church (Col. 1:13-14).

But for Luther the incorrigible Augustinian, those whom the Father has adopted and redeemed by his Son and begun to renew by his Spirit, in short those

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1028 WA 51.124.4-6 [A], cf. LW 51.372.
1030 WA 51.124.10-125.1 [A], LW 51.372.
who nicht gehoren in dis vergenglich leben, sed in coelestem vitam, are still flesh-bearing pilgrims in exile from their true home, and they are incessantly tempted by the devil, the world, and their own sinful desires to re-naturalize here below. (As a rule, reports of Luther’s “this-worldliness” have been greatly exaggerated\textsuperscript{1031} and, I suspect relatedly, the profoundly evangelisch Bonhoeffer has been much

\textsuperscript{1031} For example, Vítor Westhelle chides Philipp Jakob Spener’s appeals to Luther’s theology in his \textit{Pia Desideria}: “...it certainly misses Luther’s worldliness.” See his essay “Luther’s Theologia Crucis,” \textit{OHMLT}, 157, n. 1. This is all the more telling, since the contrast between Spener’s pietistic otherworldliness and Luther’s evangelical worldliness is self-evident to Westhelle and requires no demonstration. Scott Hendrix critiques “an overemphasis on Luther’s worldliness” and writes commendably of the Reformer’s “guestly spirituality” in “Martin Luther’s Reformation of Spirituality,” in Timothy J. Wengert, ed., \textit{Harvesting Martin Luther’s Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 240-60, here 258. Though this is a step in the right direction, I am not convinced that Hendrix’s useful exposition does full justice to the starkly otherworldly orientation of Luther’s Genesis “Saints” in particular. For in the 1530s and 40s, even as he ubiquitously stresses the obedience of that faith which works through love in ecclesia, oeconomia, politia—the Dreiständelehre—the old Luther very much continues to reflect the “stark orientation toward the otherworldly” that Berndt Hamm calls the “dominant mentality” of late medieval Europe (\textit{The Reformation of Faith}, 17). See e.g. the description of St. Abraham’s obedient, detached, married, monastic, and exilic existence in the 1537 lecture on Gen. 12:1, WA 42.441.15-19, 35-442.7, LW 2.252-3: Monachi hanc magnam laudem putant, quod relinquant omnia, cum tamen plus inveniant in monasteriis, quam in domo parentum reliquerunt, Sed quem mihi cum hoc Monacho Abraha conferes, qui deserit patriam, cognationem, fundos paternos, domum et omnia, et simpliciter sequitur in exilium vocantem Deum? ... Quid igitur inquiris, nonne David rex erat, et Dominus terrae, quae Abrahamae semini promissa fuit? Denique ipse Abraham, etsi exul fuit, tamen fuit in re lauta, et habuit maximas opes: vera quidem haec sunt, ac si non haberent. Sicut Epistola ad Hebraeos testatur: ‘utenes mundo tanquam non utentes’ [1 Cor. 7:31]. Ad hunc modum omnibus temporibus in mundo vivunt, occupantur quidem Oeconomicis et civilibus studiis, gubernant Respublicas et familias aedificant, colunt agros, exercent mercaturam, aut manuarias operas, et tamen agnoscent se cum patribus esse exules et hospites: utuntur enim mundo tanquam diversorio, ex quo emigrandum brevi sit, non apponunt cor ad huius vitae negocia, sed tanquam sinistra manu corporalia curant, dextram levant sursum ad aeternam patriam: ac si quando accidit, ut turbetur aliquid, vel in Republica vel Oeconomic, nihil aut parum moventur. Satis enim est eis, utqunque in hoc diversorio tractentur, quod nonus aeternas mansiones a filio Dei paratas.” Note Luther’s references to Ps. 39:12, 1 Cor. 7:31, Heb. 11, and John 14:1. In his 1537 sermon on John 14:1-4, the Reformer’s “otherworldliness” is again on full display. See WA 45.483-88, LW 24.25-31, e.g. WA 45.484.36-485.6, cf. LW 24.27: “If you have nothing here (hie), you will surely receive richly there (dort).” For God still has such a great store that he can give every one of you a hundred dwellings for one. Therefore retain your courage, and do not hesitate to surrender what the world can take away from you. The dwellings of life are far more spacious than the dwelling of death. Even if they throw you in a dungeon or prison here (hie), or drive you away, do not let it bother you. These are houses that belong to the world; but you look upon another home, a home which you have to look forward to which you will receive and possess there (dort).”
The reborn of God, the redeemed in Christ, have eternal life now by faith (John 1:12-13, 3:3-8, 13-18, 36, 5:24-5, Rom. 3:21—6:23). They experience the advance of this new life through the Spirit’s operations described in Rom. 8, and they do the good works of love set forth in Rom. 12—15. But even so, in this life they never surpass the angefochtene holiness of the flesh-fighting, law-loving saint confessed so frankly by St. Paul in Rom. 7. At sixty-two, the irascible and corpulent Doctor, weary of countless battles and eager to depart and be with Christ (Phil. 1:21-3), knew this better than ever before. To describe this vision of Christian life and holiness one last time for his difficult, unruly, and largely impenitent flock in Wittenberg, Luther turned again to the Augustinian theology he had set out in the same pulpit three decades earlier:

After baptism, much from the old Adam remains. As has often been said, sin was completely forgiven in baptism, but they are not yet completely pure (peccatum in baptismo prorsus remissum, sed nondum sind gantz rein). As in the parable about the Samaritan, who carried the man wounded by the robbers into the inn. For he did not do this in such a way, that he healed him at once, but he bound up his wounds, pouring (infundens) etc. The man who fell among the robbers had received two injuries. Everything that he had, they took from him, they robbed him, they wounded him, so that he was half-dead and had to have died if the Samaritan had not come. Adam has fallen among murderers and has propagated sin into us all: but Christ the Samaritan has come, who binds us up and carries us into the Church and heals us. Thus we are under the Physician’s care, for sin indeed has been forgiven, but it has not yet been purged out, neither are we pure (peccatum quidem gar remissum, sed nondum expurgatum nec rein). If the Spirit does not rule a man, he becomes rotten again. But he must purify the wounds daily. So this life, in this world, is a hospital. Sin indeed is forgiven, but not yet healed (peccatum quidem remissum, sed nondum heil).

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1033 WA 51.125.1-14 [A], cf. LW 51.373-: Post baptismum remanet multum de veteri Adam. Saepe dictum peccatum in baptismo prorsus remissum, sed nondum sind gantz rein. Ut in parabola de Samaritano, qui portavit vulneratum a Latronibus in hospitium. Nam in so nicht an, das er in flags heil machet,
Here Luther sallies forth into his exposition of Rom. 12:6 and the way “the devil’s bride, reason, the lovely whore, comes in and wants to be wise,” cooks up conceited schwermerey, and draws people away from the true faith into heresy (in this paragraph, that of the south German and Swiss Reformed in mysteriis; later in the sermon, Rome).1034 The problem with heresy is that it is not an obvious sin like fornication: “Other gross sins are seen, but no one is able to judge reason.”1035 So it is useful to explain how to fight against the subtle sin of heresy (which is born of tinkering with God’s Word, in order to make it fit with what one takes to be reasonable or pious apart from the revelation of that Word) by analogy to how one fights against “the sin of sexual lust, which everybody understands.”1036 Therefore, the experienced Pfarrer fleshes out the logic of postbaptismal evil desire, graced non-consent, and forgiveness one last time for the Wittenbergers in familiar Augustinian terms:

An objection arises: I am a Christian nevertheless? Well stated. Take heed, take heed to yourself. Sin has not yet been purely healed, purged out (nondum peccatum pure sanatum, expurgatum). As I say to a young man, to a girl: That you would not feel the sickness of your father and mother (fuelest patris, matris krankeit)—that is impossible. If you follow lust, you will become a whoremonger, a fornicator. There the Gospel admonishes you: “Don’t do it! Don’t follow your concupiscientiae!” [Ecclus. 18:30]. Sin indeed has been forgiven and purged, now see to it that you remain in grace (modo ut maneas in gratia). In this way the leftover misfortune in the flesh has been forgiven, but

\[\text{sed verband im seine wunden infundens &c. Is, qui inciderat in latrones, hat ij schaden empfangen. Alles, was er hat, haben sie im genomen, Spoliarunt, vulnerarunt, das er halb tod war, hette muessen sterben, nisi Samaritanus venisset. Adam ist unter die Morder gefallen et in nos omnes propagavit peccatum, nisi venisset Christus Samaritanus, qui verband und tregt uns in Ecclesiam, heilet an uns. Sic sumus sub Medico, peccatum quidem gar remissum, sed nondum expurgatum nec rein. Si spiritus non regieret hominem, wuerde er wider faul. Sed mus die wunden teglich reinigen. Sic vita haec in hac terra ist ein Spital, peccatum quidem remissum, sed nondum heil.}\]

1034 WA 51.125.14-126.10 [A], cf. LW 51.373-4.
1035 WA 126.10 [A], cf. LW 51.374
1036 WA 127.5-6 [A], cf. LW 51.374
not yet purely swept out. Rather the filthy relics are to be purged, like that man who fell among the robbers. I speak about sexual lust, a gross evil which all people feel (sentiunt). If a believer does not follow God’s admonition, to stand against the Devil who tempts him [1 Pet. 5:8-9], sin has not been forgiven for him (ei non est peccatum remissum).1037

Again, what’s true of sexual sin holds for that “more hideous harlotry” which is idolatry: and how the prophets raged against “der Abgotterey... der schonen hur”!1038

But that is the stuff of Reformation polemics; let us attend to the mature Augustinian theology of sin, grace, and holiness still being preached by the oldest Luther. Much from, though not all of, the old Adam remains in the Christian saint after baptism: and these base reliquiae are rightly called “sin.” This residual sin is a deadly affective disease, and its malignant operations, suffered by the patient soul in the form of evil desires, feelings, and impulses, cannot be entirely done away with in this life. For the wounds of the holy soul are not yet wholly healed. But even though the saint is not yet fully healed of the cancer of sin, all his sins, including the remnants of Adam’s sin that still infect him, have been completely forgiven in baptism. For Christus Samaritanus has taken him up and brought him into the Church; and in this hospital Christus Medicus has begun to heal his wounded soul. So long as Christ’s redeemed patient continues in his care, all is well, and the hope of full healing is well founded. His sins, and the bits of Adam’s sin still in him, have been blotted out, and what remains will be healed in time, for the Spirit binds up and purifies his wounds.


1038 WA 127.5.-128.3 [A], cf. LW 51.374-5.
daily. But the patient, for all his suffering, is not merely a passive recipient of Christ’s (and the Spirit’s) gracious ministrations in the Church. He must see to it that he remains in Christ’s grace; and, healed and empowered by Christ’s grace and Spirit, he does in fact abide in Christ by refusing to consent to the residual sinful desires he inherited from Adam. True, he cannot help but “feel” the persistent effects of his congenital disease. But the Gospel—not the law!—admonishes him to refuse to follow his feelings, with the promise that if he resists them God’s grace in Christ covers the “sin” that necessitates this resistance, and the threat that if he gives way to his evil and pathological desires the forgiveness he once enjoyed will vanish. Luther’s allusion to Ecclus. 18:30, a central text (as we saw in Part II) in Augustine’s explication of his theory of consent but by 1546 no longer part of Luther’s canon, is especially striking in this connection: as I argued in chapter 2, for the mature Luther non-consent is (from the human perspective, not *sub specie praedestinationis aeternae*) the absolute *conditio sine qua non* for abiding in a state of grace and gift. *Maneas in gratia! Thue es nicht! Folge nicht concupiscentiae!* So far the old and dying doctor *justificationis gratui* cætam, brimming with imperatives which he believed both could be kept by Christ’s grace and Spirit and had to be kept in order to continue in that grace.

Set alongside one another, the two sermons vividly demonstrate the basic continuity that marks Luther’s “Augustinian” dogmatics of sin, grace, and holiness from 1514—16 to his death in 1546. Residual sin from Adam; grace in Christ the Samaritan; healing in the Church by the Spirit, ordered toward increasing purity of heart; the utter needfulness of refusing consent to the evil affective pathology that still infects and affects Christ’s convalescent saints; the merciful gift of forgiveness/non-
imputation, the main object of which is this evil desire in the saints; the contingency of this mercy upon the refusal of consent to sinful desire (or else upon its renewal in repentance): these are the characteristic, fundamental, and consistent components of Augustine’s theology of sin, grace, and sanctification in the 420s, and of Luther’s from 1514 to 1546.

Now let us see about some of the noteworthy developments in that stretch of time, bearing in mind that the shifts which take place in Luther’s theology occur within the context of this core and enduring Augustinian doctrine.

3. Continuities and Discontinuities: Luther’s creedal and evangelical Augustinianism

My goal in this section and the next is to render systematisch an account of how the embryonic dogmatics of holiness examined in Part II relates in continuity-and-discontinuity to the mature dogmatics set forth in Part I. Of course, my selection of the word “embryonic” signals my interest in the gradual development of Luther’s theology over time. But here, I am not in the hunt for the dates, causes, circumstances, and effects of breakthroughs, let alone “the” Durchbruch or Wende to “Reformation theology.” (One index of just how hard that distinguished project is, is the realization that if Luther’s supposed turn from Augustine’s gratia sanans to the Reformer’s promissio gratiae is the standard for determining who does and does not count as an evangelical theologian, Luther in 1546 himself fairs rather poorly.) Rather, I hope simply to offer an historically sensitive dogmatic description of select points where the maturing and mature Luther’s theology either upholds, advances, or departs from positions held in 1514—16. For two reasons, I join “continuity-and-discontinuity” with dashes and an “and.” There is, first, the fundamental “Augustinian” continuity
established above in section 2. This ought to inform, and moderate, asseverations of Luther's novelty; it urges us to look for the ways his fresh exegetical and spiritual insights cohere with the traditions he inherited, traditions which profoundly and permanently shaped his theology. In the second place, it is one my basic operating assumptions that the real discontinuities apparent in the thought of some major thinkers in the tradition (e.g., Plato, Augustine, Thomas, Luther, Barth) are thrown into the greatest relief when set in relation to the continuities that persist amidst, and in some sense enable, the often more perceptible shifts, modifications, or developments in one's thought. This is true even of the great and dramatic reversals that sometimes take place, for example of Luther against Biel or Barth against Schleiermacher. For the old teacher continues to shape the renegade pupil precisely as the latter rebels against the former. I am looking for discontinuities-in-continuity, for nova in vetere and for vetera in novo.

3.1. From sin, grace, and mercy (c. 1514—16) to sin, gift, and grace (1521—46)

To begin, let us consider the terms that oriented my study of Luther's mature dogmatics in Part I: residual indwelling sin (peccatum/caro), the grace of free forgiveness and justification in Christ (gratia), and the gift of new life and progressive renewal in holiness by the Spirit (donum). Rolf Schäfer has argued that Luther’s use of “gratia” as a quasi-technical term for the wrath-removing favor and pardon of God in Christ, and “donum” for the nature-renewing power of Christ present within the believer by the Spirit, dates to the Antilatomus of June 1521. He was probably convinced of the usefulness of this distinction by Melanchthon, who had borrowed it from Erasmus’ 1516 Novum Instrumentum. In the winter 1515/16 lecture on Rom. 5:15
(gratia Dei et donum in gratia, etc.), which Luther wrote prior to receiving his copy of Erasmus’ work later on in 1516, he identifies “grace” and “gift” as equivalent terms used to name the one ipsa iustitia gratis donata per Christum;¹⁰³⁹ and as recently as the lectures on Galatians published in 1519, after Luther became familiar with Erasmus’ distinction, he had argued against it.¹⁰⁴⁰ But Master Philipp’s writings (and personal conversation?) in 1520/1 seem to have won Luther over to it. Grace and gift, in their proper distinction and inseparable interrelation, factor prominently in the Antilatomus,¹⁰⁴¹ and when the Galatians lectures were republished in 1523, Luther deleted his earlier critical remarks.¹⁰⁴² As I trust chapter 2 has demonstrated, Luther


¹⁰⁴⁰ On Gal. 3:7, WA 2.511.11-21, LW 27.252: Dicit enim, spiritum tributum et virtutes factas ex auditu fidei, et hoc probat, quia sic Abrahæ fides est reputata ad iusticiam. Ergo ne fidem reputari ad iusticiam est spiritum accipere? Aut ergo nihil facit, aut accipere spiritum et reputari ad iusticiam idem erit. Quod et verum est, et ideo refertur, ne divina reputatio extra deum nihil esse putetur, ut sunt, quibus verbum Apostoli ‘gratia’ magis favorem quam donum significari putatur. Nam favente et reputante deo vere accipitur spiritus, donum et gratia. Alloquin ab aeterno gratia fuit et intra deum manet, si tantummodo favorem significat, eo quo in hominibus modo favor est. Deus enim sicut diligat reipsa, non verbo tantum, ita et favet re præsente, non tantum verbo.


¹⁰⁴² Rolf Schäfer, “Melanchthon’s Interpretation of Romans 5.15: His Departure from the Augustinian Concept of Grace Compared to Luther’s,” in Timothy J. Wengert and M. Patrick Graham, eds., Philip Melanchthon (1497—1560) and the Commentary (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 79-104, here esp. 82-5, 95-104.
runs with the distinction-inrelation of *gratia et donum*, *Gnade und Gabe* for the rest of his life. Once these terms are cemented in his mind as a kind of shorthand for describing the trinitarian work of redemption (which seems to be the case already in 1521) “grace” and “gift” take on a life of their own, rarely tethered to their original provenance in *Rom. 5:15* but always charged with the creedal gospel of God’s free gifts of forgiveness in Christ and new life in the Spirit.

Luther’s famous “Preface to Romans” in the 1522 *Septembertestament* is one of the instances where both the roots of the distinction in Erasmus’ and Melanchthon’s exegesis of *Rom. 5:15* and Luther’s own mature dogmatics are on full display:

Between grace and gift (*Gnade vnd gabe*) there is this difference: grace really means God’s graciousness or favor (*hulde oder gunst*), which he bears in himself toward us, out of which he was pleased to pour Christ and the Spirit with his gifts (*seynen gaben*) into us. This becomes clear from the fifth chapter, for there he says *gnad vnd gabe ynn Christo etc.* (*Rom. 5:15*). Though now the gifts and the Spirit (*die gaben vnd der geyst*) increase in us every day, they are not yet perfect, since evil lusts and sin still remain in us which struggle against the spirit, as he says in [Rom.] 7 and Gal. 5, and as the feud between the woman’s seed and the serpent’s seed is foretold in Gen. 3[:15]. Even so, grace (*gnade*) does so much that we are reckoned wholly and fully justified before God, since his grace is not divided and parceled out, as are the gifts (*die gaben*). Rather, he takes us wholly and indeed into favor (*ynn die hulde*), for the sake of Christ our intercessor and mediator; and for that reason, the gifts (*die gaben*) have begun in us.1043

*Gnade*, *hulde*, and *gunst* refer to God’s kind favor toward sinners in and for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ, the Mediator. *Gabe* means Christ, the Holy Spirit, and his gifts,

1043 WA DB 7.8.10-22: *Gnade vnd gabe sind des vnterscheyds, das gnade eygentlich heyst, Gottis hulde oder gunst, die er zu vns tregt bey sich selbs, aus welcher er geneygt wirt, Christum, den geyst mit seynen gaben ynn vns zu gissen, wie das aus dem fünfften Capitel klar wirt, da er spricht, gnad vnd gabe ynn Christo etce. Ob nu wol die gaben vnd der geyst ynn vns teglich zu nehmen vnd noch nicht volkomen sind, das also noch bose luste vnd sund ynn vns vberbleyben, wilche wider den geyst streytten, wie er sagt am .7. Gala. 5 vnd wie Gen. 3. versprochen ist der hadder zwisschen des weybs samen vnd der schlangen samen, So thut doch die gnade so viel, das wyr gantz vnd fur voll rechtfertig fur Gott gerechnet werden, denn seyne gnade teylet vnd stucket sich nicht, wie die gaben thun, sondern nympt vns gantz vnd gar auff ynn die hulde, vmb Christus vnsers fursprechers vnd mittelers willen, vnd vmb das ynn vns die gaben angefangen sind. Cf. LW 35.369-70.
poured (gissen) into the heart by the Father in order to renovate it into the new “spirit” who struggles against the old flesh and its desires. The gifts have not yet been perfected in the saints, owing to their residual sinfulness; St. Paul’s battle against his old self, described in Rom. 7 and Gal. 5, attests this well. But seeing as the outpoured (or “infused”) gifts originate in the gracious kindness of God, the remaining flaws in the saints’ renewal do not hinder them from being taken entirely into his favor. For God’s grace is so strong that the really but imperfectly holy are already reckoned as wholly and fully justified in his sight for the sake of Jesus Christ, their Serpent-Crusher, Mediator, and Intercessor. Thus far Luther’s theology of residual sin, grace and justification in Christ, and daily increasing renewal in holiness by the Spirit’s outpoured gifts c. 1522, replete with the rich creedal and evangelical substance and stated in the same dogmatic shorthand which will crop up so plentifully in the 1530s and 40s. Held alongside the dogmatics of sin, grace, and gift set forth in the Smalcald Articles or On the Councils and the Church, the thirty-eight year old Reformer’s pronouncements on the same loci appear to be virtually indistinguishable.

How does this mature dogmatics, blossoming in 1521/22 and bearing rich fruit in the later years, relate to the younger professor’s exegetical ruminations (and Augustinian appropriations) in 1514—16? I think Schäfer is right to locate a terminological shift in the vicinity of early 1521. But that does not, in itself,
demonstrate a shift in doctrinal substance. It may be that in early summer 1521, Luther first recognized just how useful Melanchthon’s Erasmian verba could be for describing the dogmatic res he had already held and taught for some time. This is not at all to downplay the significance of Melanchthon—or Erasmus—for the formation of Luther’s maturing theology in the early 1520s: as an Anglican, I don’t have a dog in that old Lutheran fight. Terminological precision and clarity is a great boon for all intellectual work, and especially for the Church’s dogmatics, and I think Melanchthon helped Luther in this regard. But it was Dr. Luther who helped Master Philipp arrive at a profound grasp of the res magna evangelii, not the other way around. His deepest convictions regarding the sin-sickness inherited from Adam, the gifts of forgiveness, regeneration, and healing that are in Christ, and the merciful non-reckoning of residual sin that God grants for Christ’s sake had assumed their mature shape and substance by 1516: Augustine, St. David, Paul, John, and Staupitz, probably in that order of importance, had led Luther to them a few years before the prodigious “Greek” assumed his professorship in Wittenberg in fall 1518.

On several occasions in Part II, I suggested that the young Luther’s Augustinian dogmatics of sin, grace, and holiness anticipates in embryonic fashion what we find full-grown in the works of his maturity. Prior to the terminological input of Melanchthon, Luther generally stuck closer to the Augustinian litterae in describing how “sin,” gratia sanans, non-consent, and non-imputation relate to one another in the Christian life. After that input, Luther still holds essentially the same theological judgments, but now in part uses different theological words and concepts to describe
them.\textsuperscript{1045} In part only, I say, for two reasons: first, because Luther’s language about “sin” does not really advance beyond what he wrote in 1515/16; second, since right up to 1546, the oldest Luther can still preach the gospel using the same Augustinian words, scripture verses, and images that he had adopted \textit{ex ipso Augustino} half a lifetime before. But let us attend now to the developments.

First, in general Augustine’s renovating “grace” evolves into the mature Luther’s renovating “gift.” But as it does so, the reality of vitiated nature’s spiritual regeneration in the saints, and of their ongoing renovation, restoration, healing, sanctification, or “justification” (\textit{Gerechtmachung}) by Christ and the Spirit, remains unaltered in its substance despite the shift in the terms Luther uses to describe this great gift. For the Lutheran \textit{donum Spiritus} is really the old Augustinian \textit{gratia sanans} passing under another name. This is why it is highly misleading to speak, as Schäfer does, of Luther’s (or Melanchthon’s, for that matter) “departure from the Augustinian concept of grace.”\textsuperscript{1046} For, on the one hand, Luther invests his Melanchthonian concept of the Spirit’s sanctifying “\textit{donum}” with the same dogmatic content that the earlier “Augustinian” \textit{gratia infusa et sanans} had possessed; and on the other hand, Augustine himself uses the word “gift” to describe the Spirit’s gracious bestowal of renovating spiritual delight in the soul: \textit{delectatio non litterae, sed spiritus donum est}.\textsuperscript{1047} (Furthermore, it will be remembered that the scriptural language of the Spirit as God’s “gift” plays a decisive role in Augustine’s trinitarian pneumatology: see, e.g.,


\textsuperscript{1046} This is his subtitle: “Melanchthon’s Interpretation of Romans 5.15: His Departure from the Augustinian Concept of Grace Compared to Luther’s.”

\textsuperscript{1047} \textit{sp. litt.} 15.26, CSEL 60.180.22-181.4, WSA I/23.161. See above, chapter 2 section 2.2.1.
In 1520, Luther is still defending *gratia infusa* in public disputation. In May 1521, commenting on Ps. 68:24 in the Wartburg, he defines “die gnade” as “der glauben in unß, die... nit auß uns noch von uns, sondern von got uns geben ist.” In the next month’s *Antilatomus*, “grace” and “gift” are distinguished in the Melanchthonian manner for the first time. But Luther continues to speak of the “gift” being “infused” into the soul (*Donum etiam infusum est*), and he ascribes to it the same healing, renovating, and sin-fighting operations that infused “grace” had once performed. Moreover, the old Luther sometimes uses “grace” in the earlier manner if it suits his purpose as exegete or preacher. It is not, then, altogether helpful to first enumerate instances of *gratia/Gnade* in works after 1521 (or 1530, in Lowell Green’s case) which have to do with the abolition of God’s wrath through his mercy and Christ’s blood, and then contrast them to the spiritual transformation that the same term names in the earlier period. For from 1514 to 1546, Luther consistently

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1048 WA 6.85-98; e.g., 85.7, 20-1: 2. *Fides acquisita sine infusa nihil est, infusa sine acquisita est omnia... 11. Fides... infusa est spiritus vitae. 12. Etiam sola fides infusa satis est ad iustificationem impii.*

1049 From “Der lxvij Psalm von dem Ostertag, Hymelfart, unnd Pfingstag,” WA 8.28.20-22. Luther is commenting on Ps. 68:28, “O gott gepeutt deyner kraf ft, o gott bekrefftige das du ynn unß gewirckt hast.” Here are ll. 17-25: *Bißher ist beschrieben alß was Christus gethan hat durch sich und seyn Apostelln. Nu hinfurt bit er, das alßo bestehen mug und erhalten werde, wie es anfangenn ist, davor auch alle Apostell, bänderlich Paulus, sorgfeltig geweßen sind. Und die krafft ist die gnade oder der glawben in unß, die heyset gottis krafft, darumb das sie nit auß uns noch von uns, sondern von got uns geben ist, da durch wir kreffting seyn zu allem guttem, widder allis boesse, drumb spricht er ‘wilche du yn uns wirckist’, das ist, durch welche krafft du ynn und durch uns wirckist, die selbe ist Christus krafft und doch vom vatter gepotten wirt. Cf. WA 8.34.13-15 on v. 34: *ßo thut alßo: gebt yhm die krafft, bekennet, das nit ever werck, sondern seyne gnade euch kreffting, gerecht und selig mache. I am thankful to Schäfer for pointing me in the direction of these texts (“Melanchthon’s Interpretation of Romans 5.15,” p. 98, n. 97).*


1051 See, e.g., the 29 Sept./6 Oct. 1537 sermon on John 1:17. In it, Luther develops a law/“grace” contrast much in keeping with Augustine’s *sp. litt.* The law reveals sin, but doesn’t have the power to save us from it or rid us of it; it is a mirror in which we may perceive the hard truth that we lack righteousness and life. This is salutary, for it impels us to cry: “Oh come, Lord Jesus Christ, and help us and give us grace (*gnad*), so that we may be able to do what the law demands from us.” WA 46.661.22-38, cf. LW 22.143-4.
upholds his hard-earned Augustinian doctrine of affective “sin” in the saints, and his no less Augustinian doctrine of the progressive renewal of their sinful affections by inner healing “grace.” But after 1521, “donum” is the word he more typically uses to describe the free gift of this renewal through the Spirit’s operations in the heart. The shift from one Augustinian (and broadly scholastic) *verbum* to another in order the better to describe the Spirit’s gift of growth in holiness does not in fact signal any material alteration on Luther’s part in his understanding of the dogmatic and spiritual *res* which either term can ably attest.¹⁰⁵²

How does the mature Luther’s “*gratia*” relate to his earlier theology? Once again, I think that a deep substantial continuity obtains beneath the surface-level (though not superficial) shift in words. Of course, as I just discussed, “grace” often refers to *gratia sanans* for the young Luther and for the old Augustine; and what the young Augustinian Luther often named as God’s mercy, forgiveness, and/or non-imputation, the older Luther often calls “*gratia*” or “*Gnade*.” But two points need to be made in this regard. First, and quite evidently, the mature Luther continues to speak the older Augustinian (and Staupitzian) language of *misericordia*, *remissio*, and *non-imputatio/reputatio*. Second, and less well-known, Augustine by no means limits himself to one way of talking about “grace.” To the contrary, in the works against Pelagius and Julian c. 411/12—30, “*gratia*” consistently unfolds as a rich and threefold gift comprising forgiveness, spiritual renewal, and bodily resurrection that reaches in its effects from sacramental initiation in baptism to the final glory of the Last Day.¹⁰⁵³

¹⁰⁵² Hence Calvin’s *duplex gratia*, or Owen’s retrieval of habitual sanctifying “grace.”

¹⁰⁵³ For example: (i) Pecc. mer. 2.27.44, CSEL 60.115, WSA I/23.106: *adextendere ac rememississe debemus tantummodo peccatorum omnium plenam perfectamque remissionem baptismo fieri, hominis uero*
scholarship, and it handicaps those few intrepid souls who try to grasp the nature of
the Reformers’ project of Augustinian ressourcement. In, for example, one of Timothy
Wengert’s learned articles, he cites a 1545 introduction to Augustine’s life and theology
by Melanchthon to this effect:

... [Augustine] everywhere called the Churches back to the true doctrine of the
Prophets and the Apostles, showed how horribly Pelagius erred by denying the
sin of the origin, demonstrated the distinction between the law and the Gospel,
taught that sins are forgiven freely because of God’s Son, not because of our
worthiness, and affirmed that the Gospel is the ministry of the Spirit, and that
the Holy Spirit is received by faith...\textsuperscript{1055}

—then gently chides his hero’s “glowing (Lutheranized) review of the divine
Augustine,” which forced him to explain “what might seem to be flaws in the good
bishop’s work.”\textsuperscript{1056} On the next page, Wengert notes Melanchthon’s admission that
Augustine “often states that human beings are justified through grace (\textit{iustificari
hominis per gratiam}), when the Holy Spirit is given who enkindles love in our
hearts.”\textsuperscript{1057} This is part of the picture for evangelical theology, but not the whole;
accordingly, Melanchthon shores up Augustine’s sanative theology of justification
through infused charity (favored by Johannes Brenz and Andreas Osiander) with a
concise statement of the genuine Lutheran forensic doctrine. In process, Philipp
asserts that

... elsewhere, Augustine distinctly and openly affirmed that remission of sins is
received by faith and that we are pronounced righteous because of the

\textsuperscript{1055} From Philipp’s preface to an edition of Augustine’s \textit{sp. litt.} published by Joseph Klug in 1545. CR
5.805: \textit{Sed tunc adversus Pelagii venena excitatus est divinitus Augustinus, qui Ecclesias passim ad
veram doctrinam Prophetarum et Apostolorum revocavit, ostendit, horribiliter errare Pelagium
negantem peccatum originis, monstravit discriminem legis et Evangelii, docuit, remitti peccata gratis
propter filium dei, non propter dignitatem nostrum, adfirmat, Evangelium esse ministerium spiritus,
ac fide accipi spiritum sanctum}. I have revised Wengert’s translation slightly.
\textsuperscript{1056} Timothy J. Wengert, “Philip Melanchthon and Augustine of Hippo,” \textit{LQ} 22 (2008): 249-67, here
259.
\textsuperscript{1057} CR 5.806.
Mediator. And by this faith, minds which in acknowledging God’s wrath are terrified of and flee God should be consoled. For there are many extant statements of his that inculcate this view without any ambiguity.\textsuperscript{1058}

Melanchthon might say this, Wengert wryly observes, but he does so without specifying “where the elsewhere in Augustine might be.”\textsuperscript{1059} In fact, the historical Augustine never said anything quite that Lutheran; and Wengert therefore proceeds to meditate on the peculiar Wittenberg manner of traditioning Augustine in light of the gospel.\textsuperscript{1060}

Here, I think, is a prime case of an unavoidable misreading of a Reformer that a prior misreading of Augustine has set up. For Melanchthon was actually right, partly. If Augustine does not hold a doctrine of declarative righteousness—and Melanchthon’s suggestion to the contrary is surely an unhistorical Lutheranization—the good bishop does indeed frequently inculcate his doctrine of undeserved forgiveness, freely granted for the sake of Jesus Christ and his blood, bestowed upon faith in baptism by the Spirit,\textsuperscript{1061} and flowing from the font of God’s free mercy and election. It is the first part, enduring in its effects,\textsuperscript{1062} of his theology of threefold baptismal grace. In addition to the texts exposited in Part II and cited in footnote 1053 just above, I would like to draw attention here to a luminous paragraph in the 421

\textsuperscript{1058} CR 5.807.
\textsuperscript{1059} Wengert, “Philip Melanchthon and Augustine of Hippo,” 260.
\textsuperscript{1060} Wengert, “Philip Melanchthon and Augustine of Hippo,” 261-3.
\textsuperscript{1061} Note, for example, the role of Rom. 5:1 at the head of Augustine’s summary of his theology of threefold grace at c. Iul. op. imp. 6.8, CSEL 85/2.306, WSA I/25.615f: \textit{Nunc ergo nostra iustitia est, ut iustificati per fidem pacem habeamus ad deum, contra carnis vero concupiscientiam nos oppugnantem per ipsius dei auxilium repugnante spiritu dimicemus. Non est ergo huius vitiae iustitia vitium non habere, sed vitia non eis consentiendo minuere eisque resistendo temperanter et iuste et pie vivere, nullum autem cui resistamus habere vitium posterioris est vitae, quae bene gestae praesentis est praesumum, sanatione nostrae, non... alienae separatione naturae.}
“handbook” in doctrine and piety which Augustine wrote for Laurentius. In *ench.* 10.33, the old bishop is instructing his junior pupil in the saving work of Jesus Christ.

The human race, by nature children of wrath and bound by a just damnation, stand in need of a Mediator or Reconciler to rescue them from God’s wrath—his just judgment—against their sins. Jesus Christ, the Mediator, placates this wrath by the oblation of his unique sacrifice on the cross. Thus, in St. Paul’s words taken up here by Augustine, we who once were enemies have been reconciled to God by the death of his Son (Rom. 5:10): and having been reconciled by his blood, we will also be saved from God’s wrath through him (Rom. 5:9). This bloody theology of redemption by Christ’s death is the objective salvation-historical *sine qua non* for the first part of Augustine’s threefold grace: the removal of condemnation by the forgiveness of sins.

Augustine immediately follows up this summary of his theology of reconciliation with a complex and rich sentence that unites the salvation of sinners from God’s wrath through the Mediator (viz., grace’s first part) with their adoption by the Spirit as God’s children (in effect, its second):

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1063 *ench.* 10.33, BA 9.164-66: *Tenebatur itaque justa damnatione genus humanum, et omnes erant irae filii... in hac ira cum essent homines per originale peccatum, tanto gravius et perniciosius, quanto majora vel plura insuper addiderant, necessarius erat mediator, hoc est reconciliator, qui hanc iram sacrificii singularis, cujus umbrae omnia sacrificia Legis et Prophetarum, oblatione placaret. Unde dicit Apostolus: Si enim, cum inimici essemus, reconciliati sumus Deo per mortem Filii ejus, multo magis reconciliati nunc in sanguine ejus salvi erimus ab ira per ipsum.

1064 See J. Rivière, “Notes Complémentaires. 27. Économie de la Rédemption,” BA 9 (1947), 370: for Augustine, “toute l’économie de la Rédemption se déroule essentiellement dans l’ordre objectif. Ce n’est pas de convertir le pécheur qu’il s’agit... mais de lui obtenir au préalable, en fléchissant la justice divine irritée contre lui, la possibilité de son pardon, et c’est à quoi tend essentiellement la médiation du Fils de Dieu. Rien, d’ailleurs, n’est plus ferme dans la doctrine d’Augustin que cette valeur du sacrifice de la croix.” Cf. *c. Iul. op. imp.* II.172, CSEL 85/1.291, WSA I/25.239f, on Rom 5.9: *de reconciliatione agebat, quam tu quoque per mediatorem Christum ex inimicitiiis quas cum deo habuimus, factam esse concedis.*
Therefore: that we are reconciled to God through the Mediator and receive the Holy Spirit, that from enemies we may be made sons—for as many as are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God [Rom. 8:14]—this is the grace (gratia) of God through Jesus Christ our Lord [Rom. 7:25].

Only the very first part of this sentence relates directly to what Augustine has been treating in the previous section, but he characteristically moves quickly from the work of the Son on the cross to its effects in the redeemed, namely, that through the Mediator, by the reception of his Spirit, the filii irae become filii dei. Reconciliation to God by Jesus’ wrath-placating blood, and—thereby—the transformation of the children of wrath into the children of God by the Spirit: this, says Augustine, is the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 7:25). In short, Wengert is wrong to smile at what he assumes to be Melanchthon’s patristic naïveté. But more to my present purpose: Augustine knew well indeed the gospel of redemption and free forgiveness through Christ’s shed blood which the mature Luther sometimes encapsulates in the word “gratia.” And as an astute reader of the Bible, it came as naturally to him to describe this forgiveness-through-redemption as the gift of God’s “grace” as it would for his better-known pupil in the 1520s—40s.

In sum: sin, “grace,” and mercy in 1515/16 become sin, gift, and grace from 1521 on. The first term (with its near associates concupiscence, flesh, desire, etc.) remains unaltered in form and content over the course of Luther’s career after his “Augustinian” turn in 1514/15. Healing grace becomes renovating “gift” in June 1521, retaining its Augustinian substance under another name. Forgiveness or non-imputation through God’s mercy in Christ, while often spoken of in the old terms, is

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1065 Ench. 10.33, BA 9.166: Quod ergo per mediatorem reconciliamus Deo, et accipimus Spiritum sanctum, ut ex inimicis efficiamur filii : Quotquot enim Spiritu Dei aguntur, hi filii sunt Dei : haec est gratia Dei per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum.
frequently designated by the quasi-technical term “grace.” Right up to 1546, these are the dogmatic and spiritual realities which together form an inseparable threefold cord that cannot be broken in this life without falling away from God’s grace in Christ. This, I think, argues for profound substantial continuity in Luther’s theology of sin, grace, and holiness even after the important terminological shift in June 1521, and it fits well with the striking Augustinian parallels between the early and the late sermons which I exposited above in section 2.

I turn now to suggest points of greater substantial discontinuity and development in Luther’s theology over the course of his career. In the main, they have to do not with his theology of renewal in holiness through the Spirit’s donum—which remains virtually unaltered to his death—but rather with his deepening scriptural understanding of the gratia that is in Christ, that is to say, of the grace, forgiveness, and/or “righteousness” which the Father freely lavishes (for Christ’s sake) upon those whom the Spirit is making new. At the outset, I again emphasize the impressionistic character of my theses in this regard. Without departing from solid footing in actual texts grasped in their historical context, I do intend to paint with a bigger brush for the remainder of this chapter.

3.2. The joyful gospel of Christ’s victory for us

One of the main reasons Luther’s mature theology remains so compelling for the Church today is its relentless focus on the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, and his complete triumph over all the enemies of his people, chiefly sin, death, the devil, and hell. In the next two subsections 3.3-4, I will flesh this out further with respect to the great themes of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness and the
promise/faith nexus. For the time being, we need to tarry with the gospel itself and, therefore, with the irrepressible joy it enkindles in the depths of the believing heart and in the work of the verus theologus. This evangelical joy is, I think, a real Charakteristikum of the Reformer’s mature theology. When Luther, commenting on Gal. 1:4 in 1531/5, declares that St. Paul “sounds forth nothing besides Christ” (Nihil aliud sonat quam Christum), it is hard not to think that he is speaking more than a little autobiographically. Likewise on Gal. 1:1:

Paul burns so ardently here that he isn’t able to wait till he comes to the issue itself, but immediately in the very title of his letter he erupts and says what he has in his heart. For in this letter, he wants to speak about the righteousness of faith, and to defend it and to overthrow the law and the righteousness of works. He is full of these thoughts, and his mouth speaks out of this marvelous and inexhaustible abundance of the most excellent wisdom and of the thought of Christ in the heart [Matt. 12:34]. This flame, this huge burning of the heart, cannot be hidden, neither can it let him be silent [Jer. 20:9]. Therefore he says: ’And through God the Father, who raised him from the dead’ (Gal. 1:1).…

St. Paul’s—and Luther’s—resolute and glad obsession with Jesus Christ and his gospel springs forth from the very nature of that gospel as the proclamation of Christ’s decisive triumph. On the next page of the Galaterbrief, Luther explains:

Thus straightaway, at the first word, the whole matter which he intends in this letter erupts for Paul. For he has to do with the resurrection of Christ, who rose again for our righteousness, Rom. 4[:25]. His victory, therefore, is the victory over the law, sin, our flesh, the world, death, hell, and all evils, and he has given this his victory to us. To be sure, these tyrants and enemies of ours accuse and terrify us. Nevertheless, they are not able to drive us into despair and condemn us. For Christ, having been raised from the dead, is the Victor over them, and he is our righteousness. Therefore thanks be to God, who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:57), Amen.

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1066 WA 40/1.82.31-2 [B], cf. LW 26.32.
1067 WA 40/1.64.14-21 [B], cf. LW 26.21.
1068 WA 40/1.65.10-18 [B], cf. LW 26.21-2.
So Luther on Paul in 1531/5, in just the first pages of that most joyful book which helped John Bunyan to begin to trust in “grace abounding to the chief of sinners.” The question is: did the young Luther c. 1514—16 have this joy in Christ the Victor?

There are hints of it. In a remarkable 1514 sermon on “The Foundation of Theology,” Luther speaks of Christ’s substitutionary penal death in a manner hard to distinguish from that of his later years. Christ did and suffered nothing for himself, but for us, indeed for me; and when I cling to him through faith, “so great is the grace given to me” that his obedience, passion, righteousness, and works become my very own.\(^{1069}\) In 1515/16, a number of texts in the Romans lectures evince the great exchange between Christ and the sinner, the co-relativity of the promise and faith, and the imputation of \textit{iustitia Christi aliena}.\(^{1070}\) And in April 1516, there is Luther’s rightly

\(^{1069}\) WA 4.652.3-20: \textit{Sic enim Christus dicit: ‘Ego sum ostium: qui per me ingressus fuerit, pascua inveniet’. Item: ‘Ego sum via, veritas et vita’. Item: ‘Et nemo venit ad me, nisi pater traxerit eum’, und das geschiihet per verbi praedicationem. Und das gehet alffo zcu, Das herz sall hangen In Christo, desperemus de nostris, trosten uns allein des, quia satisfecit pro peccatis nostris, quia passio sua et poena, sanguinis effusio et mors, das gildt mir, Ehr ist sunst ein her des hymmels, allein das ehr sein ehe tregtt, ut vitaremus omnia nostra. Voluntatem dedit, voluntatem reddamus. Sic esse oportet. ‘Jha wo findt man den meister?’ Christus est magister, ipse vitam habet et perdit, gibbt das leben vor den todtt, perdit etiam famam, iustitiam und alffo will schoner wegyke, ut esset in eo virtutum thesaurus, omnia reliquit, ut amaret patrem, iussus est trucidari ut sceleustus homo, wie ein boffter bube. Unde dixit: ‘Vide, pater, haec omnia facta, ut quanto te amore prosequar videas’. Item omnia perdit, etiam matrem, klebt und hengkt gar bloff in patris voluntate. Ille voluntatem Dei nobis reddidit, qui et solus servavit. Nuh hatt ers fur sich nichtt gethan, sed pro nobis. Ergo cum in Christo haereo, sua obiedentia, passio, iustitia opera mea sunt per fidem. Et tanta est mihi data gratia, ut per fidem omnes Christi actiones mihi propriae sint.\(^{1070}\) For \textit{iustitia aliena} in 1515, see, e.g., (1) the scholion on Rom. 1:1, WA 56.158.10-14, LW 25.136: \textit{Deus enim nos non per domesticam, Sed per extraneam Iustitiam et sapientiam vult saluare, Non que veniat et nascatur ex nobis, Sed que aliiunde veniat in nos, Non que in terra nostra oritur, Sed que de celo venit. Igitur omnino Externa et aliena Iustitia oportet erudiri.} (2) On Rom. 2:15, WA 56.204.15-28, LW 25.188: \textit{Cor enim credentis in Christum, si reprehenderit eum et accusauerit eum contra eum testificans de malo opere, Mox auertit se et ad Christum conuertit dicique: ‘Hic autem satisfecit, hic lustus est, hic mea defensio, hic pro me mortuus est, hic suum iustitiam meam fecit et meum peccatum suum fecit. Quod si peccatum meum suum fecit, iam ego illud non habeo et sum liber. Si autem iustitiam suam meam fecit, iam Lustus ego sum eadem Iustitia, qua ille. Peccatum autem meum illum non potest absorbere, Sed absorbetur in abysso iustitiæ eius infinita, Cum sit ipse Deus benedictus in sæcula. Ac sic ‘Deus maior est corde nostro’. Maior est defensor quam accusator, etiam in infinitum. Deus defensor, cor accusator. Quæ proportio? Sic, Sic, etiam Sic! ‘Quis accusabit
cherished letter to his Augustinian confrère, Georg Spenlein: “Learn Christ and him crucified [1 Cor. 2:2]... Beware of aspiring to so great a purity that you do not wish to be looked upon as a sinner, or to be one; for Christ dwells only in sinners.” In short, the substance of the gospel of Jesus Christ as Luther himself would later come to confess and preach it is in place by 1514. And I would suggest that any Protestant Augustinian who wishes to deny this needs first to think carefully about whether he or she can do so while maintaining the catholicity of his confession with any real historical seriousness. For if Luther is not preaching the gospel in 1514—16, then Augustine never did at all.

That said, when such powerful adumbrations of Luther’s mature evangelical teaching as these come to the fore in mid 1510s, my impression is that they do so as


That bitter pill which John Maxfield, Luther’s Lectures on Genesis, 74-7, 115, 139-40, appears willing to swallow.
pretty isolated beams of sunlight momentarily breaking through a dark and ominous sky. In hindsight, the evangelical theologian (I refer to conviction, not denomination) can switch the metaphor slightly and see these shafts of light as the dawning of the sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2). But brooding brother Martin, convinced as he was that *fiducia* was a sign of spiritual presumption and that insecurity was conducive to humility, did not enjoy the luxury of this hindsight. In this early monastic period, already firmly “Augustinian” but not yet fully “evangelical,” the overall tenor of Luther’s writings is one of penitential sorrow; and his driving concern seems to be less “How can I find a gracious God?” as “How can I live faithfully as a humble monk, and teach others to do the same?” Luther of course knew, believed, and taught that Jesus Christ, the Son of God and David, had won the victory for us by his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension. But then, so did all major patristic and medieval theologians: and lecturing on Gen. 28:12 in 1542, e.g., Luther would still single out not just Augustine and Ambrose but Bernard and Bonaventure too as especially praiseworthy for their glad delight in the incarnation of God’s Son.

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1073 Bayer (*Promissio*, 140-2) acknowledges these texts to some extent but in the end argues them away, the better to fit his thesis of a *Wende* in summer 1518. I prefer to let the texts stand, and to posit instead an inconsistency in Luther’s theology as it develops (rather like a Christian saint) in fits and starts.

1074 See esp. the 1515 scholion on Rom. 1:3-4, e.g., WA 56.168.33-169.3: *Igitur Epilogemus. Evangelium est de filio suo facto ex semine Dauid, manifestato nunc filio Dei in potestate omnium per spiritum. sanctum datum ex resurrectione mortuorum, Ihesu Christo domino nostro. Ecce sic habes, Quod Evangelium est sermo de Christo filio Dei primum humiliato et postea glorificato per spiritum sanctum.* Cf. LW 25.148.

1075 WA 43.580.38-581.4, 11-13: *haec est illa ingens et inenerrabilis dignitas humani generis, quam nemo potest eloqui, quod Deus hac miranda coniunctione copulavit sibi humanam naturam. Ambrosius et inprimis Bernardus admodum delectantur hoc loco prae omnibus dulcissimo, et opere isto incarnationis, et quidem recte et pie. Nam talis delectatio erit gaudium supra omne gaudium, et beatitudo aeterna, cum illae vere intuebimur nostram carmen per omnia similem nobis, et in summo pariter et infimo loco. Haec enim omnia fecit pro nobis, descendit ad inferos, et ascendit ad coelos... Bernardus valde dilexit incarnationem Christi, item Bonaventura, quos duos maxime laudo propter...*
Furthermore, by 1515/16 Luther clearly believed that the victory of Christ, and its spoils in righteousness, was given freely to faith: as did Augustine and arguably a few other fathers like the author of the *Epistle to Diognetus*, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Hilary, Marius Victorinus, Ambrosiaster, Ambrose, Prosper, Leo, and Fulgentius, together with at least some medieval catholics (not least Bernard, and some luminaries in the remarkable succession of teachers in the O.E.S.A. unearthed by Müller, Stakemeier, Zumkeller, Trapp, Oberman, and Saak). But as I argued in Part II, in 1515/16 Luther does not yet consistently hold that the believer is free to trust that he possesses the gift of Christ’s victorious righteousness by faith. On the contrary: if the devout monk thinks he is righteous, that is a surefire proof that he isn’t. Whereas during the 1518—20 period, Luther begins to teach that apart from this assured resting of the heart in Christ, there is no real faith at all. On this point, farther in section 3.4.

For my present purposes, I want to relay—with minimal comment—a handful of texts from Luther’s middle and late career which illustrate the joyful gospel of Christ’s victory with admirable clarity. (1) In the first place, a classic “Finnish” excerpt from the 1520 *Freedom of the Christian*:

... faith bodily unites (*copulat*) the soul with Christ as a bride with the bridegroom. By this mystery (as the Apostle teaches) Christ and the soul are made one flesh (Eph. 5:29-32, Gen. 2:24). For if they are one flesh, and there is a true marriage between them—indeed, by far the most perfect of all is consummated, since human marriages are but tenuous figures of this single

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*illum articulum, de quo tam libenter et praecclare cogitant, et magna laetitia et pietate in se ipsis exercent. Cf. LW 5.220-1.*  
true marriage—it follows that everything they have, both good and evil, becomes common. So that whatever Christ has, the believing soul is able to presume and glory about these things as if they were his own; and whatever belongs to the soul, these Christ arrogates to himself as if they were his own. Now let us compare these things, and we will see incomparable things. Christ is full of grace, life, and salvation. The soul is full of sins, death, and damnation. Now let faith come between, and it will happen that sins, death, and hell are Christ’s, but grace, life, and salvation are the soul’s. Indeed, it is necessary that he, if he is the bridegroom, accept the things which the spouse has and, at the same time, impart to the spouse the things which are his own. For if he gives her his own body and his own self, how will he not give her all his own things? [cf. Rom. 8:32] And if he receives the body of the bride, how will he not receive all the bride’s things?

Now this brings forth a most sweet spectacle, not only of communion but of a saving war and of victory and salvation and redemption. For since Christ is God and Man in the same person, which neither sinned, died, nor was damned, neither is he able to sin, die, or be damned, and his righteousness, life, and salvation is unconquerable, eternal, omnipotent; since, I say, such a person made the sins, death, and hell of his bride common to himself, indeed proper to himself, on account of faith’s wedding-ring, and in these matters he does not act otherwise than if they were his very own and if he himself had sinned, laboring, dying, and descending to hell in order to conquer them all; and sin, death, and hell were not able to swallow him up; these were necessarily swallowed up in him in an amazing duel (stupendo duello). For his very righteousness is greater than all sins, his own life is more powerful than all death, his own salvation is more invincible than all hell. Thus the believing soul, through the pledge of its faith in Christ her bridegroom, becomes free from all sins, secure from death and safe from hell, since the eternal righteousness, life, and salvation of Christ her bridegroom have been given her. Thus he presents to himself a glorious bride without spot or wrinkle, cleansing her by the washing of water in the word of life [Eph. 5:25-27], that is through faith in the word of life, righteousness, and salvation. Thus he weds her to himself in faith, in mercy and in compassion, in righteousness and judgment, as Hos. 2 [:19-20] says.

Who, therefore, sufficiently esteems these royal nuptials? Who comprehends the riches of the glory of this grace [Eph. 1:6-7, 12, 14, 2:7]? Here this rich and pious bridegroom, Christ, considers this poor little woman, this ungodly harlot, redeems her from all her evils and adorns her with all his good things. Now indeed it is impossible that her sins should destroy her, since they have been set upon Christ [Isa. 53:6] and swallowed up in him, and she has the very righteousness in Christ her bridegroom of which she may presume as her very own, and against all her sins, against death and hell she is able with confidence (cum fiduitia) to set this righteousness and say: “If I myself have sinned, and my Christ in whom I believe has not sinned, all his things are mine and all my
things are his,” as in the Song of Solomon: “My beloved is mine, and I am his” (2:16). This is what Paul says, 1 Cor. 15:57: “Thanks be to God, who has given us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Victory, that is, over sin and death, just as he also says there: “sin is the sting of death, but the power of sin is the law” (15:56).1077

All the telling marks of Luther’s mature theology of Christ’s victory and the believing soul’s participation therein are present in this great Reformation tract: the orthodox doctrine of the two natures united in Christ’s person; his marvelous duel with sin, death, the devil, and hell, and his unequivocal triumph over the same, which triumph is possible precisely because of the character of his person as the invincible God-Man (Luy); the believer’s mystical union with Christ through faith (the Finns); the exchange of all the sinner’s propria with Christ’s (and vice versa) in faith’s marriage; the joy and freedom of the sinner saved thus and clothed with Christ and his divine righteousness, life, and salvation; the Augustinian boasting, not in one’s self but in Christ and in gloria suae gratiae (Hombert); St. Paul’s shout of victory at 1 Cor. 15:56-7, the climax of his “sprawling masterpiece on the resurrection” (as N.T. Wright styles 1 Cor. 15). Looking back, we see the ripening seeds of Luther’s theology of the gospel in the 1516 letter to Spenlein now fully flowered into Reformation theology; looking ahead, we have here the lineaments of the gospel that Luther will preach, teach, confess, and struggle to believe right up to the end of his life.

(2) In the second place, a passage from the 1537—40 Saturday sermons on St. John’s Gospel which Luther preached during Pfarrer Bugenhagen’s errand to Denmark. The whole series is an exercise in the kind of patristic/homiletical and scholastic/technical christology that Yeago and Luy have illumined in their researches.

In order to prime his readers for the rich feast of scriptural exegesis, patristic orthodoxy, scholastic precision, and Reformation soteriology which is to follow, Luther ranges freely through John 1:1-18 and 29-34 in the first sermon, of 7 July 1537. I pick up here near the end:

In sum, in the first place we must have such a Savior who can deliver us from the power of the god of this world, of the Devil, likewise from sin and death, that is: he must be the true, eternal GOD, through whom all who believe in him become righteous and blessed. For if he is not more and higher than Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, John the Baptist, etc., then he is not our Redeemer. But if he, as the Son of God, shed his blood for us to redeem us and purify us from sin, and we believe it, and rub it in the Devil’s nose when he terrifies and plagues us because of sin, then the Devil is defeated quickly; he has to go away and leave us in peace. For the fishhook, that is: the divinity of CHRIST, was so hidden under the earthworm, under his humanity (which the Devil gobbled up in his throat when Christ died and was buried) that it tore open the Devil’s belly, so that he couldn’t keep him down with justice, but had to give him up again. And thereby he ate death, which is our highest consolation: for just as little as he was able to keep Christ in death, so little can he also keep us in it, who believe in Christ.

On the other hand, we must have a Savior who is also our Brother, of our flesh and blood, who became like us in all things sin only except [Heb. 4:15]; and that, we sing, confess, and say also in our Children’s Creed: “I believe in Jesus Christ, the one only Son of God the Almighty Father, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,” not by Joseph, “born of Mary,” a true, natural Man, “who suffered, was crucified, died, on the third day rose from the dead, ascended into Heaven, is sitting at God’s right hand,” in the same power and glory with the Father. That, therefore, I may say with a joyful heart: “I believe in Jesus Christ, GOD’S only Son, who sits at his right hand and intercedes for me [Rom. 8:34, Heb. 1:3-4, 8:1-2, 9:11-28, 10:11-14, 1 John 2:1-2], he who is even my flesh and blood, ja, he is my brother! For us men and for our salvation he has come from heaven, become Man, and died for our sins.” Therefore John too has begun his Gospel with the eternal divinity of Christ, saying: “In the beginning was the Word” (1:1), and “this same Word,” he says later on, “has become flesh” (1:14)… So now this article, that Christ is true natural God and Man, is our Rock [Matt. 16:16-18, 1 Cor. 10:4], and our salvation and blessedness is established upon it. On this we were baptized; on this we live and die.\textsuperscript{1078}

\textsuperscript{1078} WA 46.556.25-557.16, 31-3, cf. LW 22.24-5.
Here, I think, three or four currents flow together into a remarkable whole: first, a
doctrinal defense, in the face of alarming Anabaptist aberrations, of the orthodox duae
naturae in una persona christology; second, a rhetorically charged proclamation of
redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, the worm-enfleshed Fishhook, which I
suspect Gregory of Nyssa would have recognized as his own; third, an insistence that
the gospel of redemption and creedal orthodoxy are mutually interdependent and
inseparable; fourth, an earthy, rambunctious sense of Devil-defying joy, since the
believer shares by faith in the invincible triumph of the Savior who tore open the
Devil’s belly and sits at the Father’s right hand interceding for us in our own flesh and
blood. “Come sin and death, Devil and hell, do what you will! for Jesus Christ, true
God and Man, my Brother, has defeated you one and all: and by faith, his victory is
mine!” That is the joyful battle cry to which the mature Luther’s creedal, kerygmatic,
and exuberant theology of gospel grace gives rise. Gottes Sohn uns gegeben wird, der
siegsmann und uberwinder des Teufels—therefore, rejoice, fight, triumph, be free.\textsuperscript{1079}

\textsuperscript{1079} Cf. parallel texts from the same sermon series at WA 46.677-84, LW 22.162-170 (3 Nov. 1537, on
John 1:29) and WA 47.78-85, LW 22.353-61 (19 June 1538, on John 3:16), e.g., WA 47.79.40—80.28:
Kan ich aber alhier gleuben und diese artznej annemen, das Gott uns seinen Sohn gibt und nicht der
gemeinen Sohnen einen als Abraham, Isaac und David, derer Sohne ehr sonst viel hat, sondern seinen
eingebornen Sohn, So ist gewiss, dieweil ein solcher Sohn uns gegeben wird, das er eine neue
Widergeburt anrichte, das er ein siegsmann und oberwinder des Teufels sej. Den das ist die ursache,
das Gottes Sohn weith, weith grosser ist dan der tod und stercker den die Sunde, der Teuffel, und uns
freundlicher ist, und wir mehr gnade gottes den Zorn durch in haben, oder, was sonst mehr sein mag.
So du dich nun druber verwunderst, wie ein mensch aus des Teuffels in Gottes reich moge gebracht
werden, So ist das noch grosser verwunderns werth, das Gott uns seinen Sohn gegeben hat. Do du nun
das gleubest, so wird das ander verwundern wohl auffhoren. Den wen wir den Sohn Gottes haben, der
fur uns stehet wider den Tod und sich widder den Teuffel leget, so sei dan der Teuffel so boese, als ehr
wolle, ist der Sohn gottes fur mich gestorben, so fresse mich der tod hin und verschlinge mich, ehr soll
mich wohl widergeben, und ich will fur ihme wohl bleiben. Christus ist gestorben und hatt der Tod den
Sohn Gottes verschlingen, aber der tod hatt an ihme einen angel geschlungen, das er ihnen hat
mussen widergeben, den es wahr unmuglich, das ehr im tode bleiben sollte. Den die person ist gott,
und do Gott und Mensch in einer person, unzertrennet, in des todes und Teuffels bauch gefahren ist,
so hatt der tod ein bisslein an ime gessen das ihme den Bauch zureist. Das ist auch Gottes des vaters
rath von ewigkeit gewesen, das ehr also den tod verschlingen und des Teuffels reich zerstoren wollte
(3) Third and last, a fascinating paragraph from Luther’s 1545 lecture on Gen. 48:15-16 which Peter Manns would hail as *patristisch-reformatorischer Theologie*. Luther observes that as St. Jacob blesses Joseph’s sons, he invokes each of the persons of the Holy Trinity distinctly: First, “the GOD before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,” that is the Father; second, “the GOD who has led me all my life long to this day,” viz., the Holy Spirit; third, “the ANGEL who has redeemed me from all evil,” that is the Son of God, who conversed familiarly with the patriarchs, wrestled with Jacob at the Jabbok, and “was to be sent by God into the world, to announce to us liberation from death, the forgiveness of sins, and the kingdom of heaven.” But as the risen Jesus juxtaposes the word “name” in the singular with the three personal names Father, Son, and Spirit at Matt. 28:19, so here Jacob skillfully pairs his rather more subtle indications of the three divine persons with the singular subjunctive verb “let him bless” (*Benedicat*). Since the three persons share in the one common work of blessing, an operation proper to the divine nature alone, both the utter unity of their divinity and the reality of their personal distinctions are equally attested.

This


1081 WA 44.698.23-699.6: *Sicut hic Angelum vocat eodem modo, qua supra post luctam dixit: ‘Vidi Dominum facie ad faciem’. Nam hic Angelus Dominus ille, sive filius Dei est, quem vidit Iacob, et qui mittendus erat a Deo in mundum, ut anunciaret nobis liberationem a morte, remissionem peccatorum et regnum coelorum. Et hic Angelus noster Goel seu vindex est, qui iustissimo iure nos adserit, et vindicat a potestate Diaboli, qui obnoxius est legi, propterea quod occidit filium Dei, iamque lex et mors et Sathan coguntur obmutescere, ac victas manus porrigere victori et triumphanti Christo Diligenter igitur observandum est, quod loquitur Iacob de Christo filio, qui solus est Angelus,*
trinitarian exegetical logic is broadly “Pro-Nicene,” to use a useful if malleable scholarly convention, though it is likely that Luther acquired his grasp of this logic (as opposed to this exegesis) through Lombard and Biel. But vis-à-vis its role in interpreting Gen. 48:15-16, we can specify at least a step further than this.

The inspiration for Luther’s identification of “the Angel/Messenger of the Lord” with the Son of God was probably Hilary of Poitiers, an excellent theologian in Luther’s estimation, who himself inherited and carried forward this ancient exegetical tradition (trin. 4.23—42). Hilary’s friend Athanasius was of the same mind: and he cites and interprets Gen. 48:15-16 much in Luther’s manner. “In saying, ‘He delivered me from all evil,’ Jacob showed that it was no created angel, but the Word of...”


\[\text{1083 On Gen. 1:1, WA 42.4.26 [Dr], LW 1.4: Hilarius et Augustinus, quasi duo maxima Ecclesiae Lumina. That Luther is set to criticize Hilary and Augustine's theory of the instantaneous creation of the world does not take away from his regard for them both. Cf. WA 42.17.8 [Dr], LW 1.21-2: optimus vir Hilarius, II. 31-2: Huiusmodi cogitationibus bono Patres Augustinus et Hilarius quoque se oblectarunt. At Gen. 1:20, WA 42.37.41-38.14 [Dr], LW 1.50-1, it is clear that in some respects Luther reads Hilary in light of Augustine’s (trin. 6.11-12) critical reception of Hilary’s theology: Ad hunc modum D. Hilarius distinguuit aliis attributis. Aeterinitas est in Patre, species in imagine, usus in munere. Dicit Spiritum sanctum esse donum in usu, quod dat usum rerum, ne pereant, et gubernat res ac conservat. Sic dicunt: Pater est mens, Filius intellectus, Spiritus sanctus voluntas. Non quod Pater sit sine intellectu, aut Filius sine voluntate, sed sunt attributa, hoc est, dicta, quae distincta non tribuuntur singulis personis sed diversis, non, quod Pater sit sine sapientia, sed quod nobis ista in pingimus ad retinendum et explicandum articulum Trinitatis. Ergo, quando textus dicit: ‘Et vidit Deus, quod esset valde bonum’, significat ipsum conservationem, quia creatura non posset stare, nisi Spiritus sanctus diligeret eam, et ista complacencia Dei in suo opere conservaret opus. Neque enim Deus ita creavit res, ut creatas deserat, sed amat eas et approbat. Igitur simul est: agitat, movet, et conservat singula pro suo modo. Hoc existimavi brevibus attingendum. Dignae enim sunt cognitum tam piae cogitationes eorum, qui nos praecesserunt in eodem stadio, in quo nos currimus.}\]
God, whom he joined to the Father in his prayer; through him, God delivers whomever he wills” (c. Arianos 3.12). Against the grain of my argument for Luther’s indebtedness to Augustine in other loci, in this respect it would seem that he actually opposes his great mentor head-on: for in his *trin. 2—3*, a text well-known to the Reformer, Augustine severely chastened the received optimism regarding the exegete’s ability to parse out which of the divine persons manifests himself in a given OT theophany. Here, then, is evidence of the free and eclectic manner in which Luther appropriates trinitarian and exegetical insights from the tradition, *contra Augustinum* if that is where the text leads him.

Regardless of its provenance, what counts for my present purposes is the old Doctor’s preferred interpretation of the *Malach Adonai* as the pre-incarnate Son of God. For it sets the stage for a staggering celebration of Jesus Christ’s triumph over death, sin, the law (in its accusing function), and the Devil. He is Jacob’s “Redeemer” (גֹּאֵל), as in the “kinsman-redeemer” or “avenger” who possesses the legal right either to liberate/redeem an enslaved person or a lost inheritance (Lev. 25:25-6, 48-9, Ruth 2:20, 3:9, 12, 4:1, 3, 6, 8, 14) or to bring vengeance upon a manslayer (Num. 35:12, 19, Deut. 19:6, Josh. 20:3). Luther, aware of both senses of the word in the Hebrew, cites Deut. 19:6 and Job 19:25—“I know that my גֹּאֵל lives!”—to explain its rich meaning in Jacob’s prophecy. Jesus Christ is not only a “ransom” (פָּדָה). Though he is that (Hos. 13:14), Christ is more: as the invincible Son of God in our flesh, innocent, sinless, and

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1084 Cf. Luther’s 29 Sept. 1544 sermon on Rev. 12:7-12, WA 49.578.33-9 [Dr], LW 58.179: Denn er hat sich auch den heiligen Vetern erzeigt und sehen lassen als einen Engel, sonderlich Abraham und Jacob, und daher hin und wider auch den namen des Engels Gottes furet, Nemlich darumb, das er von Gott gesand, aber doch ein solcher Engel, der da Gott gleich ist, das ist: HERR aller Creaturn und selbs Schepffer. Solcher ist der andern keiner, welche daher Engel heissen, das sie gleich wie wir Menschen von Gott geschaffen sind aus nichts.
holy, he possesses the *ius redimendi* and therefore redeems condemned sinners with full justice as our avenger (*vindex*), liberator, and kinsman (*propinquus*).\textsuperscript{1085} For Luther, in the deep mystery of Christ’s triumph over the Devil and Death *through* his atoning suffering and death for sin on the cross—a major NT theme: cf. John 12:31, Col. 2:13-15, Heb. 2:14-17, Rev. 5:5-6—the two prophetic shades of גואל’s meaning in the OT converge as they are fulfilled in the promised *redemptor*:

Christ the Lord became our פדה and גואל. For he not only redeemed us, but claimed us for himself by right (*iure sibi nos asseruit*), so that the Devil and hell were forced by strict justice (*stricto iure*) to release him, since they had killed the innocent Son of God. Therefore the Law got burned, Death shit itself, the Devil, hell, sin have gone too far (*Lex hat sich verbrant, Mors hat sich beschissen, Diabolus, infernus, peccatum haben sich vergriffen*)! There, all of them became guilty and debtors to God, to this Son Jesus Christ, who now possesses the right (*ius*) against his enemies. For what reason, O Law, have you crucified the Son of God? Why have you killed the innocent, O Devil, death, hell? “We have a law,” they say, “and according to the law he ought to die, since he has made himself the Son of God” (John 19:7). Well then, take a good look at him rising from the dead and triumphing over you, saying, “I am the Son of God: I am an invincible person (*invicta persona*).” What now Satan? What law, what death, what hell? “Death is swallowed up in victory, etc.” (1 Cor. 15:54-7). “I have lost,” they all shriek; together they acknowledge that they have been conquered with the highest and full right and most justly (*summo et pleno iure ac iustissime victos esse*). And after his resurrection, Christ commanded that these things be announced to the whole world, and the Gospel preached to everyone. “Come!” he says, “believe in Me, be baptized. I will give you my own victory. You will not be condemned, but even when you die you will live in my name. You will never die, because I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me, even if he dies, lives” (John 11:25-26). This One, therefore, is our גואל, whom Jacob calls the Angel in this passage. “He is the Angel or redemptor who was able to redeem me with all right (*omni iure potuit me redimere*) and to keep me safe from all evils of conscience, of the law, sin, death, brother Esau, etc., and all the troubles with which I have been afflicted in my life.”\textsuperscript{1086}

In short, Jesus Christ, invincible God in innocent humanity, pulverized the Devil and scared the shit out of Death. But he did so with full regard paid to the claims of justice

\textsuperscript{1085} WA 44.697.17-23, cf. LW 8.162.

\textsuperscript{1086} WA 44.697.23-698.6, cf. LW 8.162-3.
that stood against hell-condemned sinners—a judgment manifested by the law in its usus elenchus—for he the innocent God-Man suffered its sanctions for them in their place (cf. Isa. 53:4-6, 8, 10-12, Matt. 20:28, Rom. 3:24-6, 8:3, 2 Cor. 5:14, 19-21, Gal. 1:4, 2:21, 3:13, 4:4-5, Col. 2:14, 1 Tim. 2:5-6, Heb. 9:15, 26-8, 10:10-4, 1 Pet. 2:24, 3:18, 1 John 2:2, 4:10, Rev. 1:5). Having satisfied the law’s just claims against sinners by his undeserved death, Jesus took just vengeance upon the Devil and Death when he rose from the grave and crushed them beneath his nail-pierced feet. For his payment of the פָּדָה by his blood on the cross invested him with legal authority to act as our גֹּאֵל in his resurrection, and to claim us for himself by right rather than by an act of sheer power (cf. Augustine’s trin. 13). Being a majestic and invicta persona, the risen Jesus gives his hard-fought victory personally and freely to all who trust in him: ego dono tibi victoriam meam. In scriptural rather than scatological terms, the promise of eternal and invincible life in Christ by faith in John 11:25-6 gives rise to the glad shout of triumph at 1 Cor. 15:54-7, upon which cognate NT texts the dying old Doctor’s ebullient Death- and Devil-mocking romp in this lecture on Gen. 48:15-16 is in effect an extended paraphrase.

This is the joyful gospel of Christ’s victory for us as the mature Luther preached and exposited it.

3.3. Not Just Forgiveness: The Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness

In this section we have to do with the inner content of the grace of forgiveness-and-righteousness given freely to faith by, through, in, and for the sake of Jesus Christ. My object here is not to exposit Luther’s mature doctrine of the iustitia Christi (or Dei, or
fidei) passiva, aliena, externa, Christiana, imputata, etc. in any real depth, only to make a few simple observations about how the “free gift of righteousness” (Rom. 5:17) in Christ c. 1520—46 relates to the earlier teaching on mercy, forgiveness and non-imputation set forth in 1515/16 after the manner of the “42os Augustine.” In so doing, I am simultaneously highlighting one of the major differences that distinguishes the mature Augustine’s theology of grace-qua-forgiveness in Christ from the mature Luther’s theology of grace as forgiveness-and-righteousness in Christ.

The gist is this: in general, it can be said that in 1515/16 the young Luther follows the old Augustine closely in stressing the reality and the gratuity of God’s mercy in Christ, manifest in the forgiveness of actual sins and the non-imputation of residual sinful desire. The mature Luther teaches this too, but in addition he maintains that in the justification of the ungodly the “positive” imputation of Christ’s righteousness is given to faith together with the “negative” non-imputation of sin. In more concrete terms: Augustine and the young Luther generally hold that the guilt of the forgiven and/or “justified” person is removed as far from him as the east is from the west. The mature Luther agrees, but adds that on top of this the forgiven person stands before God clothed in Jesus Christ’s very own righteousness; and for this reason, the justified believer, united with Christ by faith, is just as righteous coram deo as the Righteous One himself (Isa. 53:11, Acts 3:14, 1 John 2:1).

I stress my qualifying adverbs on generality for two reasons. First, as I noted above, Augustine himself on rare occasions does speak of the imputation of Christ’s

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1087 On this point, see chapter 2 above.
righteousness, mainly vis-à-vis baptized children, and in 1514—16 the young Luther is already elaborating freely on iustitia imputata without Augustine’s specific restriction of it to infant baptism. Second, the mature Luther often speaks simply of forgiveness or non-imputation in the “Augustinian” manner of his youth, without any hint of the Reformation iustitia Christi imputata. From what I can gather, and as one might expect, the lion’s share of such occurrences are to be found in passages that concern the “Augustinian simul” of renewed spiritus and old flesh/“sin” in the regenerate person. Still, the thesis of an advance from mere forgiveness/non-

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1088 c. Iul. op. imp. 1.57, CSEL 85/1.55 (cf. WSA 1/25.85): ... sic imputari generatis parvulis iniustitiam primi hominis ad subeundum supplicium, quemadmodum imputatur parvulis regressor omnium, iustitia secundi hominis ad obtinendum regnum caelorum; c. Iul. op. imp. 3.148, CSEL 85/1.454 (cf. WSA 1/25.350): Si aetum parvuli propter iniustitiam secundi hominis, qui regenerationis est auctor, deputantur iusti, cur non propter peccatum primi hominis, qui generationis est auctor, deputantur iniusti? Also: c. Iul. op. imp. 3.49, 6.22-3.

1089 See the texts from 1514—16 cited in full at the start of section 3.2 above: WA 4.652.3-20, WA 56.158.10-14, WA 56.204.15-28, WA 56.267.1-7, WA Br 1.35.15-36.

1090 See, e.g., the 1531/5 lectures on Gal. 5:16-17. (1) On Gal. 5:16, WA 40/2.79.22-80.15 [Dr] (cf. LW 27.64): Deberemus quidem implere legem et impletione eius iustificari, sed peccatum obstat. Praescribit et praecipit quidem lex, ut ‘Deum ex toto corde etc. et proximum ut nos ipsos diligamus’, sed ideo non sequitur: Hoc scriptum est, ergo fit, Lex praecipit dilectionem, ergo diligimus. Non dabis aliquem in terris, qui ita diligat Deum et proximum, ut lex requirit. In futura autem vita, ubi plane mundati ab omnibus vitius et peccatis et puri ut sol erimus, perfecte dilectione iusti erimus. In illa vero vita impedit puritatem illam caro, in qua, donec vivimus, haeret adhuc peccatum. Hinc tam potens est amor nostri viciosus, ut longe superet amorem Dei et proximi. Interim tamen, ut et in hac vita iusti simus, habemus ‘Propiciatorium’ et Thronum gratiae Christum, in quem credentes, peccatum nobis non imputatur. Est igitur fides iusticia nostra in hac vita. In futura autem, ubi perpurgati et prorsus liberi erimus ab omnibus peccatis et concupiscentiis, non amplius opus habebimus fide et spe. (2) On Gal. 5:17, WA 40/2.92.31-93.14 [Dr] (cf. LW 27.73-4): Sancti enim non nuntur sua iusticia, sed cum Davide canunt: ‘Ne intres in iudicium cum servo tuo, quia non iustificatur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens’, Item: ‘Si iniquitates observas, Domine, Domine, quis sustinebit?’ Intuentur igitur Christum, Propiciatorem suum, qui vitam dedit pro peccatis iusorvm. Deinde si quid est reliquum peccati in carne, noverunt hoc non imputari, sed per remissionem condonari sibi. Interim tamen Spiritu pugnant contra Carnem, non quod omnino eius concupiscientiam non sentiant, sed quod eam non perfricant. (3) On Gal. 5:17, WA 40/2.94.28-95.25 [Dr] (cf. LW 27.75-6): Istam luctam Carnis cum Spiritu habuerunt et senserunt omnes Sancti, Eandem et nos experimur. Qui consulit conscientiam suam, modo non sit Hypocrita, certo inveniet ita geri rem in seipso, ut Paulus hic descriptit, scilicet, quod Caro concupiscat adversus Spiritum. Unusquisque igitur Sanctus sentit et fatetur Carnem suam resistere Spiritui et etsq duo ita sibi inicem adversari in seipso, ut, quae velit, etiamse maxime hic laboret et sudet, tamen non possit ea facere. Itaque Caro obstat, quo minus praecepta Dei servemus, quo minus diligamus proximos ut nosipos, multominus ut diligamus Deum ex toto corde etc. Ideo impossibile est nos legis operibus
imputation in Augustine and the younger Luther to the non-imputation of sin plus the additional imputation of Christ’s righteousness in full-grown Reformation theology is more than defensible.\textsuperscript{1091} I realize that for some critics, this interpretation of the mature Luther draws perilously near to the orthodox doctrine of free justification in the later evangelical Confessions, both Lutheran and Reformed.\textsuperscript{1092} But this cannot be

\textit{Iustificari. Voluntas bona quidem adest, quam oportet adesse (est enim Spiritus ipse rebellans Carni), quae libenter vellet facere bonum, implere legem, diligere Deum et proximum etc., Caro autem non obsequitur isti voluntati, sed resistit ei. Sed Deus non imputat hoc peccatum, est enim propicius propter Christum. Ex hoc tamen non sequitur, quod debes peccatum extenuare aut contemnere, quia Deus illud non imputat. Non imputat quidem, Sed quibus et propter quid? Non duris et securis, sed poenitentiam agentibus et fide apprehendentibus Christum Propiciatorem, propter quem ut remittuntur eis omnia peccata, Ita et religuae peccati eis non imputantur. Illi non extuam peccatum, sed amplificant, quia norunt illud nulla satisfactione, operibus et iusticia elui posse, praetergum per mortem Christi, non tamen propter magnitudinem eius desperant, sed certo statuunt illud ignosci sibi propter Christum. (4) On Gal. 5:17, WA 40/2.96.17-97.16 [Dr] (cf. LW 27.76-7): Ex his etiam intelligi potest, qui veri Sancti sint. Sunt autem non trunci et lapides, ut Sophistae et Monachi somniant, qui prorsus nulla re  afficiantur aut nunquam concupiscentiam carnis sentiant, sed, ut Paulus ait, ‘caro ipsorum concupiscit adversus Spiritum.’ Ideo peccatum habent et peccare possunt. Et Psalm. 32. testatur, Sanctos confiteri inusticiam suam et orare pro remissioni impetiatis peccati sui, cum inquit: ‘Dixi, confitebor adversum me inusticiam meam Domino, Et tu remisisti mi impietatem peccati mei. Pro hac orabit ad te omnis Sanctus’ etc. Deinde orat tota Ecclesiae, quae certa sancta est, Remitti sibi peccata et credit Remissionem peccatorum, Et Psalm 143. orat David: ‘Ne intres, Domine, in iudicium cum servo tuo, quia non iustificatur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens’, Et Psalm. 130.: ‘Si iniquitates observas, Domine, Domine, quis sustinebit? Apud te propriatio est’ etc. Sic loquuntur et orant maximi Sancti, David, Paulus etc. Ergo idem loquuntur et orant eodem spiritu omnes sancti. Sophistaes Scripturas non legunt, aut si etiam legunt, tamen obducto ob oculos velo legunt, ideo, ut de nulla prorsus re, ita neque de peccato neque de sanctitate recte iudicare possunt.\textsuperscript{1093}

\textsuperscript{1091} In his article “Was There a ‘Reformation Doctrine of Justification’?” HTR 103/2 (2010): 205-36, my friend David C. Fink argues that forgiveness and imputation are roughly synonymous in the “first wave” of evangelical confessions in the 1520s and 30s, and that this earlier usage then evolves into the two-part formula \textit{remissio peccatorum et imputatio iustitiae Christi} in the “second wave” of confessions in the 1560s and 70s. I think Fink has put his finger on an important imprecision in the first few decades of the Reformation. That said, to me it seems that however imprecisely stated \textit{in verba}, the dogmatic res signified by the two-part formula is already in place in the mature Luther’s theology of “grace” as forgiveness and righteousness in Christ.

\textsuperscript{1092} See, for example: (1) The 1559 \textit{Confessio Gallica}, written by Calvin with Beza and Viret’s help, art. 18: “We believe that all our righteousness rests upon the remission of our sins, in which is also our only felicity, as David says (Ps. 32:1-2). We therefore reject all other means by which we could justify ourselves before God, and without presuming any virtue or merit, we hold simply to the obedience of Jesus Christ, which is imputed to us (nous nous tenons simplement à l’obéissance de Jésus-Christ, laquelle nous est allouée) as much to cover all our faults as to make us find grace and favor before God.” Schaff, 3.369-70, alt. (2) The 1561 \textit{Confessio Belgica}, the witness of the martyr Guido de Brès, art. 23: “We believe that our blessedness consists in the remission of our sins for Jesus Christ’s sake, and that therein is contained our righteousness before God, as David and Saint
helped! For on my reading of the texts, the old Doctor would have it no other way: even if, as I think the Finns have rightly argued, he might have hoped for a stronger emphasis on union with Christ in the tradition that bears his name, such as one finds amongst notable French, Dutch, and English Reformed theologians of his century and the next.\footnote{ But cf. David Yeago, "A Lutheran Contribution to Spiritual Theology: The Doctrine of the Mystical Union," \textit{Lutheran Forum} 18/4 (Advent, 1984): 18-22; Martti Vaahutoranta, "Unio und Rechtfertigung bei Johann Gerhard," in Matti Repo and Rainar Vinke, eds., \textit{Gott und Mensch in der nachreformatorischen Theologie} (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola, 1996), 200-45.}

Since I have already exposited the “grace” of Christ’s righteousness fully in Part I, and indeed again at some length in section 3.2 of this chapter, I will be brief here. The free and merciful bestowal of the full and complete \textit{iustitia dei}—“die Gerechtigkeit, die vor Gott gilt,” Rom. 3:21—upon justly condemned sinners is the just reward of Christ’s obedient suffering and death in our place on the cross, and the spoils of his triumph; and the risen Jesus gives it freely to whoever believes his gospel.

I think Oberman was right to argue that Luther broke ranks with scholastic theologies of justification at just this point: the law-crushed sinner’s empty-handed reception of Christ’s righteousness as his own by faith, and the identification of this freely given \textit{iustitia Christi} with the righteousness that God requires at the sinner’s hands in order

Paul teach us, declaring the blessedness of that man, to whom God counts righteousness apart from works (\textit{à qui Dieu alloue justice sans oeuvres}, Ps. 32:1, Rom. 4:6). And the same Apostle says that we are justified freely or by grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24-5). And this is why we always hold fast to this foundation, giving all glory to God, humbling ourselves, and recognizing ourselves such as we are, without presuming to trust in anything in ourselves or our merits, and relying and resting upon the sole obedience of Christ crucified, which is ours when we believe in him (\textit{nous nous appuyons et reposons en la seule obéissance de Christ crucifié; laquelle est nôtre, quand nous croyons en lui}). Schaff, 409, ECRC, 100. (3) The 1577 FC, Ep. 3, thesis 2: “We believe, teach, and confess that our righteousness before God consists in this, that the Lord forgives us our sins out of sheer grace (\textit{Dominus nobis peccata remittit ex mera gratia}), without any respect at all to our forgoing, current, or consequent works, dignity, or merit. For he gives and imputes to us the righteousness of Christ’s obedience (\textit{Ille enim donat atque imputat nobis iustitiam oboedientiae Christi}). Because of this righteousness, we are received by God into grace and accounted righteous.” \textit{BSELK} 1237.11-16, cf. \textit{BC} 495.
to escape eternal condemnation in hell, meant that full justification came at the
beginning of the Christian pilgrimage, not the end; and for this reason above all, the
heart of the sinful but Christ-trusting *viator* had been set free to enjoy peace with God
in Christ now (as St. John and Paul are especially given to say, John 3:14-18, 5:24, 6:54,
10:27-30, 11:25-6, 1 John 2:1-2, 3:1-2, Rom. 5:1-11, 8:1, 8:31-39, Gal. 5:1, Eph. 2:4-8, Col. 1:12-
14, 2:13-15, 1 Thess. 1:4-10, 5:9-10, 2 Tim. 1:8-10).\(^{1094}\)

In the 1520—46 period, Luther proclaims, exposits, and defends this doctrine of
the *iustitia fidei* using all the various and vivacious scriptural terms and images I
examined closely in Part I. For it stands at the heart of his mature theology of “grace”
(*gratia/Gnade*). At times, as we saw above, “imputation” as a legal mechanism and
metaphor set *in foro divino* is very much front and center; our sin is reckoned to Christ
crucified, and Christ’s obedience is reckoned to faith as righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). In
other places, the believer’s union with Christ and his invincible righteousness, and the
great exchange that follows upon this union, takes the lead. In many works, not least
the great *Galaterbrief*, forensic imputation and union with Christ stand side by side.
For complex reasons that cannot detain us here, not least the Osiandrian controversy
and its one-sided settlement,\(^{1095}\) many later Luther scholars and theologians have felt
compelled to pick between either *unio*-texts inspired by the likes of Gal. 2:20 and 3:26-
perplexities over this phenomenon have more to do with a lack of scriptural depth and
catholic breadth on our part than with an imagined inconsistency in Luther’s

\(^{1094}\) Heiko Oberman, “‘Iustitia Christi’ and ‘Iustitia Dei’: Luther and the Scholastic Doctrines of

\(^{1095}\) Timothy J. Wengert, *Defending Faith: Lutheran Responses to Andreas Osiander’s Doctrine of
theology. Might not the simple fact that such texts are so intricately interwoven in the thread of St. Paul’s argument have urged upon us the goodness to be had in holding the two motifs together in their apostolic richness and unity? I think the mature Luther tried his hand at just this, and in the event did rather well:

Therefore: the Christ who is grasped by faith and dwells in the heart is the Christian righteousness on account of which God counts us righteous and gives us eternal life.\(^{1096}\)

These three are joined together: faith, Christ, acceptance or imputation. For faith grasps hold of Christ and has him present and encloses him as a ring encloses the gem; and whoever is found having this faith in the Christ who is grasped in the heart, God reckons that person righteous.\(^{1097}\)

In my judgment, such efforts to hold together St. John’s “patristic” doctrine of saving unio cum Christo with St. Paul’s “Reformation” emphasis on saving iustitia in Christo per fidem sine operibus mark one point where the late medieval Augustinian pupil surpasses his ancient master as an exegetical theologian. But regardless of one’s dogmatic evaluation of the shift, I think it is beyond dispute that with his doctrine of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, the mature Luther takes a step past the old Augustine’s doctrine of the non-imputation of sin: this, amidst their deep agreement that forgiveness/non-imputation is God’s free gift through and for the sake of his incarnate Son and his shed blood.

3.4. Promissio evangelii in Evae semine omnibus credentibus

\(^{1096}\) On Gal. 2:16, WA 40/1.229.28-30 [Dr]: Ergo fide apprehensus et in corde habitans Christus est iustitia Christiana propter quam Deus nos reputat iustos et donat vitam aeternam. Cf. LW 26.130.

In his 1971 monograph *Promissio: Geschichte der reformatorischen Wende in Luthers Theologie*, Oswald Bayer argues forcefully that Luther’s Augustinian theology of sin and grace was already in place by the 1515/16 Romans lectures, but that this did not make Luther a Reformation theologian.\(^{1098}\) Neither did the *Disputation against Scholastic Theology* (4 Sept. 1517), the *Ablaßthesen* (31 Oct. 1517), or the *Heidelberg Disputation* (26 April 1518, with its celebrated *theologia crucis*) mark a real, decisive, and “reformational” departure from the broad spectrum of acceptable theological opinion within medieval Catholicism. The theology of these writings represents a rock-ribbed mystical Augustinianism (think Gregory of Rimini with a twist of John Tauler—or John Staupitz) which, if not ever really popular, at least held its rightful place at the table.


\(^{1098}\) Bayer, *Promissio*, 140.
Here are the crucial theses:

8. The forgiveness of fault (Remissio culpe) does not depend upon the contrition of the sinners, nor upon the office or power of the priest.
9. Rather, it depends on faith, which is in the word of Christ saying: “Whatever you loose, etc.” (Matt. 16:19).
10. For it is true that it is not the sacrament of faith, but faith in the sacrament (i.e., not because it takes place, but because it is believed) that justifies.
11. Christ does not want the salvation of men to consist in the hand or the choice of a man,
12. but as it is written: “he bears up all things by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:3), and: “purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9).
13. They err even to the point of infidelity who assert that the forgiveness of fault is uncertain because of the uncertainty of contrition.
14. No matter how uncertain either the priest or the sinner may be about contrition, absolution is valid if he believes that he has been absolved.
15. It is therefore certain that sins are forgiven if you believe they are forgiven, because the promise of Christ the Savior is certain (certa est Christi salvatoris promissio).
16. A man absolved through the keys ought rather to die and deny every creature than to doubt about his own absolution.
17. By doubting whether his absolution is pleasing to God, at the same time he doubts whether Christ was truthful when he said: “Whatever, etc.” (Matt. 16:19).
18. By building forgiveness on top of contrition, they build on sand, i.e., they build faith in God on top of the work of man.
19. Not believing the absolution until contrition is certain is injurious to the sacrament and the engine of despair.
20. Indeed: to want to build confidence of conscience (fiduciam conscientie) on top of contrition in this way is to set up God for a liar and oneself as truthful.
21. Such people presume upon their own works and powers most desperately, not upon the mercy and word of Christ.
22. Indeed: they want to strengthen the word and faith themselves, rather than being strengthened by the word and faith.
23. Priests are not the authors of forgiveness, but ministers of the word to the end of faith in forgiveness (ministratores verbi in fidem remissionis).
24. The power of the keys works a strong and infallible work by the word and commandment of God, except in the event that you are a deceiver.
25. The priest has a sufficient and manifest sign of contrition, if he perceives that the sinner asks for and believes the absolution.

\textsuperscript{1099} WA 1.629-33. On which see Bayer, Promissio, 166-7, 172, 182-202; Brecht, Road to Reformation, 235-6. On the Augustinian and medieval backcloth to thesis 10, see Jarod Wicks, S.J., “FIDES SACRAMENTI—FIDES SPECIALIS: Luther’s Development in 1518,” in idem, Luther’s Reform, 117-47.
26. Indeed: it is better by far to inquire of him whether he believes that he is absolved than whether he grieves worthily.

27. Take care, then, that the priest does not probe for contrition alone, so that a man believes that he must be absolved because of it.

28. Rather, for him that saying of Christ must be insisted on: “Courage, son! Your sins are forgiven you” (Matt. 9:2), instead of inquiring about his worthiness.

29. It follows that that word of Christ: “whose sins you forgive, etc.” (John 20:23) are to be understood not about penalties, but about fault.

33. For nothing justifies except faith only in Christ (Nihil enim iustificat, nisi sola fides Christi), for which faith the ministry of the word through the priest is necessary.

34. Without this faith, contrition over sins is the operation of despair and offends God rather than reconciling him.

48. Not one human being knows how often he sins mortally, even in good works because of empty boasting (propter vanam gloriam).

49. Only those things should be confessed, which either to himself or to others are certain to be mortal, i.e., grave sins (crimina).

50. Despairing over the rest, let him cast himself with confidence into the abyss of the mercy of God, who faithfully promises (cum fiducia in abyssum misericordie dei fideliter promittentis).

The sum of it all (Summa summarum): The righteous lives not by works nor by the law, but by faith. Rom. 1:17.
To begin at the end: Luther's concluding “the sum of it all” is no innocent peroration, but a pointed jab at the *Summa summarum* which his bitter opponent, Sylvester Prierias Mazzolini, had first published in 1514. The “Sylvestrina,” as it was called, was one of the most popular sixteenth-century manuals for confessors, and belonged to what Thomas Tentler calls “an identifiable genre” stemming from the work of the mid thirteenth-century canon lawyer, Raymond of Peñafort. These “summas for confessors” aimed to assist priests in evaluating the gravity of a penitent’s sins and the depth of his contrition in order to make a sound judgment about whether to absolve him and, if so, about the appropriate penance to assign him. The doctrine of absolution which Luther sketches in *Pro veritate* constitutes a Reformation broadside against this entire genre, against Prierias’ thorough and best-selling *Summa*, and indeed—as Cajetan insightfully recognized at Augsburg in fall 1518—against central aspects of the medieval sacramental system itself *et eo ipso*, the Roman Catholic

*quam dignitas eiusmodi exquirenda.* 29 *Consequens est, quod verbum illud Christi ‘quorum remiseritis peccata &c.’ non de penis, sed culpa intelligitur… 33 Nihil enim iustificat, nisi sola fides Christi, ad quam necessaria est verbi per sacerdotem ministratio. 34 Sine qua fide contritio peccatorum est desperationis operatio et plus deum offendens quam reconcilians… 48 Nullus hominum novit, quoties peccet mortaliter, etiam in bonis operibus propter vanam gloriam. 49 Ea tantum debet confiteri, que vel sibi vel aliis certa sunt esse mortalia, id est crimina, 50 De reliquis desperando seipsum cum fiducia in abyssnum misericordie dei promittentis proiicere. Summa summarum: Iustus non ex operibus neque ex lege, sed ex fide vivet. Ro. 1.

1101 Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 31-9. Tentler observes (241-3, 271-3) that most confessional manuals were decidedly less rigorous in their contritionism than was Luther’s primary scholastic teacher, Gabriel Biel; for most—including Prierias—the Scotist doctrine of the adequacy of attrition (on the conviction that the sacrament transformed it into contrition) sufficed. For Biel’s doctrine, see Oberman, *Harvest*, 146-60, who concludes thus: “The strictness of Biel’s contritionism necessarily would enhance scrupulousness and despair. Biel is aware of this problem and would have liked in view of this to accept Scotus’ *parum attritus* solution. But Biel’s doctrine of the *facere quod in se est* and a high estimate of the natural capacities and dignity of man forced him to reject this solution.”
For Luther, by mid 1518 an ardent theologus promissionis gratiae, the power of absolution no longer resides in the sacramental authority of the priest. Neither does its efficacy depend upon the purity of a contrite heart. Rather, absolution rests exclusively on Christ the Savior’s sure promise of forgiveness (theses 1, 2, 4-6, 8, 9, 13, 15, 18, 23, 28, 29), justification (10, 33), and salvation (6, 7, 11, 15), a promise efficaciously conveyed in the verbum externum of absolution and received as a free gift by faith. Trust in God’s promise of grace in Christ overcomes penitential uncertainty and despair, and issues in assurance of heart, peace, joy, thankfulness, and courage. For Christ’s clear and certain word steels the penitent per fidem promissionis to rip his eyes off his insufficiently contrite no less than his abundantly sinful self, and to stake everything instead on the infinite abyss of God’s mercy manifest and graspable in the

The new evangelical Promissiotheologie surfaced prominently as the Grunddifferenz between Luther and Cajetan at the Diet of Augsburg, 12-14 Oct. 1518. In the course of their impromptu debate, the German Augustinian defended his controversial doctrine of assurance through faith in the promise of forgiveness. When admonished by the formidable Italian Thomist to recant, Luther confessed: “I do not want to become a heretic by contradicting the conviction through which I became a Christian; I would sooner die, be burned, chased out, cursed etc.”—as he reported to Karlstadt, 14 Oct. 1518 (#100), WA Br 1.217.59-63: ... wenn ich dies einig Wort spräche: ‘revoco’, das ist: ‘Ich widerrufe.’ Aber ich will nicht zu einem Ketzer werden mit dem Widerspruch der Meinung, durch welchen ich bin zu einem Christen worden; ehe will ich sterben, verbrannt, vertrieben und vermaledeiet werden etc. Luther had explained his non sacramentum, sed fides sacramenti iustificat doctrine earlier on in the letter, WA Br 1.215.12-22: Aber am allermeisten ist über diesen zweien Artikeln gefocht worden: Zum ersten, daß ich gesagt hab, daß der Ablaß nicht sei der Schatz des Verdienst unsers lieben Herrn und Seligmachers Christi. Zum andern, daß ein Mensch, das zu dem allerhochwürdigsten Sacrament gehen will, glauben müsse etc. Dagegen der Legat gesetzt hat die Extra vagans in Sexto Decretalium, die sich anhebt: Unigenitus. Darauf er sich feste verließ und ganzlich vermaß, als wäre ich dadurch überwunden; wollt mich derhalb zu einem Widerspruch dringen. Er zog für sich an die gemeine Opinion und Wahn der Scholasticorum oder Schullehrer von der Kraft und Wirkung der Sacrament und von der Ungewißheit deß, der das hochwürdig Sacrament empfahet. In retrospect, Cajetan replied in lapidary fashion: “This is to set up a new Church.” See Cajetan’s tractate “Utrum ad fructuosam absolutionem in sacramento poenitentiae exigatur fides, qua poenitens credat certissime se esse absolutum a Deo,” which he prepared ahead of his meeting with Luther by 26 Sept. 1518, but then edited afterwards in light of their arguments: “The sacrament of penance exists sine certa fide effectus in suscipiente. Hoc [viz., Luther’s assertion to the contrary] enim est novam Ecclesiam construere.” In his collected Opuscula (Lyon, 1575), 11a.7-8, as cited by Bayer, Promissio, 183 n. 135.
promise. In short: the penitent sinner is righteous by faith in Jesus Christ, and therefore lives in the freedom and courage of the gospel.

I think Bayer is right to urge that this biblical theology of promise and faith is the consequence of the Ablaßstreit rather than its cause. But in itself, this does not prove that Reformation theology did not exist prior to the disputation Pro veritate. For all such claims depend upon one’s prior dogmatic account of what counts as Reformation theology, and are therefore inadjudicable on purely textual or historical grounds. That said, it is beyond question that the controversy engulfing Europe in 1518 was the causa occasionalis for the subject matter and argument of this disputation. Starting with thesis 1, Luther begins to attack the natural preference for remissio poenae over remissio culpae that stands at the center of all concupiscent desire for indulgences. One can be saved well enough without the former so long as he has the latter (thesis 6). And regardless: when there is forgiveness of guilt, “there is no penalty even in penalty, but joy in tribulations [cf. Rom. 5:3, Jas. 1:2-3]” (thesis 5)—a sturdy plank in Luther’s mystical theology of sanctification through the cross, to which I will return below. Now, in the famed Ablaßthesen of 31 Oct. 1517, Luther had

\begin{verbatim}
1 Bayer, Promissio, 164.
2 Cf. Bernhard Lohse (Martin Luther’s Theology, 88) on the circularity involved in scholarly searches for the Durchbruch to Reformation: “In the debate over the breakthrough one cannot avoid the impression that the definition given the content of this discovery is at times a personal confessio of the given researcher.”
3 WA 1.630.5-631.2: 1 Inter duas ecclesiasticas illas remissiones pene et culpe longe precellit remissio culpe. 2 Remissio culpe quietat cor et maximam omnium penarum, scilicet conscientiam peccati, tollit. 3 Remissio pene quandoque auget conscientiam malam, quandoque peiorem nutrit presumptionem. 4 Remissio culpe reconciliat hominem deo, remissio pene reconciliat hominem homini, id est ecclesie. 5 Remissaculpaet conscientia, nulla pena est in pena, sed gaudium in tribulationibus. 6 Sine remissione pene potest homo salvus fieri, sed nequaquam sine remissione culpe. 7 Magis prodest ad salutem, si absolutus a culpa omissatredemptionem penarum.
\end{verbatim}
(in good taulerisch fashion, as Leppin has shown\textsuperscript{1106}) already denounced indulgences for taking away from the faithful the most powerful means of sanctifying grace available to them, to wit: penal, purgatorial suffering. Eight months into the public controversy, Luther is singing the same tune in regards to the hidden blessing of the holy cross, as indeed he will for the rest of his life. But now in June 1518, his theology begins to resound with the new evangelical song of the promise and, therefore, with the assurance which the believer may enjoy by faith. If extra-sacramental indulgences were pernicious prior to the advent of the new theology because they robbed Christians of the holy cross—alongside which, for Luther if not perhaps for his princes, the loss of the Germans’ hard-earned Gulden was nothing—by summer 1518 the sacrament of penance in its medieval form has itself become baleful. For its “Babylonian captivity” has buried the promise of free absolution in Jesus Christ under intolerable burdens and veiled it beneath impenetrable distractions. Instead of directing sin-heavy souls to the promise of grace, and lifting up hearts through faith in this gospel, penance as the Reformer’s arch-nemesis Prierias (\textit{et al.}) taught it fixed crushed hearts upon false objects of hope: the adequacy of the penitent’s contrition, the intricacy of his confession, the authority of the priest, the sufficiency of satisfactions. In Luther’s judgment—long-since preformed in his heart and mind by the crucicentric piety-theology of Augustine, Bernard, and Staupitz, but now rendered powerfully lucid through his deepened grasp of St. Paul’s doctrine of blessing, righteousness, and life by promise and faith (Rom. 4, 9:6-16, Gal. 3:6—4:7, 21-31)—this is a lie; and therefore, to pastor souls \textit{ad modum Sylvestri} is to “make them trust in a

\textsuperscript{1106} Volker Leppin, “Omnem vitam fidelium penitentiam esse voluit.”
lie” (as Jeremiah once said of Hananiah and Shemaiah’s false prophecies, 28:15, 29:31),
to their destruction. “The sum of it all,” then, is that handbooks on penance like
Prierias’ Sylvestrina are worse than a waste of time. But—certa est Christi salvatoris
promissio! And if the crushed heart takes hold of the promise of absolution by faith, he
has the reality of salvation which Christ bestows upon him through this very word.
The Summa summarum is not Sylvester’s but St. Paul’s, Rom. 1:17. The righteous shall
live, not by the purity of their contrition, the fullness of their confession, or the
impressiveness of their penitential satisfactions, but by faith: faith which relies, not on
the power of the priest, but on the promise of the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ.
(And to be sure, good priests are faithful ministers of Christ and his Word: theses 23
and 33, cf. Eph. 3:7, Col. 1:25.) So far Luther in early summer 1518, the newly minted
Worttheologe.

Pace Bayer, I have made no secret of my preference for Oberman and Leppin’s
step-wise approach to Luther’s development in the 1513—20 period. In the course of
those years, Luther experienced a series of piecemeal but interrelated breakthroughs,
rather than one decisive (or even apocalyptic!) turn to Reformation. And as I have
argued in this book, the “Augustinian” breakthrough that Luther experienced c. 1514—
16 was far more important, and in the event far more enduring, than Bayer recognizes
or allows for. These reservations aside, I find his case for the initial emergence of
Luther’s mature Promissio- or Worttheologie in the vicinity of summer 1518
compelling. Bayer goes on to trace how the new promise theology grew in clarity and
in the extent of its application to other loci over the next two years, culminating in the
great Reformation treatises of fall 1520: The Babylonian Captivity of the Church in
October, and in November *The Freedom of a Christian*. This, I think, is also sound. So too is Bayer’s contention for the lasting centrality of the promise in the Reformer’s doctrine of justification from 1520 to this death. As Asendorf has underscored, Luther’s irreducibly salvation-historical promise theology, deeply rooted in the *Protevangelium* and the promises to the patriarchs that build upon it, first surfaces in a fall 1519 sermon on Gen. 9:9\(^{1107}\) but then snowballs into “the organizing principle of Luther’s middle and late theology” in the 1520s and 30s. The theology of the Promise of the Seed finds its “monumental expression” in the *Genesisvorlesung* 1535—45, the sprawling volumes of which comprise the old Doctor’s last and perhaps greatest exposition of this impressive and vital scriptural motif.\(^{1108}\)


The promise of grace in Jesus Christ, the Serpent-Crusher, true God and Man in one Person, nailed to the tree and risen from the dead; the right distinction of the gospel as this promise from the law of works; free justification by faith alone; assurance of salvation;—these are co-extensive doctrines which together lie at the heart of Reformation theology and piety. No account of Luther’s theology which fails to attend to them can hope to do him any real justice, and it is to Bayer’s great credit that his work has brought the theology of the promise from the margins into the center of the field. However, in addition to the historical reservations I noted above, Bayer’s Lutherdeutung stands in need of significant dogmatic corrections; and I believe the argument of this book has positioned us to see these weak points rather clearly, and to shore them up. In the introduction to chapter 2, I critiqued Bayer’s tendency toward an “abstract” theology of justification by promise and faith, i.e., one that might well stand or fall without the scandalous particularity of the flesh and blood of the Seed promised to Eve, Abraham, Jacob, and David of old, the Son of God and Mary, the Lord Jesus Christ, with his bitter sufferings, atoning death, and glorious resurrection. For Luther, this is The Promise, and apart from it there is neither a gospel to preach nor a truthful evangelical theology to expound. “Every promise of God includes Christ: for if it is separated from this Mediator, God is not dealing with us at all.” But I will not reengage that contest here. Instead, I aim to point out four additional respects in which Bayer’s good account of Luther’s Worttheologie needs to be adjusted in light of the Reformer’s Augustinian—and “mystical”—theology of sin, grace, and holiness.

\[\text{On Gen. 15:6, WA 42.567.23-4, LW 3.26: omnis promissio Dei includit Christum, si enim absque hoc mediatore sit, Deus nihil nobiscum agit.}\]
First, Bayer tends to assume a stark contrast between the Augustinian Luther and Luther the Reformation theologian. “Promissio” names the break between the former and the latter and, therefore, the advance beyond the Catholic law/grace distinction (and its doctrine of justification by faith working through love) to the Reformation law/gospel distinction (and justification sole fide). But this is incomplete. On the one hand, Augustine himself had his own biblical theology of the promise. To give just one example: at c. dei 16.43, Augustine first (a) explains that the promise (promissio) of universal blessing made to Abraham at Gen. 12:3 “was to be fulfilled by Christ’s coming in the flesh, and not by keeping the old law, but by faith in the gospel (euangelii fides),” then (b) observes in Moses’ death outside the promised land a symbol of the law’s salvific impotence, but in Joshua’s victorious conquest a prefiguring of the promised salvation in the true Joshua, Jesus Christ. So it proves too much to exaggerate the difference between Augustine’s law/grace contrast and the mature Luther’s distinction between the accusing law and God’s saving promise, for Augustine can show himself to be a pretty sound Lutheran, that is to say a careful reader of Genesis and St. Paul, on just this point. On the other hand, Bayer’s Augustine/Luther contrast fails to account for Luther’s abiding Augustinianism. As I

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1110 CCSL 48.549, Bett. 709.
argued above, Luther never in fact abandons the law-“grace” contrast. He merely shifts his preferred terminology from *gratia sanans* to *donum Spiritus*. The faith that receives the promise of “grace” in Jesus Christ is quite alone in the office of justification, and utterly passive/receptive. But the same faith which grasps Christ in the promise for justification cries out for increased supplies of the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying gift, and this to the end of a real and robust—if inchoate and imperfect—renewal of life evidenced in concrete *ex corde* law-keeping.\footnote{On Gen. 15:6, WA 42.566.35-6, 567.1-2, LW 3.25: “We know indeed that faith is never alone (*fides nunquam est sola*) but brings with it love and other manifold gifts.” Again: the faith that alone justifies “brings with it a chorus of the most beautiful virtues (*chorum pulcherrimarum virtutum*), and is never alone (*neque unquam sola est*).”} In short, Augustine’s *sp. litt.* is very much alive in Luther’s mature theology of holiness; by the Spirit and faith, the Lutheran disciple does real works of love (Gal. 5:5-6). To be sure, these works contribute nothing to justification forensically construed—that great matter is entirely and exclusively wrapped up in Christ crucified (Gal. 2:21)—but they very much do indicate the inchoate beginnings of the real law-fulfillment which one day will come to its completion in eschatological glory.

(2) With these remarks, I have already stumbled upon my second point: when grasped within the parameters of Luther’s doctrine of grace in Christ and renewal by the Spirit’s gift, the “promise” of the gospel is far richer in its content than Bayer realizes. Without question, there is for Luther (as for any Augustinian theologian) a real priority to the free gift of mercy and forgiveness in Christ: “grace.” Once an appropriately bleak account of fallen humanity’s helplessness due to original sin is in place, and with it a muscular doctrine of predestination as the only hope of salvation, this must needs be so: John 3:3-8, 6:63, Rom. 3:24, 8:29-30, 9:16, 11:5-6, Eph. 1:3-14, 2:1-8,
2 Tim. 1:9, 1 John 4:19, etc. We love God because he first loved us; and it is precisely the Lord God’s merciful and lavish gift of forgiveness and righteousness in Christ crucified—in Luther’s mature terms, “grace”—which astonishes a son of Adam’s heart, puts away its servile fear, and evokes filial love for such a God as this, who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. So Luther on Gen. 15:6:

... for he who believes in God, and is sure that he shows favor toward us (certus est, quod faveat nobis)—if indeed he even gave his Son, and with the Son the hope of eternal life, how could this man not love God with his whole heart? how could he not stand in awe of him? how could he not endeavor to declare the gratefulness of his heart for such great benefits? how could he not prove obedience to God by bearing up under adversities?

God’s grace in Christ comes first, to be sure, but it is itself ordered to the evocation of responsive faith, trust, fear, hope, and love in the forgiven heart renewed by the Spirit’s gift; and on top of this, being neither a semi-Pelagian, a Philippist, a French Jesuit, or an Arminian, for Luther that lively faith which alone grasps hold of God’s grace in Christ is itself the effect—not the cause—of the Spirit’s renovating gift in the deepness of an incredulous and self-obsessed heart (Eph. 2:8). In the Reformer’s mature dogmatics of grace and holiness, it is simply impossible to have the one without the other.

Prima facie, therefore, one might expect to find the same thing when Luther casts this same doctrine in the biblical language of God’s promise; and so we do. In the Reformer’s promise theology, too, “grace” enjoys a certain ascendancy over “gift”:

partly, I suspect, owing to the pastoral and polemical context in which he lived and

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worked, but partly also because key *promissio* texts in the Bible focus on the grace of forgiveness through the shed blood of Jesus. Thus, for example, the words of the Lord at the institution of his Holy Supper, which Luther reads in terms of the promises of a new covenant scattered amongst the prophets: “This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt. 26:28). Primarily, then, the Eucharist is about forgiveness through Christ’s blood—“grace”—for that is what Christ promises to give his Church in and through it. So Luther in the Large Catechism (1529): “‘This is my body and blood, given for you and poured out for the forgiveness of sins.’ That is to say, in brief, that we go to the sacrament because there we receive a great treasure, through and in which we obtain the forgiveness of sins.”

Likewise: “Ja, the whole gospel and the article of the Creed, ‘I believe one holy Christian Church, forgiveness of sins,’ etc. are included and set forth for us through the word in this Sacrament.” Chiefly, then, Christ promises forgiveness in the Supper, and the necessary spiritual correlate of every promise is faith: “Because Christ offers and promises (*verheisset*) forgiveness of sins, it can be received no other way than by faith.” Since through the bread and wine the risen Jesus Christ gives to his people his body broken and his blood shed for the forgiveness of sins, the principal (though for Luther not the exclusive) gift to be had in the Supper by faith is the “grace” bestowed through Christ’s word of promise.

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117 Ibid, BSELK, 1142.11-12, cf. BC, 470.
118 Ibid, BSELK, 1138.23—1140.5, cf. BC, 469: “Therefore, [the Eucharist] is appropriately called a food of the soul, for it nourishes and strengthens the new man (*den neuen Menschen*). For through baptism we are born again in the first place. However, nonetheless, the old hide (as it is said) remains in a man’s flesh and blood. There are so many hindrances and attacks (*anfechtung*) of the devil and the world that we often grow weary and faint and at times even stumble. Therefore the
This being so, still it would be a mistake to reduce the content of the promise to the “grace” of forgiveness and righteousness that is in Christ, for in Luther’s theology the promise also includes the gift of new life through the Spirit. The promise of new life comes through more clearly, for example, in Luther’s baptismal catechesis than in his teaching on the Supper—I gather for basic scriptural reasons. For if in the Supper the Church proclaims her dear Lord’s atoning death for sin till he comes (1 Cor 11:26), baptism promises and gives not only forgiveness, but death and new life in Christ: holiness. In baptism, the sin, isolation, sorrow, and death that characterize my old “self” are put to death and buried with Christ, and the Spirit gives the gift of new birth into the holy and glad communion of Christ’s risen body (John 3:3-8, Acts 2:38-9, Rom. 6:3-11, 1 Cor. 6:11, 12:12-3, Gal. 3:27-8, Col. 2:11-12, Tit. 3:5). Again, the Large Catechism: “In baptism every Christian has enough to learn and exercise his whole life long. For he can always keep himself busy with firmly believing what it promises (zusagt) and brings: victory over the Devil and Death, forgiveness of sins, God’s grace (gnade), the whole Christ and Holy Spirit with his gifts (gaben).” In the terms of this study, baptism is the sacrament of both gnade and gabe, grace and gift. For together with the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ, baptism promises a share in den gantzen Christum, that is, in the Church (totus Christus, caput et membra: a classic

Lord’s Supper is given as a daily food and sustenance so that our faith may be refreshed and strengthened and that it may not fall back in the struggle but become evermore stronger and stronger. For the new life ought so to be done, that it continually develops and progresses (denn das neue Leben sol also gethan sein, das es stets zuneme und fortfare). But it must suffer so much against it. For the devil is a furious enemy; when he sees that we resist him and attack the old man, and when he cannot rout us by force, he sneaks and skulks about on every side, trying all kinds of tricks, and does not stop until he has finally worn us out so that we either renounce our faith or lose heart and become indifferent or impatient. For times like these, when our heart feels too sorely pressed, this comfort of the Lord’s Supper is given to bring us new strength and refreshment (neue Krafft und Labsal hole).”

Augustinian tag) vivified by the Holy Spirit and filled with his sanctifying gifts. It is well-known, of course, that for Luther lifelong repentance is the right use and proper signification of baptism:

These two parts, being sunk under the water and coming out of it again, point to the power and work of baptism, which is nothing else than the slaying of the old Adam and the resurrection of the new man, both of which must continue in us our whole life long. Thus a Christian life is nothing else than a daily baptism (eine tegliche Tauffe), begun once and continuing for ever. For we must keep at it without ceasing, always sweeping out (ausfege) whatever is of the old Adam, so that whatever belongs to the new may come forth. What then is the old man? It is what is born in us from Adam, irascible, spiteful, envious, unchaste, greedy, lazy, proud, ja unbelieving, beset with all vices and by nature he has nothing good in him. Now, when we enter into Christ’s Kingdom, such things must daily decrease so that the longer we live the more gentle, patient, and meek we become, and the more we break away from unbelief, greed, hatred, envy, and pride. This is the right use of baptism among Christians, signified through water-baptizing.\footnote{Ibid, BSELK, 1128.7-21, cf. BC, 465.}

But perhaps less well-known is the fact that for Luther this baptismal gift of new life and continual growth in holiness is not an awkward appendix to the gospel, but a chief part of God’s saving promise. For in the promulgation of his gospel by preaching, water, bread, and wine, God promises to lavish not a single but a twofold blessing upon those who believe what they hear, are drenched in it head to toe, and eat and drink it with glad and thankful hearts. Grace and gift, forgiveness and new creation, free justification and real holiness of life: this one great evangelical reality is what the Father promises to grant, in and for the sake of his Son and by the operation of his Spirit, to every poor beggar who \textit{per fidem promissionis} bets the farm on this gospel.

(3) In the third place, we need to adjust Bayer’s interpretation of the \textit{kind} of assurance which the promise of grace in Jesus Christ creates in the believing heart. In chapter 2.1.4, on the 1538 addendum to SA III.3, I introduced Luther’s eminently
traditional conviction that regeneration is amissible; and on that occasion, I noted
Berndt Hamm’s incorrect conflation of Luther’s doctrine in this regard with that of the
Reformed. In his influential essay on the Reformation doctrine of justification, Hamm
urges that for the Reformers, “salvation means the unconditional and thus final
acceptance of the godless, an acceptance that cannot be reversed.” Following Bayer
(and back of him, Hennig), Hamm asserts that this conception of unconditional and
irreversible salvation first emerged publically at Augsburg in Oct. 1518. Cajetan
accused Luther of wrongly mingling the objective and subjective aspects of assurance:
for the cardinal, the reality of sacramental grace in the Church is sure enough, but a
given person’s share in that grace is uncertain or, at best, conjectural. For his part,

... Luther and the other reformers after him made a connection between the
objective validity of the actions of Christ, of the New Testament and its
promise, and the advent of his promise in the shape of faith’s subjective
certainty in the man who receives it. This connection is possible only in light of
unconditionality.\footnote{\textsuperscript{121}}

The proper end of salvation’s \textit{objective reality in the promise} (effectually conveyed in
Word and Sacrament) is to summon, create, and sustain \textit{subjective assurance} of this
salvation within the heart, which takes hold of it in the promise by faith. Note well,
objective salvation by grace and subjective assurance by faith can only be linked
together inseparably if the grace given in the promise is strictly unconditional. It is
precisely the conditionality of Bielish \textit{pactum}-theology that drove Luther to the brink
of despair: “facientibus quod in se est,” etc. The Reformation doctrine of justification
puts away fear and anxiousness because it first puts away every condition for achieving
salvation, replacing merit through law by the free grace of the gospel:

\footnote{\textsuperscript{121} Berndt Hamm, “What was the Reformation Doctrine of Justification?” in \textit{The Reformation of Faith}, 200-1.}
Only because the question of whether the person receiving grace is worthy or unworthy becomes irrelevant, only because the sinner’s gaze no longer remains fixed on himself with his imperfect repentance and his inability to love, only because this subjective uncertainty is no longer necessary and the sinner’s attention is diverted away from his own potential for works and towards Jesus Christ as the sole grounds of salvation, does the subjective certainty of salvation become possible: man is unconditionally accepted by God for salvation although he is a sinner, indeed as a sinner. Unconditional certainty, to the Reformers, is thus the outcome of unconditional grace.\textsuperscript{1122}

For the great scholar of late medieval \textit{Frömmigkeitstheologie}, the experience of unconditional certainty separates evangelical piety from its Catholic precursors by a wide gulf. As of 1518, the new promise theology has rendered “the whole typical late medieval yearning for security and the certainty of grace and salvation” obsolete, assured peace with God being an integral part of justifying faith in the promise; and “this certainty of being safe in Christ is the source of all that [the Reformers] call the peace, calm, joy, and consolation of a Christian life.”\textsuperscript{1123}

Bayer, of course, emphasizes the promise—faith/assurance nexus in a similar manner, for on his reading assurance born of the promise is what distinguishes \textit{Pro veritate} as the first reformational text in Luther’s Werke. In absolution and in the Eucharist, the promise is spoken anew in order to preserve the believer’s union with the promising God; but it is in baptism that this unbreakable relation is actually established, on the basis of “the once-for-all-time nature of the promise.”\textsuperscript{1124} Hence in Bayer’s 1989 \textit{Thesen zur Rechtfertigungslehre}, we find the same stress on unconditionality and finality highlighted in Hamm’s account:

\textsuperscript{1122} Ibid, 201.
\textsuperscript{1123} Ibid, 201.
\textsuperscript{1124} Bayer, \textit{Martin Luther’s Theology}, 57.
7. The gospel is the pure—that is, unconditional—word of forgiveness to the sinner: “you are set free!”

8. Nothing more is needed for salvation, “for where there is forgiveness of sin, there is life and salvation” (Small Catechism): salvation is to be understood as final and total communion with God.\textsuperscript{1125}

But is the promise of the gospel quite as unconditional for the mature Luther as modern Lutherans like Bayer and Hamm have grown accustomed to think of it?

It all depends on the nature and scope of the unconditionality, and thus the precise kind of assurance, which one posits. In his 1542 lecture on Gen. 32:3-5, Luther contrasts the “conditional promises of the law” (\textit{conditionales promissiones legis}) with the “simple promise of grace” (\textit{simplex promissio gratiae}). In his office as the law’s chosen promulgator, Moses is an “if” man: if you do this, you will live; if you do not do it, you will die. In the law, the promised blessing of righteousness and life is contingent upon the condition of one’s law-keeping (Lev. 18:15, Deut. 27:26; cf. Gen. 2:16-17). But the ancient patriarchs enjoyed the simple promise of grace, righteousness, and life in the Serpent-Crusher \textit{sine conditione}—as does the \textit{semen Abrahae}, that is the evangelical Church in all ages (Rom. 4:13-16, Gal. 3:6—4:7). For in the gospel of his crucified Son, God promises free mercy to sinners who deserve nothing but punishment, and freely gives this grace to those who take him at his word.\textsuperscript{1126} In this


\textsuperscript{1126} WA 44.71.21-38, 72.5-12: \textit{Iudaorum nugae, quas Lyra hoc loco videtur secutus, inanes sunt et frivolae. Dicunt enim Iacob trepidasse, propterea quod diutius cum idolatra Laban moratus esset, et aliquam labem ab eo contraxisset. Item quod cogitarit Iacob promissiones esse conditionales, quae requirant debitum erga Deum officium. Sed neutiquam sic sentiendum est de patribus. Quanquam vera est distinctio, duplices esse promissiones, conditionales et simplices sine conditione: ut legis promissio est conditionalis: Gratiae promissio est simplex. Quando merces promittitur laboranti, conditio est, quae requirit operam et officium pactum, quod si non sequitur, merces non solvitur. Sed tales promissiones missas faciamus, quando est cum Deo agendum in conscientia. Mox enim confundemur: Si quidem ne uno quidem momento in officio sumus. Ideo falsa et pessima glossa est Lyrae, quam sumpsit a Iudaenis: qui nugantur Iacob non potuisse statuere, promissionem gratiae esse
sense, for Luther the promise is indeed unconditional. For nothing is demanded on
the part of the ungodly sinner: nothing, that is, but his sins, for his spiritual
bankruptcy is the one asset he brings to the bargain. The riches of God’s grace are
given freely in Christ, through the redemption wrought by his shed blood (the
princely sum paid at the cross being itself the outworking in time of the Father’s
merciful resolve to set his chosen people free from sin and death). By means of the
preached Word and sacraments, these riches are bestowed freely and effectually in the
promise itself. Poor beggar that he is, the repenting and believing sinner receives the
free gift of these riches by faith alone, that is, quite apart from any regard to the
spiritual capital he might have built up ex hypothesi by doing works of the law. For
lively faith is nothing but an empty-handed heart grasping hold of Christ crucified in
the promise and refusing to let him go. Since the unconditional promise of grace
overcomes the conditional promises of the law, the believer enjoys assured peace with
God (Rom. 5:1, Eph. 3:12, Heb. 10:22). So long as he abides in Christ by faith—“his
whole life,” like St. Jacob’s, “absorbed in this promise”\footnote{On Gen. 48:21, WA 44.719.13-4: omnis vita eius in hac promissione absorpta est: Deus promisit se fore mihi propicium, adeo ut ex me nascendus est Messias. Cf. LW 8.191.}—the most fulsome praise
that Bayer and Hamm could possibly lavish upon the certitudo salutis does indeed
(save for one literally crucial exception: farther on this in a moment) hold water.

So long as! For as I argued in Parts I and II, Luther consistently teaches that the believer may fall away from grace (and forfeit the gift of the Spirit) if he consents to the sinful desires that remain in his flesh. There is therefore an abiding conditionality to Luther’s theology after all; and to say the least, this considerably complicates his doctrine of assurance. To take first his position on assurance: Bayer and Hamm—and Cajetan—are right to argue that Luther’s *fiducia promissionis* signals a breaking-point with mainstream medieval Catholic doctrine and piety. But for Luther, the assurance of faith is a provisional reality limited in its scope to the present moment: one of the many respects in which his teaching is more medieval than it is modern. The evangelical believer knows for a certainty that he has been baptized, preached to, absolved, and communicated. Furthermore, he knows that in the present moment, by faith, he receives the promise through these means. Even if, for a season, he enjoys no experiential certainty of this grace, he clings to the sure promise lodged *in verba externa* and lets their sheer reality and givenness be certainty enough for him for long as the darkness may last. Ego baptizatus sum! So then, even the afflicted soul has a kind of assurance, not to be sure in himself but rather in the Word he grasps by an act of heroic hope. In time of trial and in time of peace, if the believer grasps the promise in faith, he is therefore free to rest in Christ with a quiet and confident heart—for the time being. Trusting in the Word, he sees (with the eyes of faith) that he has been justified and that he has peace with God. But what he cannot see is whether he will trust God’s promise this afternoon, or tomorrow, or in the hour of death. That depends on whether he continues to abide in Christ, persevering to the end in order to be saved (Matt. 10:22); and David’s and Peter’s great falls stand as an everlasting
rebuke against souls who nurse the presumption that they will certainly stand fast (cf. 1 Cor. 10:12). In short: by faith in the promise, the believer enjoys (to quote a woman whose heart could see) the blessed assurance that Jesus is mine in the present. But he has no guarantee that his present sense of assurance is a certain foretaste of glory divine. His present salvation is real enough, but it is not final.

Now, behind this principled lack of final assurance (that is, assurance of perseverance) lies the complex and dynamic interplay of three interrelated loci: first, the Augustinian doctrine of predestination, which Luther adopts c. 1514/15 and never abandons despite his grave Prädestinationsanfechtungen and, in the 1530s and 40s, his pastoral counsel not to think too much about it; second, Luther’s deeply Augustinian doctrine of sin, grace, and holiness, the main object of this book; third, the Lutheran doctrine of present assurance through faith in the promise. Perhaps, in the long run, at least one of these factors has to give way before the others. Reformed theologians like Calvin, Hooker, and Owen pick up the first and the second but then modify the third, broadening the scope of assurance to include each link in the catena aurea from predestination to glory (Rom. 8:30) and thus, arguably, altering it in kind. For their part, Erasmians, Philippists, et al. who abandon absolute predestination willy-nilly attenuate sin, enfeeble grace, and misplace holiness in opera hominis by the same stroke; which means that they too alter the nature of assurance, anchoring it too confidently in the believer’s free decision to cooperate with grace and thus enervating that grace (and sapping the strength of assurance) in just the way Luther lamented near the end of de servo arbitrio. Since Luther’s hard-to-categorize position charts a

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1128 WA 18.783.3-39, Packer, 313-14. Farther on this point in the conclusion below.
middle way between these alternative stances, describing the exact nature of the conditionality which he envisions in the Christian life proves a difficult task. If considered in light of God’s eternal predestination, the elect believer’s continuance in grace is not conditional at all; or if it is, God has promised to give, by the operation of his Spirit, the very conditions which he requires for the believer to remain in his grace, viz., repentance and faith to the bitter end. In this regard, eternal salvation is every bit as unconditional for Luther as it is for Calvin—or Augustine. But Luther agrees with Augustine (and with all medieval Augustinians) that with few exceptions, it has seemed wise to the Lord to hide from the elect the fixed fact of their election, the better to keep them in a spiritual posture of right fear of God, humility, obedience, and dependence. In this regard, he is in spiritual practice closer to Erasmus than he might care to admit. For from the limited vantage point of the viator in lumine gratiae nondum gloriae, the great matter of his own salvation—dependent as he knows it really is on God’s election according to free grace (Rom. 9:16, 11:5-6)—appears to be a profoundly conditional matter. As I put it above, for Luther a great “if” hangs over the Christian life: if the believer perseveres to the end in faith and repentance, he will be saved. “If you live according to the flesh, you will die: but if, by the Spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom. 8:13). In this life, the gift-empowered refusal of consent to residual sin is utterly necessary to remain in Christ’s grace, and unconditional certainty is not on the table.

(4) The fourth and last point of correction to Bayer’s promissio-thesis is an intimate spiritual corollary of the third. For Bayer, the mystical theologia crucis encapsulated in the April 1518 Heidelberg Disputation is part and parcel of what the
new theology of promise and faith emerging in May/June 1518 overcomes.\textsuperscript{1129} I am convinced that Luther’s promise theology deeply refashions the mystical theology of sanctification through the cross. But it does not do away with it. Instead, it gives rise to what Berndt Hamm calls an “evangelical mysticism.”\textsuperscript{1130} And for the old Luther—above all as hagiographic lecturer on the Genesis saints—at the heart of the darkest possible mystical experience of the holy cross is the withdrawal of any felt sense of God’s grace, kindness, favor, love. To suffer thus is to share in Christ’s desolation on the cross (Ps. 22:1-2). In the traditional monastic terms which the old Luther continued to utilize, this is the \textit{suspensio gratiae}.\textsuperscript{1131} In the more novel language of the Reformer’s \textit{Worttheologie}, the same experience is described as the total eclipse of the promise in the midst of demonic accusation and attack—or even divine, in the case of the greatest saints. For in the highest \textit{Anfechtungen}, of the order holy Jacob endured that long dark night at the River Jabbok, it is none other than Jesus Christ himself, the Promised Seed, who rises up in battle against his saint, revokes all former assurances of his blessing, and assaults him with the threat of certain damnation.\textsuperscript{1132} In that instance, by definition, subjective assurance of salvation is gone. But in spite of it all, the Promise stands fast; and though its sweetness can no longer be tasted in the heart,

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\item Berndt Hamm, “Wie mystisch war der Glaube Luthers?,” in Berndt Hamm and Volker Leppin, eds., \textit{Gottes Nähe unmittelbar erfahren: Mystik im Mittelalter und bei Martin Luther} (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2007), 237-87, here 237 et passim. On p. 262, note 77, Hamm observes that Bayer’s \textit{worttheologische} interpretation of Luther’s theology (as opposed to zur-Mühlen’s in \textit{Nos extra nos}) precludes the very possibility of an evangelical \textit{Mystik}.
\item See chapter 2.2.3 above, where I discussed the appearance of this monastic-theological phrase in the lecture on Gen. 8:1 (WA 42.335ff, LW 2.103-6) and in Luther’s marginal notes on Tauler’s sermons, WA 9.99.29 (\textit{suspensio gratiae et spiritus}) and 101.3-4 (\textit{derelictione a deo per suspensionem gratiae}).
\item WA 44.96.39-40: \textit{Nostra vero sententia haec est, quod luctator sit Dominus gloriae, Deus ipse, sive filius Dei incarnandus, qui apparuit et locutus est patribus.} Cf. LW 6.130.
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by virtue of the Spirit’s ineffable *gemitus* (Rom. 8:26) its rock-solid truth can still be trusted, and the Lord’s deliverance hoped for (Isa. 50:10). And because of Luther’s Augustinian doctrine of gift-empowered non-consent as the spiritual condition for abiding in Christ’s grace, the severely afflicted saint not only can but must cling to the promise. For God will not forsake a believer unless the believer forsakes God first. But forsake God the saint may indeed do, frail and sinful as he is by virtue of his flesh. And does not everything in his experience argue that God has already forsaken him? that, in St. Asaph’s words, the steadfast love of the Lord has forever ceased, and his promises come to end for all time (Ps. 77:8)? For as long as the hour of darkness endures, the afflicted saint hangs suspended between eternal death and eternal life: or rather, he is in process of being plunged into the abyss of death and hell, with just a slender thread of faith precariously tethering him to the kingdom of grace and life. Everything hinges (*in conspectu credentis, non dei miserentis*) on whether he will give up and cut the thread and fall to his destruction, or else defiantly refuse to let go of God in his promise of grace, clinging to God’s promised steadfastness in Christ even in the face of his own wrathful opposition to this promise and indeed, to the saint himself. So the mystical *Worttheologe*, lecturing on Gen. 32 in 1542:

This passage is regarded by all as among the most obscure in the whole Old Testament. Nor is this strange, since it deals with that sublime temptation (*de sublimi illa tentatione*) in which the Patriarch Jacob had to fight not with flesh and blood or with the Devil, but against God himself. But that is a horrible battle, when God himself battles and in a hostile fashion sets himself against his opponent as though on the point of taking away life. He who wants to stand and conquer in this struggle must certainly be a holy man and true Christian.¹³³⁴

¹³³⁴ WA 44.93.2-8: *Hic locus ab omnibus habetur inter obscurissimos totius veteris Testamenti. Neque id mirum est: quia agit de sublimi illa tentatione, qua dimicandum est Patriarchae Iacob non cum carne et sanguine, aut cum Diabolo: sed adversus Deum ipsum. Ea vero horribilis pugna est: Quando
... moreover, the temptation to despair (tentatio desperationis), which usually accompanies this experience, increases the pain and confusion of the flesh, when the afflicted soul complains that it is deserted and cast off by God. This is the ultimate and heaviest temptation to unbelief and despair, with which the greatest of the saints (summi ex sanctis) are usually exercised. And he who is able to stand and endure there, he comes through to the perfect knowledge of the divine will [Rom. 12:2], so that he is able to say with Jacob: “I have seen the Lord,” etc. (Gen. 32:30). “I didn’t think that our Lord God meant so well with me.”

In 1515/16, Luther would have counseled a soul suffering thus to resign himself to damnation, the better to facilitate the purgative work of infused grace. This, of course, is the spiritual wisdom of John Tauler and the Theologia Deutsch, and I think Leppin is quite right to insist that Tauler's influence on Luther is far more important—and more abiding—than many have recognized. Long after the advent of the new promise theology, the indisputably evangelical Luther continues to describe the

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1134 WA 44.97.25-31: Auget autem dolorem et trepidationem carnis tentatio desperationis, quae solet concurrere, quando animus adflictus. queritur se desertum et abiecit a Deo. Haec est ultima et gravissima tentatio diffidentiae et desperationis, qua solent exerceri summi ex sanctis. Et qui ibi potest consistere et perdurare, pervenit ad perfectam cognitionem voluntatis divinae, ut possit dicere cum Iacob: ‘vidi Dominum’ etc. Ich meinet nicht, das unser Herr Gott so gut mit mir meinet. Cf. LW 6.131.


1136 Volker Leppin, “Transformationen spätmittelalterlicher Mystik bei Luther,” in Gottes Nähe, 165-86, esp. 171-8; idem, “Tauler, Johannes (ca. 1300-1361),” TRE, vol. 32, pp. 745-48, here 747. This, pace Henrik Otto, Vor- und frühreformatorische Tauler-Rezeption. Annotationen in Drucken des späten 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhunderts (Gütersloher, 2003), 213-14, who argues well that Tauler influenced Luther profoundly in the early period, but then concludes that this influence was merely temporary. Cf. the lecture on Gen. 41:1-7, WA 44.297.9-20, LW 7.133: Ista exempla diligenter observanda sunt et inculcanda mentibus piorum, carnales enim contemnunt, nec perspicuunt penetralia virtutum, quae scribuntur et proponuntur Ecclesiae in consolationem, ut discamus adflictiones nostras certissimum argumentum et pignus esse, quod simus filii Dei. Extat vox Tauleri, quanquam non logitur in terminis scripturae sanctae, sed alieno et peregrino sermone utitur: Magnum damnum sciat homo se fecisse, qui non expectat opus Domini, videlicet, quando vult eum crucigere, mortificare et redigere veterem hominem in nihilum, quod non fit nisi passione et cruce, ibi enim sustines opus Domini, qui format te, hobelt dich, und haut die groben eßt ab, et quidquid est impedimenti ad aedificationem aeternam, praecidit securi, serra, dolabra. Sicut inquit David Psalmo 37: ‘Subditus esto Deo, et formare ei.’
mystical experience of damnation in the old taulerisch terms; and he does so because he fully expects holy Christians (summi ex sanctis) to suffer this ineffable agony as a crucial component of their sanctification by Christ’s cross. The experience itself is unaltered from a phenomenological standpoint, and the spiritual end of the experience is the same as well: Lutheran saints, too, pass through the hellish purgatorial suffering of the cross en route to holiness and glory. But the Promise has turned Tauler’s old wisdom on its head. In the midst of hell, the saint of God, that is “the man of faith who has the promise,”\(^\text{1137}\) is no longer to resign himself to perdition even in the event that God in his majesty so wills it. Just the reverse in fact. The Seelsorger trained in Luther’s evangelical Mystik (and, with Mattox and Maxfield, we must ever recall that the spiritual formation of skilled pastors is the old Doctor’s main object in his lectures\(^\text{1138}\)) advises the soul in his care to cling to the divine promise in faith with such a tenacity and adamance that he might even be forced to hold the Lord God himself to his word. In scholastic terms, the suffering saint is to reject deus in potentia absoluta sua in favor of deus in potentia ordinata sua, that is, Jesus Christ and him crucified as he is present, given, and graspable in Word and sacrament.\(^\text{1139}\) In

\(^{1137}\) WA 44.101.39, LW 6.136.

\(^{1138}\) WA 44.98.29-35: Haec diligenter agitanda sunt propter eos, qui aliquando futuri sunt pastores Ecclesiaram. Semper enim erunt aliqui, qui pacientur hasce tentationes, ut eorum voce erigi et confirmari possint: in hunc modum, confide, fili, crede te baptisatum esse, pastum et cibatum coena Domini, absolutum impositis manibus, non meis, sed Dei, qui dixit ad te: Remitto tibi peccata, promitto vitam aeternam. Hoc si firma fide appræhenderint, evanescant tentationes et blasphemiae spiritus. Cf. LW 6.132; Mattox, Defender, 257; Maxfield, 15-18.

\(^{1139}\) See above all the 1539 lecture on Gen. 19:14, WA 43.71.7—73.23, LW 3.274-77, esp. WA 43.72.37—73.10: Ego legi tales libros cum magno studio, et vos quoque hortor, ut legatis: sed cum iudicio, nec nulla causa est, cur ego haec sic urgeam et incutam, ut in ordinam Dei potentiam et ministeria Dei intueamini: nolumus enim agere cum Deo nudo, ‘cuius viæ sunt impervestigabiles, et abscondita iuditia’, Romanos undecimo. Ordinatam potentiam, hoc est, filium incarnatum amplectemur, ‘in quo reconditi sunt omnes thesauri divinitatis’. Ad puerum illum positum in gremio matris mariae, ad victimam illam pendentem in cruce nos conferemus, Ibi vere contemplabimur Deum, ibi in ipsum cor Dei introspiciemus, quod sit misericors, quod nolit mortem peccatoris: sed ut convertatur et vivat. Ex
scriptural terms, even as the Lord Almighty himself seeks to put him to death (cf. Exod. 4:24), an evangelical mystic like Jacob must defiantly and resolutely refuse to let go of God in his promise, until he blesses him (Gen. 32:26):

I shall cling to the Word of God and be content with it. There I shall die: there I shall live. There is sufficiently abundant protection in the promise of God not only against the devil, the flesh, and the world but also against this sublime temptation. For if God were to send an angel to say: “Do not believe these promises!” I would reject him, saying: “Depart from me, Satan, etc.” Or, if God himself appeared to me in his majesty and said: “You are not worthy of my grace; I will change my counsel and I will not keep my promise to you,” there I would not give him ground, but it would have to be fought out bitterly against God himself. It is as Job says: “Even if he kills me, nevertheless, I will hope in him” (Job 13:15). If he should cast me off into the depths of hell and place me in the midst of devils, nevertheless, I believe that I am going to be saved: because I have been baptized, I have been absolved, I have received the pledge of my salvation, the body and blood of the Lord in the Supper. Therefore I want to see and hear nothing else, but I shall live and die in this faith, whether God, or an angel, or the devil says the contrary.¹¹⁴⁰

This is to draw near to the gates of hell and to emerge the victor, grace-wounded and limping as you go. For in the narthex of eternal damnation, when the only certainty is sheer terror and the only unconditional truth the justice of the saint’s condemnation, the excruciating lack of assurance and the invincible strength of the Promise go hand-in-hand—for the sanctification of the saint, and to the great glory of God.

If the young Luther, with Tauler’s famed nun and not a few other early modern catholics, saw the very apex of sanctity in the mystical confession, “Let him slay me”; and if modern Lutherans have tended to disregard sanctity and mysticism alike, saying simply “I will hope in him” on the basis of a one-sided theology of the Word; in the mature Luther’s spiritual theology, the greatest of the saints count the whole world as loss, stake everything on the Promise, endure the purifying cross, dare God to keep his word, and therefore cry out with Job in the patient, hopeful, holy suffering of faith: “Even if he kills me, nevertheless, I will hope in him.” Such is the Reformer’s theologia mystica promissionis, fidei et crucis, and it is most assuredly a theology of holiness.

Did not the Lord give Jacob a new name in the struggle? Renewal in holiness is the object of all God’s marvelous dealings with his saints: “But now I give to you a name that accords with what I have done with you, just as I have magnified you (cf. Ps. 4:4 Vg.), not as a son of the flesh, but as I have led, governed, afflicted, purged, and

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1141 Otto, Vor- und frühreformatorische Tauler-Rezeption, 110-14. On p. 113, Otto notes three texts from 1518 wherein Luther cites Tauler (and alludes to the story from Predigt 13) to prove his lack of novelty: in his Resolutiones, WA 1.586.16-19; the Asteriscii against Eck, WA 1.298.29ff; and the Ad dialogum Silv. Prieratis de potet. papae responsio, WA 1.674.33-7, to wit: ... quidam e tua secta, doctissimus Doctor Iohannes Taulerus, ait, si coelu m coram te apertum esset, adhuc intrare non deberes, nisi primum voluntatem dei super introitu consuleres, ut etiam in gloria non quae tua sunt quaeras. Sed hanc sententiam verissimam et theologicissimam absit ut probet Scholastica Theologia.

1142 For promissio—fides—crux, see the 1544 lecture on Gen. 37:18-20, where Luther states that in the stories of the fathers the promise and their faith in the promise should be observed, “and afterwards also their cross. For these three are the principales loci in the legends of the saints.” WA 44.272, LW 6.364. In the 1539 lecture on Gen. 22:1-2, Luther summarizes the Christian life in these three terms: “If there are some who want to follow allegory, Moriah was the word of God and faith in the word. For these two are correlatives: there can be no faith or worship of God where there is no word, and wherever the word is, there it is necessary that there are some people who believe. Where, therefore, these two are, there follows a third, namely the cross and mortification. These three make up the Christian life.” WA 43.208.19-22, cf. LW 4.101. Since it names the virtue exercised under the cross, the spiritual greatness of patience must never be underestimated, WA 44.300.41—301.2, cf. LW 6.402: “Let patience (Patientia), says James (1:4), have the perfect work. For he who is patient (paciens) does not sin: ‘he who is mortified, has been set free from sin,’ Rom. 6[7]. He who is patient (Patiens) in faith in Christ is truly a saint. There, nothing of sin remains [cf. 1 Pet. 4:1]. For whatever he suffers (patitur) is sheer and purest righteousness.” On the cross in the Genesis lectures, see Forsberg, Das Abrahambild, 91-8.
sanctified you by many vexations, in order that I might make you a new man and a
new creature (novum hominem et novam creaturam); and now I give to you a new
name, not of the flesh but of the spirit.”\textsuperscript{143} This is the old Luther’s mystical theology of
real and indeed heroic holiness, and it is Promissiotheologie to the core.

3.5 The Trinitarian Deepening of Luther’s Theology

In the last place, a brief word on the maturation of the young Luther’s Augustinian
theology sin and grace (Part II) into the mature Reformer’s trinitarian dogmatics of
holiness (chapter 2). The student of Luther’s theology who steps back from this or that
tree to survey the whole forest of his works cannot help but notice the rising profile of
the catholic doctrine of the Holy Trinity. In part, this is because the younger Luther
could simply assume its truthfulness: a luxury he could no longer afford after the
emergence of anti-trinitarianism in the 1530s amongst the likes of Christian Entfelder,
Michel Servetus, and John Campanus.\textsuperscript{144} Hence the vigorous assertions of the
Church’s creedal doctrine (and doctrinal theology) that flow steadily from his pen in
the 1530s and 40s. For example: the Three Symbols or Creeds of the Christian Faith
(1538), expositing the Apostles’ Creed, the Athanasian, and the Te Deum; On the
Councils and the Church (1539), which articulates a scripturally-ruled and historically
informed evangelical conciliarism in its first two parts and then culminates in the

\textsuperscript{143} On Gen. 35:9-10, WA 44.192.13-17, cf. LW 6.259.
\textsuperscript{144} Cf. WA Tr 1.99.18-21, LW 54.32 (#237, from April 1532): “When an exceedingly virulent book was
published in 1532 contra trinitatem, Luther said: ‘These people don’t think about the fact that other
people too have suffered temptations about this article: ja, but it doesn’t lighten the sting to set my
thought over against the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.” Presumably, Luther and his guests were
discussing the Dialogi de Trinitate which Servetus published that year. See Brecht, Preservation of
the Church, 133-4; for the “Radical Triadologies” of Entfelder, Servetus, Campanus, Claude of Savoy,
and Schwenckfeld, see George Huntston Williams, The Radical Reformation, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed. (Kirksville, MO:
Truman State University Press, 1992), 459-76.
third with the trinitarian, grace-and-gift ecclesiology I set forth above in chapter 2.3; the Promotionsdisputationen of Erasmus Alberus (1543), Georg Major and Johannes Faber (1544), and Petrus Hegemon (1545), advanced exercises in scholastic trinitarianism; exegetical works like the Lectures on Genesis (1535—45) and the Treatise on the Last Words of David (1543), in which Luther champions patristic trinitarian exegesis of the Old Testament along the lines I sketched above in section 3.2.\footnote{On the last point, see esp. Christine Helmer, “Luther’s Trinitarian Hermeneutic and the Old Testament,” Modern Theology 18/1 (Jan. 2002): 49-73; Mickey L. Mattox, “From Faith to the Text and Back Again: Martin Luther on the Trinity in the Old Testament,” Pro Ecclesia 15/3 (Summer 2006): 281-303.} In short, the old Luther increasingly devoted his attention and skill to preaching, expositing, and defending the catholic objectum fidei or fides quae summed up in the ancient confessions of the Church.

But this is not what I have in mind to underscore here. For the trinitarian deepening of Luther’s theology was not just a matter of a topical shift due to the external provocations of false doctrine. The deepening ran much deeper than that, and it is therefore much harder to document or demonstrate. But a full account of the development of Luther’s theology of holiness requires that I set my hand to it nonetheless, unavoidably impressionistic as my observations here must needs be. We have no reason to suspect that there was ever a time in Luther’s life when he did not hold the Church’s received doctrine of the Trinity. (To be sure, the Devil attacked this chief article along with all the others: but Luther fought back against the vanity of his fallen, finite reasonings by the Word of God and prayer, as does every verus theologus ecclesiae.) In a life marked by extraordinary upheaval, his creedal faith in the Trinity—and in the person, natures, and work of Jesus Christ—is a fixed and stable datum, and
as such a reliable gauge of the Reformer’s abiding catholicity (as Aulén, Piepkorn, Pelikan, Mannermaa, Yeago, et al. have argued1146). I think there is, however, a discernible shift from a more formal (not merely formal: more) commitment to catholic dogma in the earlier stages of Luther’s career to the materially trinitarian dogmatics of grace and gift that pervades and invigorates his mature Reformation theology. In other words, the more evangelical and scriptural Luther’s gospel became, the more deeply catholic his theology grew. As Helmer has cogently argued in her book, this gradual development from a more formal to a profoundly material trinitarian commitment was not a matter of abandoning vain theological attempts to peek into the inner being, life, and glory of the so-called “immanent Trinity” in favor of an exclusive focus on the redemptive-historical manifestation (sub contrario!) of the “economic Trinity.” Nor was it quite a matter of leaving off scholastic speculations about God for a more patristic, exegetical, and kerygmatic theology of Father, Son, and Spirit. The old professor clearly delighted in thinking about the eternity, majesty, infinity, and joy of the Holy Trinity in se; and certainly by the time of the Romans lectures, the young doctor in biblia was well on his way toward the articulation of a scripturally rich theology of the Trinity’s mighty deeds of salvation ad extra pro nobis. But as Luther continued along the path which Dr. Staupitz had set for him in 1512, the trinitarian substance of the gospel itself, that is the Father’s promise of free grace in his Son and new life by his Spirit, increasingly impressed itself upon his mind.

We see this in the great summaries of his teaching which Luther supplied for posterity in the late 1520s and 30s: in addition to the third part of *On the Councils and the Church*, the third part of the *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper* (1528) and, in terms of their impact on the ground in the real life of the Church, above all the two Catechisms (1529) come to mind. In the *Confession*, for example, amidst a workmanlike, matter-of-fact summary of the Church’s faith that follows the outline of the Apostles’ Creed—and in process, highlights loci in doctrine and piety where, in Luther’s judgment, Roman Catholic teaching subverts the Creed, *e.g.*, “I therefore condemn both new and old Pelagians, who do not want to let original sin be sin, rather it must be a weakness or lack,”1147 likewise the theory and praxis of monastic life as salvifically meritorious since “to seek a way of blessedness there, that’s the devil’s doctrine and faith, 1 Tim. 4[:1-5] etc.”1148—amidst, I say, this more formal and straightforward elaboration of the heads of creedal doctrine, Luther suddenly erupts into a doxological surge of robust trinitarian faith that is simultaneously an impassioned proclamation of God’s free gift of nothing less than himself to us poor sinners in the gospel:

These are the three persons and one God, who has given himself to us all wholly and completely (*der sich uns allen selbs gantz und gar gegeben hat*), with all that he is and has. The Father gives himself to us (*Der Vater gibt sich uns*), with heaven and earth and all the creatures, that they may serve us and be useful. But this gift has become obscured and useless through Adam’s fall. Therefore the Son himself subsequently gave himself to us (*hat darnach der son sich selbs auch uns gegeben*) and has given all his work, sufferings, wisdom, and righteousness and reconciled us to the Father, so that we, living and righteousness once again, might also know and have the Father with his gifts. But since this grace would useful to no one if it remained so profoundly hidden and could not come to us, the Holy Spirit comes and gives himself to us also

1147 WA 26.503.25-6 [Dr], cf. LW 37.363.
1148 WA 26.504.28-9 [Dr], cf. LW 37.364.
wholly and completely (kompt der heilige geist und gibt sich auch uns gantz und gar). He teaches us Christ’s saving deed, shows us how to understand it, helps us receive and preserve it, to use it to our advantage and to impart it to others, to increase and extend it. He does this both inwardly and outwardly: inwardly through the faith and other spiritual gifts, but outwardly through the Gospel, through baptism, and the sacrament of the altar, through which as through three means or ways he comes to us and inculcates the sufferings of Christ in us and brings blessedness for our use.\footnote{WA 26.505.38—506.12 [Dr], cf. LW 37.366.}

But arguably the trinitarian deepening of Luther’s gospel (and so his evangelical theology) is even more apparent in texts that are not immediately concerned with the exposition of the Church’s creedal doctrine. In my mind, the \textit{Disputations against the Antinomians} (1537—40) are especially worthy of mention in this regard. If those passages which feature the mature creedal theology of grace in Christ and renewal by the Spirit’s gift were cut, Jefferson-style (cf. Jer. 36:23), from the disputations, little would be left over. Precisely because their subject matter is not the Holy Trinity but the nature of the law, its right use, its role in justification, its proper distinction from the gospel, and so forth, the depth of Luther’s mature grasp of the doctrines of creation, of Adam and Eve’s rebellion with its horrible effects, and of the Father’s utterly gracious (and in the promise, publically declared) resolve to redeem fallen humans from sin and death through the grace of his Son and to restore them to life, holiness, freedom, and joy by the gift of his Spirit is on full display gegen die \textit{Antinomer}.

With this, I come to the end of my argument. I hope that it has furnished an accurate (if admittedly impressionistic) account of how the Reformer carried forward the insights he gleaned from the “420s Augustine” into the works of his maturity, even as he clarified, developed, and deepened this basically traditional vision into a robustly
trinitarian, joyfully evangelical, and persistently mystical dogmatics of sin in Adam, grace and righteousness in Jesus Christ, and renewal into real holiness of life by the Spirit.
CONCLUSION
SUMMARY REMARKS, PROSPECTS FOR THE CHURCHES, AND ONE
DOGMATIC CORRECTION

Two co-extensive arguments lie at the heart of this book.

First, I have argued that in his mature dogmatics Martin Luther sets forth a vigorous doctrine of progressive renewal in holiness by the “gift” of the Holy Spirit. This he sets in careful relation both to the persistent “sinfulness” of the saints and to the “grace” of free forgiveness and righteousness in Jesus Christ. Together, these three realities—grace, gift, and “sin”—are the components that comprise Luther’s rarely grasped “simul.” Far from proving his principled indifference to sanctification, rightly understood the simul peccator et iustus presents a pithy summary of the Reformer’s creedal, mystical, and “Augustinian” theology of embattled holiness advancing mirabiliter within the impregnable stronghold of God’s promise of forgiveness, life, and salvation in Jesus Christ. Indeed, in point of the facts I have urged in this book, it would seem that the “simul” has occupied too central a place and too high a profile in twentieth-century accounts of Luther’s theology. The regenerate suffer the ongoing presence of residual sinful desires in and as their “flesh,” to be sure, and in this sense the greatest of the saints confess they are poor sinners. But by virtue of the Spirit’s renewing gift, holy Lutheran (!) believers in Christ refuse to consent to the evil desires which tantalize, vex, and grieve them all at once. That is, they refuse to stop repenting, cling by steadfast faith to God’s Word in law and gospel, and shut up their ears to the devices of the devil. They put the bits of old Adam’s affections persisting within them to death, beg for increased supplies of the Spirit’s life-giving power, triumph over sin
amidst great weakness by the Spirit’s strength not theirs, and thus continue in the path of baptismal discipleship that leads through their appointed share in the holy cross to the glory of Christ’s resurrection. So long as they keep up the fight, God ignores the imperfections that mar their real renewal for the sake of the blood and righteousness of his incarnate Son. For “sinful” as the heart-rent saints in part remain, this perfect righteousness is theirs by faith in the gospel. Infinite as the Son of God himself, this divine and victorious righteousness utterly abolishes the debt of original and past actual sins, swallows up the affective sinfulness that remains in the saints, and presents them pure and blameless before the Father, as innocent as Christ himself, their Head and Husband—provided they continue to repent and believe. For Spirit-given non-consent to evil desire, manifest in the deep repentance of faith, hope, and love, is the spiritual lynchpin that holds together the three parts of the “simul.” If the battle for non-consent is lost, and a saint succumbs to his flesh as did David with Bathsheba, then faith and the Spirit depart and grace and gift are forfeited. In that tragic case, the erstwhile saint becomes one with his flesh, falls out of righteousness and life in Christ back into death and damnation in Adam, and is found to be peccator totaliter, totus caro, nihil nisi caro, etc.—no longer a iustus saint at all. “He who does not abstain from sin, but persists in his former evil nature, must have a different Christ, that of the Antinomians; the real Christ is not there, even if all the angels would cry, ‘Christ! Christ!’ He must be damned with this, his new Christ.”

Second, I have argued that this theology of sin, grace, and real renewal in holiness is deeply “Augustinian.” Despite the genuine novelty of his Reformation

\[150\] On the Councils and the Church, WA 50.599.35-600.2, cf. LW 41.114.
theology in certain vital respects, the dogmatics of holiness which Luther learned from the “420s Augustine” in the mid 1510s stayed with him for the rest of his life: and this, not as a relic of his medieval past awkwardly patched together with his novel *Worttheologie*, but as the substance and core of his catholic and evangelical theology of sin in Adam, grace and righteousness in Christ, and new life by the Spirit.

I thank you for the patience and kindness you have shown me by getting this far in my book. Perhaps you have found the argument thought-provoking, useful, and even compelling. But if you haven’t, I suppose there isn’t much I could add here to convince you. A little like the fighter pilot God in his wise counsel decreed I shall never become, I’ve done my best to bring this P-51 Mustang back to base with all nine yards left behind in German-occupied territory. In short, my ammo is spent. All that remains is the debriefing, and thus the occasion to share insights gained from this long sortie for use in future contests. These I limit to two areas: first, the implications of my research for the unity of the divided Churches; second, one point where, in the course of writing this book, I’ve come to think that Luther’s dogmatics stand in need of a correction in light of the doctrines of grace set forth in the Word of God for the infinite consolation of fleshly, frail, tank-empty, bullet-ridden, battle-scarred little saints like me.

To be quite clear, I am now shifting gears from the (one hopes) more or less objective historical-theological research of the scholar to the (one also hopes) grace-astonished, scripturally-ruled, historically-rooted, deeply committed, glad, hopeful, and perhaps even wise work of the church theologian. If that’s not your cup of tea, I assure you I take no offense if you stop reading right here! For the real object of my
argument in this book is academic and historical. I trust that in good faith my more

critical readers will not “Bulverize” the forgoing four-hundred or so pages of historical
research too severely in light of the honest dogmatic theology which follows. I
realize that in setting my hand to speak of what is in fact true, I leave myself open to
attack from those quarters that have become too clever for old fashioned things like
being, goodness, beauty, and truth—perhaps, I fear, even to mere dismissal as “a
theologian.” But this is a risk I am willing to take. For I am a Christian, and a pastor
too, and I confess I love the Church of God too much to leave the results of my
historical research sitting on the shelf. I have done my best—others, surely, can do
better—to describe Luther’s theology as it developed in the first half of the sixteenth
century. Now, the time has come to harvest the fruit of this research for the benefit of
Church and theology in the twenty-first. I certainly hope that other, more capable
church theologians than myself will indulge my lack of expertise in their field, and
find further areas of application than the two I have chosen. And for their part,
perhaps my pure historian friends will “bear with me in a little foolishness” (2 Cor.
11:1).

See C. S. Lewis, “‘Bulverism’: Or, the Foundation of 20th Century Thought,” in God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 271-7, esp. 273: “... you must show that a man is wrong before you start explaining why he is wrong. The modern method is to assume without discussion that he is wrong and then distract his attention from this (the only real issue) by busily explaining how he became so silly. In the course of the last fifteen years I have found this vice so common that I have had to invent a name for it. I call it Bulverism. Some day I am doing to write the biography of its imaginary inventor, Ezekiel Bulver, whose destiny was determined at the age of five when he heard his mother say to his father—who had been maintaining that two sides of a triangle were together greater than the third—‘Oh you say that because you are a man.’ ‘At that moment,’ E. Bulver assures us, ‘there flashed across my mind the great truth that refutation is no necessary part of argument. Assume that your opponent is wrong, and then explain his error, and the world will be at your feet. Attempt to prove that he is wrong or (worse still) try to find out whether he is wrong or right, and the national dynamism of our age will thrust you to the wall.’ That is how Bulver became one of the makers of the Twentieth Century.”
Reformation Catholicity – Or, Calling All Evangelical Augustinians

Holy Church is that free Jerusalem which is above, our once-barren mother; apart from her society, no slave-born, orphaned son or daughter of Adam may call upon God as his Father (Isa. 54:1, Gal. 4:26). In her womb we are reborn by the imperishable seed of God’s Word, and at her breasts we are nourished through the sacraments of the gospel (1 Pet. 1:23-5, Isa. 66:10-11). Above, in her eschatological fullness, she is built as a city that is bound firmly together, for in truth there is but one body and one Spirit, one Lord, faith, and baptism, one God and Father of all (Ps. 122:3, Eph. 4:4-6).

But here below, the feuding tribes of Israel must find their way up to her (Ps. 122:4). The safest route up this craggy ascent is the way of the One who came down for her, who set his face to go to the City of David and shed his blood to ransom and purify her children: the sons and daughters of the promise, born not of the flesh but of the Spirit, freely adopted by the Father in love (Eph. 4:8-10, Luke 9:51, Eph. 5:26-7, Gal. 4:21-31, Eph. 1:4-5). The nearer our fractious tribes come to this nail-pierced Man, who is the eternal Son of God, the nearer we draw to one another. For he is the King of righteousness and peace, and is himself our peace by his blood, that through him we may all have access in one Spirit to the Father (Isa. 9:6, Heb. 7:2, Eph. 2:13-18). Did not the prophet Micah speak of these things long ago?

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for Me one who is to be Ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.” Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace (Mic. 5:2-5, cf. Matt. 2:6, John 10:11-18).
For in this good Shepherd “all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through
him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by
the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:19). And yet—the tribes are divided! One follows Paul’s
strong grace and free justification, another Apollos’ impressive erudition, another
Cephas’ rock-solid ecclesiology (1 Cor. 1:12). I thank God that I wasn’t baptized into the
name of Paul, or Luther, or Augustine; and I endeavor here to preach the gospel with
all the weakness and folly that it calls for as the *verbum crucis* (1 Cor. 1:13-25). Still, it
may be that Augustine and Luther—to say nothing of Peter and Paul—may have some
insight into this crucified King of righteousness and peace; and having listened to
them for some time as they listened to the Bible, here I take my own stand on the
Word of God, and hazard to speak a few words to the divided and languishing tribes of
the Lord as they sojourn toward the City of Peace.

To begin with my own tribe, the Anglicans. We are known, with some justice,
for being Augustinians at the prayer-desk and Pelagians in the pulpit; and perhaps
part of the reason for this pitiful reputation is the fact that since the Oxford
Movement we have billed ourselves as a people of Prayer Books, liturgies, laws of
ecclesiastical polity, and “the patristic consensus,” but not of the Reformation
confessions. In fact, apart from the adjustment that I will suggest in a moment, the
doctrines of sin and grace set forth in Articles 9—18 (of the little-studied Thirty-Nine)
is in substance identical to the evangelical Augustinianism of Luther’s mature
dogmatics. In particular Article 9, “Of Original or Birth-sin,” is redolent of the “42os
Augustine” as Luther came to understand him in the mid 1510s:

Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly
talk;) but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that
naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek, Φρόνημα σαρκός, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin (peccati tamen in sese rationem habere concupiscentiam fatetur Apostolus).

Whether Thomas Cranmer, who drafted the first edition of the Articles in Edward’s reign, learned this doctrine from his readings in continental Lutheran and Reformed theology or directly from his own extensive Augustine research I do not venture to say. But in light of the present study, it ought to be clear that in this Article the reformed Church of England confesses a Simullehre that is virtually indistinguishable from Luther’s as I have exposited it in this book. (The same goes for Article 15, “Of Christ alone without Sin,” which appeals to 1 John 1:8—a classic Augustinian proof-text: “... but all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”) Finally published in haste in 1553, just prior to his demise and only after his longsuffering efforts to convene a general evangelical council to draft an agreed Reformation confession had failed, Cranmer wrote this article with full knowledge of Trent’s 1546 decree on original sin. The general tenor of the article’s content, the appeal to Rom. 8:1, the affirmation that concupiscence has the ratio peccati as well as the pointed jab that St. Paul—unlike Trent!—doth not hesitate to confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin, all reflect the church-political
context of the early 1550s. Without ambiguity, the English confession takes its stand against Trent and with the European Reformers: that is to say, with the “420s Augustine” and against the “410s.” The original or birth-sin inherited from Adam is an evil corruption and infection of human nature which, of itself, has the character of a “fault” and the nature of “sin”—to this point, in the sixteenth century, all were agreed. But next comes the parting of the ways: for the Anglicans confess that this vicious “corruption,” “infection,” “flesh,” “lust,” “concupiscence,” and “sin” remains in the regenerate. Yet despite the ongoing presence of what the Apostle confesses to be intrinsically sinful, by faith in Christ and baptism there is no longer any condemnation for them. That is not a bad summary of the argument of this book regarding the mature Luther’s personal theology. The sobering reality of postbaptismal “sin,” real but partial regeneration (“gift”), the removal of condemnation through faith and baptism into Christ (“grace”): these are the components of the great Reformer’s “Augustinian simul.” But beyond Luther, this doctrine of “sin,” renewal, and

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152 Session 5 (17 June 1546), the Decree on Original Sin §5: “If anyone says that the guilt (reatum) of original sin is not remitted through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which is conferred in baptism, or even asserts that the whole of that which pertains to the true and proper definition of sin is not taken away (non tolli totum id, quod veram et propriam peccati rationem habet), but says that it is only shaved off or not imputed (tantum radi aut non imputari): let him be anathema. For God hates nothing in the reborn, because there is nothing of condemnation [Rom. 8:1a Vg.] for those who are truly buried together with Christ through baptism into death [Rom. 6:4], who do not walk according to the flesh [Rom. 8:1b Vg.] but, putting off the old man and putting on the new who is created according to God [cf. Eph. 4:24], are made innocent, immaculate, pure, blameless and beloved children of God, heirs indeed of God and coheirs of Christ [Rom. 8:17], so that nothing at all might delay their entrance into heaven. The holy synod confesses and senses that in the baptized, concupiscence or the tinder (fomitem) remains; which, since it is left for the struggle, is not able to harm those who do not consent (consentientibus) and manfully fight back against it through the grace of Christ Jesus. In fact, he who competes legitimately will be crowned [2 Tim. 2:5]. This concupiscence (concupiscentiam), which the Apostle sometimes calls sin (peccatum), the holy synod declares the church catholic has never understood to be called sin because it is truly and properly sin in the reborn (vere et proprie in renatis peccatum sit), but because it is from sin and it inclines to sin (ex peccato est et ad peccatum inclinat). If anyone however holds the contrary: a. s.” DEC II/667, my translation.
forgiveness is the shared conviction of the evangelical Churches, Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican, as set forth in their public confessions; and the fact that this common teaching originates in and is elaborated along the lines of the “42os Augustine” argues strongly in favor of the catholicity of these Reformation confessions.

John Davenant (1572-1641), a moderating voice at the Synod of Dordt (1618/9) and later bishop of Salisbury, knew this well. Near the start of his 1631 *Disputatio de justitia habituai et actuali*, this generous and keen Reformed theologian took up the aspersions of Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621, in his *de iustificatione* 2.1) to the effect that, owing to the doctrine of the persistence of original sin *qua* sin after baptism, “Calvin, with the Lutherans, allows that there does not exist any inherent righteousness” in the regenerate at all.\footnote{1153} In fact, the bishop protested, “We all, no less than the Romanists themselves, teach that inherent righteousness, and that grace of sanctification which is the root of new life, is infused into the justified.”\footnote{1154} To justify his “we all,” Davenant supplies concise but apt excerpts from a sampling of evangelical theologians: Luther, Calvin, Martin Bucer (1491-1551), Melanchthon, Peter Martyr (1499-1562), Martin Chemnitz (1522-86), and William Whittaker (1548-95). The Luther quote is taken from the spring 1523 lectures on Jude, and is pretty accurate—as is Davenant’s summary of Luther’s theology:

Luther, (tom. 5 in *Epist. Judae, near the end,* says: We have received the Holy Spirit through faith, and we have been purified; but notwithstanding, as long as we live here, that corrupt mass of flesh and blood adheres to us. Here he plainly

confesses both a certain purification or internal renovation, and the remains of
sin still cleaving to us.\textsuperscript{155}

Davenant is clear: the Reformers, including Luther himself, agree with Rome
regarding the reality of inner renovation and purity through the Spirit. Rather, the
question in dispute between them is whether the “remains of sin” still cleave to the
purified saints and if so, how they can stand righteous before God despite them.\textsuperscript{156}

Davenant argues an emphatic Yes to the first question; and in reply to the second, he
consequently urges the necessity of imputed righteousness as the formal cause of
justification. Inherent renewal is real enough, though insufficient to that great end.
But where our righteousness fails, Christ’s is enough. In the course of defending what
he regarded as the common Reformation theology of residual sin, renewal in holiness,
and justification by faith, Davenant turns repeatedly (and with a display of erudition
befitting a one-time Lady Margaret’s Professor of Divinity at Cambridge) to the “420s
Augustine.” In, for example, a chapter that begins by citing Trent’s decree on original
sin and its appeal to Rom. 8:1, Davenant turns to one of Thomas Stapleton’s (1535-98)
arguments in favor of the sinlessness of the saints. In 1 Cor. 3:16, St. Paul teaches that
the Church is the temple of God, filled with his Spirit; but in the Lord’s temple, all

\textsuperscript{155} Davenant, \textit{Justification}, 1.6-7, original emphasis. On Jude 23, WA 14.90.25-9 [B] (cf. LW 30.215):
\textit{Wyr haben wol den heyligen geyst empfangen durch den glauben und sind reyn worden, aber so lang
wyr hie leben, henget uns noch der alte sack, unser fleysch und blat ymmer an, das lesset seyzen
mutwillen nicht. Das ist der ‘befleckte rock’, den wyr sollen ablegen und ymer auszyhen, so lang wyr
leben.}

\textsuperscript{156} Davenant, \textit{Justification}, 1.15: having established that the Reformers uphold real inherent
righteousness, “we must enquire in the second place—Whether this inherent righteousness which
we have conceded to be in the regenerate, is so perfect, as wholly to exclude original sin, and leave
nothing in the righteous man which may retain the character and true nature of sin? Upon this
single point depend almost all those other questions which have been subjects of controversy
concerning justification, and the perfection or merit of works. If therefore we can prove our point
in this, we shall obtain a bloodless and easy victory in all the rest.”
things are clean and pure; therefore, no sin remains in the regenerate. In his reply, Davenant appeals to c. *Iul.* 6.14.42 and 6.15.48:

Answer:—In the perfected and finished temple of God, no sin remains; and we shall be such temples of God when we come to the state of glory; whilst however we are in this militant state we are truly esteemed and called temples of God, but not yet completely built, not yet carried to the height of perfection: It is, then, by no means wonderful, that some rubbish and dust should be found in these temples, which are as it were in an uninterrupted course of building. We therefore answer Stapleton, as Augustine once did Julian: *Let no one be so foolish as to suppose, that every baptized person is therefore perfect, because it is said—*The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are;—*We are the temple of the living God; and other things of this sort. For this name is given now, even while it is being built. Here our members, which are upon earth, are being mortified:—there is however in us something to mortify, so that sin should not reign in our mortal body, &c. And concerning this evil which cleaves to the justified, he thus speaks in the same chapter: *How could it be, that such and so great an evil should not, by the mere fact of its being in us, hold us in death, and drag us into final death, if its chain were not broken by that remission of all our sins which takes place in baptism?* Let the Papists show us, why they deny that evil to have the formal nature of sin, which would condemn only by the mere act of its inherence, unless its guilt were removed by gratuitous remission.\[1157\]

Farther on, busy now with Martin Becanus (1563-1624), Davenant effectively cites c. *Iul.* 2.4.8 without fanfare much as Luther had done while exegeting Rom. 7:18 in 1516, then rounds off this surreptitious citation with an express appeal to the older Augustine’s doctrine of threefold baptismal grace:

The Jesuit therefore sadly errors in this, that he thinks baptismal grace produces its entire effect at once, whereas it frees us immediately from the guilt of sin, but by a gradual process from its pollution. We do not deny then that the effect of grace is a full and entire purgation from sin; but we teach with Augustine, that we arrive at this hoped for perfection by the same baptism which is here received. We enjoy not immediately this perfect cleansing, but at length we shall attain to it by the benefit and efficacy of Divine grace, operating continually in us.\[1158\]

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\[1157\] Davenant, *Justification*, 1.33, original emphasis. For c. *Iul.* 6.14.42, see NBA I/18.916, PL 44.846, WSA I/24.503; for 6.15.48, NBA I/926, PL 44.850, WSA I/24.507.

\[1158\] Davenant, *Justification*, 1.41, original emphasis; cf. 1.75. In the first marginal gloss on Rom. 7:18 (WA 56.70.22-3), Luther writes: *Deus in Christo regenerat hominem generatum sanatque vitiatum a reatu statim, ab infirmitate paulatim.* This is an exact quote of c. *Iul.* 2.4.8 (NBA I/18.524, PL
Such appeals to Augustine pepper the following chapters in defense of the doctrines wrapped up with postbaptismal residual sin, which Davenant sums up nicely at the head of chapter 9: “Baptism frees the person from the guilt of all sins; but it does not immediately free the nature from the operation, or indwelling of original sin.” He then adds: “This is the uniform position of Augustine, who teaches that concupiscence is original sin causing death in the unbaptized; but that it remains in the baptized, though its guilt is put away.” Davenant devotes the whole of chapter 13 to proving that this is in fact Augustine’s “uniform position,” first allowing for ambiguity in Augustine vis-à-vis the sinfulness of concupiscence in the baptized—“Hence arises the contest between us and the Romanists concerning the two-fold opinion of Augustine”—in order then to argue that the “420s Augustine” is the real and orthodox doctor of the Church and, eo ipso, that the evangelicals are the real and orthodox Catholics. Its crowning argument is the hotly-disputed excerpt from nupt. conc. 1.25.28, taken from c. Iul. bk. 6 and interpreted—in the familiar “Lutheran” manner—in light of the gains made circa 420/1:

What is truly and in its own nature sin, may nevertheless not be imputed for sin to the person engrafted into Christ. But as often as this is the case (which we affirm to be so in all the regenerate) sin, remaining in them, is deserving of punishment (habet condignitatem ad poenam) by its own innate depravity; because it is an evil contrary to the Divine law; but it is not adjudged to punishment (non habet deputationem ad poenam), owing to Divine compassion; because it has been remitted and pardoned in baptism. Now let us hear what Augustine himself thinks: Contra Julian lib. 6 cap. 6, he says—

\[44.679\): God in Christ regenerat hominem generatum, sanatque vitiatum, a reatu statim, ab infirmitate paulatim.\]

\[1159\) Davenant, Justification, 1.56. Original emphasis.

\[1160\) Davenant, Justification, 1.84.\]
Concupiscence is put away in baptism, not as regards existence, but so as not to be imputed for sin; for although its guilt is now discharged, yet itself remains.\footnote{Davenant, \textit{Justification}, 1.97. Original emphasis.}

Davenant’s numeration differs from ours: the reference is to \textit{c. Iul. 6.17.51}, a text I examined at some length above in chapter 3.2.1.1. There I argued that Luther’s interpretation of \textit{c. Iul. 2.5.12} in the Rom. 7:17 scholion reflects the very kind of “420s Augustine”-style explanation of \textit{nupt. conc. 1.25.28} which the old Augustine himself, having been pushed by Julian toward greater clarity of thought and expression, offered not just in the huge \textit{c. Iul. op. imp.} but already in \textit{c. Iul. 6.17.51}.\footnote{WA 56.351.10-7: \textit{Ex ista pulchra authoritate patet, Quomodo Concupiscentia sit ipsa infirmitas nostra ad bonum, que in se quidem rea est, Sed tamen reos nos non facit nisi consentientes et operantes. Ex quo tamen mirabile sequitur, Quod rei sumus et non rei. Quia Infirmitas illa nos ipsi sumus, Ergo ipsa rea et nos rei sumus, donec cesset et sanetur. Sed non sumus rei, dum non operamur secundum eam, Dei misericordia non imputante reatum infirmitatis, Sed reatum consentientis infirmitati voluntatis. Cf. LW 25.340.}

Had Rudolf Hermann read Davenant, I think he would have found his theology of sin, grace, and renewal every bit as “grave”—and as eerily Augustinian—as he found the young Luther’s. For the Saxon and the Englishman hold the same doctrine, having drawn it from the same African well.

The question is: does anyone still hold it today? Taking a sober look at the Anglican Communion, one has to admit that the evangelical Augustinianism of Luther, Cranmer, and Davenant has seen better days. But in the past century, three presbyters whom many do not readily think of as specifically “Anglican” theologians have held and taught it indeed: John Stott (1921-2011), J. I. Packer (1926—), and John Webster (1955—).\footnote{John R. W. Stott, \textit{The Cross of Christ} (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2006); J. I. Packer, \textit{Knowing God} (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1993); idem, “The Evangelical Identity Problem – An Analysis,” (Oxford: Latimer House, 1978); idem, “A Kind of Noah’s Ark? The Anglican Commitment to Comprehensiveness” (Oxford: Latimer House, 1981); idem, \textit{The Thirty-Nine Articles: Their Place}} These distinguished ecclesial theologians have exerted immense
influence on the global evangelical Church. In the judgment of the Archbishop of Kenya, Dr. Eliud Wabukala, the rise of a confessing movement within twenty-first-century Anglicanism is due in large part to the impact of Stott’s and Packer’s works upon the African and Asian episcopate. Wabukala clearly delights to point out that since the doctrines of sin and grace in the Articles represent a revived Augustinianism, and since Augustine fought against Pelagius, his own advocacy for their authority in the Church means that today an African is once again taking the British to school.\textsuperscript{164} This is most welcomed. In addition to the doctrinal leadership Wabukala exercises within the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, Ashley Null’s scholarly retrieval of Thomas Cranmer as a “Protestant Augustinian” theologian holds out real promise for a better grasp of the theology of the English Reformers in the wider context of the European Reformation.\textsuperscript{165} The same goes for Torrance Kirby and Corneliu Simuţ’s cogent interpretations of Richard Hooker, Keble’s would-be sixteenth-century Tractarian, as a Reformed theologian.\textsuperscript{166} Still, I am afraid the prospects for an historically responsible and scripturally rich Augustinian revival amongst us Anglicans are grim: the revisionist historiography of the Oxford Movement has done its work; probably in reaction to Anglo-Catholic moralism, the Luther who has been celebrated in some pockets (namely Zahl and his circle) is the “radical” Luther of Hermann, Joest,

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\item \textsuperscript{165} Ashley Null, \textit{Thomas Cranmer’s Doctrine of Repentance: Renewing the Power to Love} (New York: Oxford, 2000).
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and Forde whom I have argued never in fact existed; and the New Perspective on Paul—with its mainly unwitting revival of the rather old perspective of Origen, Jerome, and Erasmus as well as its less-than-dexterous dismissal of Augustine and Luther as exegetical theologians—occupies more ground by the day.\textsuperscript{167} In short, there is work to be done: the history of English theology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries needs to be retold from the ground up; the confession and character of “Anglicanism” fundamentally reconceived in light of that retelling; the holy scriptures diligently heard, read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested; above all, the gospel recovered, cherished, preached, and believed. In addition, I think we owe our friends in the Lutheran as well as the other Reformed Churches a hearty apology for having told stories about them and about ourselves that are false, all in order to celebrate the superiority of our polity, and all the while obscuring the glory of the gospel of free grace for sinners in Jesus Christ which Cranmer, Hooker, Davenant et al. gladly confessed along with their fellow German, Swiss, French, Dutch, and Scottish evangelicals.\textsuperscript{168}

What about the Lutherans? I confess I am very curious to see how my siblings in the Churches of the Augsburg Confession will receive the argument of this book. In theory, those pastors and theologians committed to seeking the catholicity of the Confessions, to receiving Luther as one doctor within the great Church, and to walking in truth, generosity, and love with the rest of that Church, ought to welcome it. For I have shown the profound continuity that obtains between Luther’s


\textsuperscript{168} Farther on this point in my article, “Where Anglicanism came from, and How Luther’s Theology might do something about it,” \textit{Lutheran Forum} 47/2 (Summer 2013): 42-51.
Reformation theology and the wisest and most scriptural of all Augustines, the only really universal doctor of the Church in the west. Moving forward from 1546, it should be much easier to fit together this “Augustinian” Luther with the theologies of Chemnitz, Gerhard, and others, there no longer being any need to sort out how the “radical” Luther’s theology of justification was tamed and muted by his ecclesial heirs. Looking beyond Augsburg, if this kind of Lutheran finds my argument about Luther’s theology compelling, I think he will need to give up whatever inflated claims of distinctiveness he may still boast of vis-à-vis the Reformed. Calvin & Co. are quite skilled at distinguishing law and gospel; the Anglicans (!) preach free justification through the imputation of Christ’s alien righteousness; and Dr. Luther proves himself to be no mean theologian of regeneration and new holy life in Christ by the Spirit, an evangelical and Augustinian doctor sanctitatis. As for Rome—more in its place below.

Now there are Lutherans, and then there are Lutherans. The gnostic antinomianism that holds the field in the liberal/old-line Lutheran churches of the west is only superficially akin to Agricola’s opposition to the preaching of the law, for as Luther allowed (albeit in the form of back-handed compliments) at least he still preached the gospel of redemption and forgiveness through Jesus Christ and him crucified.166 I suspect that such Lutherans as these will not regard my argument very highly, being enemies of the cross of Christ, but perhaps it will make them think twice about calling themselves by Luther’s name. I have more hope for “radical Lutherans” who have learned their theology from Forde: for amongst them, there seems to be a real regard for the Confessions (large swathes of them, at any rate), a deep admiration...

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for Luther, and a sincere desire to become theologii crucis. If this book compels any such to rethink their assumptions about Reformation theology, go back to re-read Luther, and above all to search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so, I will be deeply gratified. Due in large part, I gather, to Elert and Joest’s pervasive influence, pretty much the same applies to those “confessional” Lutherans who at times seem to regard dismissiveness toward both the doctrine and the reality of holiness as a distinguishing mark of true piety. To all such “radical” Lutherans, whether of the more edgy or the more stodgy variety, I put the question (with all brotherly affection): if you will not heed the prophets and the apostles urging that “God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness” (1 Thess. 4:7), will you lend an ear to your great Reformer as he summons you to repent and believe, teach, and confess the fullness of the blessing of righteous and life, forgiveness and holiness, pardon and purity, which God promises us in the gospel?

Finally, as to the ecumenical Lutherans and the great Church of Rome, that massive Manasseh amongst all the other smaller tribes of Israel. It’s fascinating to read the 1999 Joint Declaration and to see in it the “two Augustines” vying with one another. In section 4.4 on “The Justified as Sinner,” the Lutherans first affirm Joest’s “totus iustus/totus peccator simul” in a way my argument puts in question, but then pull back from it by virtue of a sound emphasis on Paul’s indwelling “sin” and Luther’s peccatum regnans/regnatum distinction, the latter drawn from the Antilatomus and rooted in the “420s Augustine” (§29). For their part, the Catholics cite Rom. 8:1 (and in the footnote, Trent) to the effect that the grace of Christ in baptism takes away all that is properly sin, “an inclination (concupiscence) that comes from sin and presses
toward sin” being all that is left behind—the “410s Augustine” (§30). The same stances are reiterated in §B of the Annex. In the agreed statement that precedes these separate qualifying paragraphs, the Lutherans and Catholics together confess (§28):

... that in baptism the Holy Spirit unites one with Christ, justifies, and truly renews the person. But the justified must all through life constantly look to God’s unconditional justifying grace. They also are continually exposed to the power of sin still pressing its attacks (cf. Rom. 6:12-14) and are not exempt from a lifelong struggle against contradiction to God within the selfish desires of the old Adam (see Gal. 5:16; Rom. 7:7-10). The justified also must ask God daily for forgiveness, as in the Lord’s Prayer (Mt. 6:12; 1 Jn. 1:9), are ever again called to conversion and penance, and are ever again granted forgiveness.

This remarkable paragraph could have been written by Augustine at any stage in the long Pelagian controversy, and by Luther at any point in his career from 1514 on. That speaks to its strength, but also to its weakness. The presenting issue remains the old question about the status of evil desire in the baptized. In the agreed paragraph, the two parties employ the scriptural language of “sin” to describe it, and cite the expected proof-texts. But there then follows the parting of the “two Augustines,” with the Lutherans still confessing that what Paul calls “sin” is sin indeed in their paragraph, the Catholics in theirs still upholding that what “the Apostle sometimes calls sin … the Church Catholic has never understood to be called sin because it is truly and properly sin in the reborn but because it is from sin and it inclines to sin.”

Well, which is it?

Evangelical Augustinian that I am, I confess it greatly troubles me to hear one of the tribes of Israel—even a big and old one—teach that what the Apostle calls x, does not really mean x, because that tribe has never understood it to meant x. Is it possible to teach in this manner and, at the same time, declare with David in the presence of the true and living God: “My heart stands in awe of your words” (Ps.

1170 Trent, Session 5 (17 June 1546), the Decree on Original Sin §5, DEC II/667, my translation.
If we stand in awe of Paul’s, that is to say God the Holy Spirit’s, in our church doctrine should we not confess this same x? and should we not do so with the simplicity and joy of a child hearing the voice of his dear Father? Is this not the best way for us to heed Paul’s admonition to the Church (in the person of Timothy) to “follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me” (2 Tim. 1:13)? In the agreed paragraph §28, Paul’s scandal-provoking but sound little word “sin” is used, and surely at this the heart of every Christian who “trembles” at God’s Word (Isa. 66:2) rejoices. But what are we to make of the Catholics’ claim that the power of sin which still presses its attacks, the inner contradiction to God, the selfish desires of the old Adam—evils on account of which the justified must ask for daily forgiveness in prayer, and struggle against all their lives—are not “sin in an authentic sense” (§30)? Is this the way to follow Paul’s sound words? This all makes for a truly apostolic “perplexity,” to be sure (Gal. 4:20).

Perhaps if the Lutherans, convinced by my argument in this book, were to retreat from their simul totaliter, refocus their right insistence on the enduring sinfulness of the saints upon evil desire, and rejoice a little more boldly in the gospel gift of renewal in holiness, the Catholics would not be so hesitant about St. Paul’s (and John’s) little word “sin.” But in that event, I believe Davenant is right to urge that the imputation of Christ’s righteousness must be looked to as the formal cause of the justification of the renewed but still sinful saints before God (Ps. 130:3-4, 143:1-2). Is this not what the JD itself gestures toward—however tentatively—in its confession that “righteousness will be reckoned to all who, like Abraham, trust in God’s promise” (§10), that “justification becomes ours through Christ Jesus, ‘whom God put forward as
a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith’ (Rom. 3:25; see 3:21-28)” (§10), that “justification ... means that Christ himself is our righteousness” (§15), and that “through Christ alone we are justified, when we receive this salvation in faith” (§16)? I hope so—indeed, I rejoice at the mere prospect! For then, with the Lutherans confessing the Church’s doctrine of holiness and the Catholics her doctrines of sin, grace, and righteousness, a consensus in “the basic truths” of the gospel has indeed been reached (§14). All that will remain is to begin preaching this gospel, and sorting out and applying its unique role as “an indispensable criterion that constantly serves to orient all the teaching and practice of our churches to Christ” (§18)—no small task, and a task by no means limited to the Church of Rome, as all gospel-loving Anglicans will be the first to confess. But if this is the case, as I hope it is, I think the Catholics will need to explain to the rest of us just exactly how these “new insights” into the nature of justification, won by listening together to the Bible (§8), fit with the somewhat different yet (we are told) infallible dogma of the Council of Trent. For if Trent was right to teach that

... the one single formal cause [of justification] is the righteousness of God (unica causa formalis est iustitia dei): not that by which he himself is righteous, but that by which he makes us righteous and endowed with which we are renewed (renovamur) in the spirit of our mind, and are not merely reputed righteous (reputamur) but are truly named and are righteous, each one of us receiving individually his own righteousness according to the measure which the Holy Spirit apportions to each one as he wills, and in view of each one’s dispositions and co-operation ...

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1171 Trent, Session 6 (13 Jan. 1547), the Decree on Justification §7, DEC II/673, my translation.
then it is hard not to conclude that Christopher Malloy is also right to call the
catholicity of the *JD* into question.\footnote{Christopher J. Malloy, *Engrafted into Christ: A Critique of the Joint Declaration* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).} But if my argument in this book about the
“Augustinian” Luther and the “Lutheran” Augustine is historically sound—and if the
great church father remains a serviceable touchstone for discerning the faithfulness of
Church doctrine—then it is Malloy’s theology (and Trent’s decree) which suffers the
deficit in catholicity. For in light of my research, the *JD* comes off rather well: it is
deeply “Augustinian” and catholic in its teaching just because it is surprisingly
Lutheran.

Once, Paul was able to bring St. Peter back to the gospel of free righteousness
in Christ by faith (Gal. 2:11-21). This is as it should be. For as it is written in the great
Psalm of Christ’s resurrection and ascension, “Benjamin, the least of them,” is the tribe
that takes the lead in the apostolic train (Ps. 68:27a; cf. v. 18 & Eph. 4:8-10). Peter,
John, and the rest of the Galileans—these mighty men of the Word are, one supposes,
“the princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali” (v. 27c). But it is Paul, and Paul alone,
who descends from the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5). And this same Paul was “the least
of the apostles” (1 Cor. 15:9), and not only so, but also “the very least of all saints” (Eph.
3:8). For he was the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15): a man set free by the great grace of
God in Jesus Christ, and by that grace alone; a man stripped bare of the slightest
pretension to a *iustitia propria* of which he might boast; a man who would never
dream of presenting his threadbare, grace-given works (Eph. 2:8-10) before the throne
of God to collect eternal life as if it were the just reward of his labors. Is it not right
for this humbled Benjamin, the least of the apostles and for that very reason the
greatest of them all, to take the place afforded him by the Spirit of prophecy and to
assume the primacy amongst the Churches? If Malloy still wants to put Campeggio,
Catharinus, de Soto, Vitriarius, and Lainez in the lead, we cannot stop him. But as for
us poor separated brethren, who pray the Psalter in our ecclesial communities, we
prefer to listen to St. Paul with his gospel as he teaches the one great Church ex
cathedra, that is to say, ex scriptura: for example, in the letter to the Romans. Based on
the JD and its confession that Christ alone, with his atoning blood, is our
righteousness, and that this righteousness is reckoned to those who believe God’s
gracious promise, I dare say there are at least some in the Church of Rome who have
learned to sing this Psalm too. For this, I give thanks to the God of all grace, who has
preserved a remnant for himself in every generation (Rom. 11:1-6).

Truth be told, the churches which (by God’s great grace) will remain faithful to
the Lord Jesus in the midst of the barbaric, proud ruins of western civilization face
great perils in the times to come. Has not the hour come for evangelical Augustinians

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1173 So the Franciscan Ludovicus Vitriarius: “Let the justified man be presented before the tribunal of
God, and God will question him and say: ‘What do you ask for?’ And the man replies: ‘I ask for
eternal life.’ ‘Why?’ replies God. The man: ‘Because you are bound to give it to me.’ God: ‘By what
law?’ The man: ‘Yours, because in your law it says: For you will repay to each one according to his
work [Ps. 62:12].’” Concilium Tridentinum: Diarorum, Actorum, Epistularum, Tractatum Nova
Collectio, ed. Societas Goerisiana (Freiburg: Herder, 1901-76), 5:569, as cited in Lane,
Justification by Faith in Catholic—Protestant Dialogue, 63, note 70. My translation. Cfr. the Augustinian
Girolamo Seripando: in the regenerate evil desire “is left over, so that a man will always think about
what sort of person he is in and of himself, and what sort he is by God’s grace through Jesus Christ.
Of himself, he is prone to every evil. Unless this proneness remained in man, he would think that
he is righteousness of himself and in himself. But the grace of God regards that evil as not reckoned
to damnation because of Christ; and to be sure, by the same grace it comes about that it does not
reign through consent, neither is it able to use the members as weapons for iniquity. And certainly,
unless this weakness were to remain in a man, Christ’s grace would be meaningless.” CT 12:552f,
cited in Peter Walter, “Die bleibende Sündigkeit der Getauften in den Debatten und Beschüssen
des Trienter Konzils,” 281.
in all the tribes to put our past quarrels behind us and prepare to confess together the truth of the gospel?

The Preservation of the Saints

Throughout this book, I have argued that Luther taught that regeneration and justification are amissible and provisional: grace and gift may be forfeited if the believer consents to the residual sinful desires of his flesh. Being an Augustinian in regards to the doctrine of predestination, Luther believed that the elect would ultimately persevere in repentance and faith to the end. Deep as they may fall into sin, God will raise them up again and restore them as he restored the humbled David. But the elect are not certain of their election, and that lack of assurance is spiritually useful to them. For it keeps them from becoming smug, from lazily resting in the grace already received instead of pressing forward in perpetual repentance, faith, dependence, humility, and prayer. Since present grace is no guarantee of future perseverance to glory, the godly take heed lest they fall (1 Cor. 10:12) and work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12), being zealous to make their calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10): for it is not he who believes for a moment, but the one who perseveres to the end, who will be saved (Matt. 10:20).

In affliction, the believer clings to Christ crucified present for him in Word and sacrament. He is free to defy the Devil, assured through faith in the gospel that Christ’s death is his redemption and that through the blood of this Mediator he has a gracious Father in heaven. But this present assurance of justification is just that: assurance in the present. Tomorrow I may grievously fall; and if I do, the game is up ... unless, in his free mercy, God grants the free gift of renewal in the repentance and
faith I squandered. But that is precisely what I cannot count on. There is no blank
check to sin with impunity. If I have grace today, I must endeavor to persevere in it.

For if I lose it, it may not be given to me again. He might not have admitted it, but had
he lived to read it the old Luther would have substantially (though not entirely)
agreed with the doctrine set forth in chapters 12 and 13 of Trent’s decree on
justification:

Chapter 12. Rash presumption about predestination must be avoided ... No one,
so long as he remains in this present life, ought so to presume about the
hidden mystery of divine predestination as to hold for certain that he is
unquestionably of the number of the predestined, as if it were true that one
justified is either no longer capable of sin or, if he sins, may promise himself
sure repentance. For, apart from a special revelation, it is impossible to know
whom God has chosen for himself.

Chapter 13. On the gift of perseverance. Similarly, concerning the gift of
perseverance it is written: *He who endures to the end will be saved* (and indeed,
the gift can have no other source save him who has the power to uphold one
who stands so that he may continue, and to restore him who falls). Even
though all should place an unshaken hope in God’s help and rest in it, let no
one promise himself with absolute certainty any definite outcome. For, unless
they themselves neglect his grace, as God has begun the good work, so he will
bring it to completion, bringing about both the will and the performance.
Nevertheless, let those who think themselves to stand take heed lest they fall,
and work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, in labors, watchings,
almsdeeds, prayers and offerings, in fastings and chastity. For, knowing that
they are reborn to the hope of glory, and not yet to glory itself, they ought to
tremble about the struggle with the flesh, with the world, with the devil, which
still remains and in which they cannot be victors unless, with the grace of God,
they do what the Apostle says: *We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according
to the flesh, for if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit
you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

Considered from the human vantage point, the perseverance of a saint depends upon
his Spirit-empowered refusal of consent to residual sin (Rom. 8:13). The believer does
well to place unshaken hope in God’s help, and to rest in it—but he can’t be certain of

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1174 Trent, Session 6 (13 Jan. 1547), the Decree on Justification §12-13, *DEC II/676.*
the outcome. Luther might have quibbled a little about the ascetic means of abiding in grace elaborated by the Tridentine fathers. But upon the necessity of that abiding in order to continue in grace until the end, and the real and present danger that the believer will fail to do this and thus fall out of life in Christ back into death in Adam, he agreed with them entirely.

Now that said, on the vexed point of assurance vis-à-vis the Christian’s election the matter is less straightforward. From what I can gather, Luther handled this question in the same pastoral, occasional, or “artful” way that he handled the distinction of law and gospel. The gospel must be kept as far away from the impenitent adulterer as heaven from hell. Only the crushing hammer of the law is fit for him. But once that hammer has done its bitter work, a wise pastor like Nathan speaks sheer words of grace: “The LORD has put away your sin; you will not die” (2 Sam. 12:13). For Pfarrer Luther, the promise of grace is not a fixed principle in a system, but a spiritual reality to be preached boldly, applied wisely, and trusted tenaciously in tentatione: “for the divine promises and consolations are not absolute, but relative, and universally and most certainly presuppose our temptation … For God does not buoy up or strengthen men unless they are engulfed in sorrow, at the point of death, or in despair.”175 Apart from that trial, the gospel is just a language game—or worse, an intellectual justification for forgiveness and “freedom” without the cost (and the gift!) of discipleship. I want to suggest that Luther approached the doctrine of predestination in a similar manner. Dogmatically, he was a rigorous Augustinian both as to the substance of the doctrine itself and as to the separation of the gift of

forgiveness and regeneration on the one hand from the gift of perseverance on the other. Pastorally, he often enough—far more often than is typically allowed for—followed Augustine (and medieval Catholicism generally) in upholding the propriety and usefulness of the disciple’s suspension between fear and hope. I think that in the specific pastoral context of needing to face down theological antinomianism and popular licentiousness-cum-Lutheranism in the 1530s and 40s, the old Doctor emphasized this side of the doctrine more and more. But there were other ways of handling it, tailored to other situations in the spiritual lives of the real souls Luther cared for. And in these diverse contexts, variations on the question of assurance come into view.

For one, consider his 1523 sermon on 2 Pet. 1:10, a locus classicus on election and assurance. Luther’s interpretation is uncomplicated: by doing good works, believers steadily grow in their assurance of God’s call and election. “Although the call and the election (der berueff und die erwelung) is strong enough in itself, yet it is not strong and firm enough for you, since you are not yet certain (gewis) that it pertains to you. Therefore Peter wants us to confirm this call and election for ourselves with good works.”

For the more faith is exercised in good works, the stronger it grows, “until it becomes sure (gewis) of the call and election and can lack nothing.” This is St. Peter’s patient route to a proper sense of assurance, and “here bounds are fixed with regard to how one should handle foreknowledge.” Peter’s wisdom stands in stark contrast to all inquisitive, rash speculation into the mystery of predestination by those

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1176 WA 14.22.25-8 [B], cf. LW 30.158.
1177 WA 14.23.6-9 [B], cf. LW 30.159.
1178 WA 14.23.10-11 [B], cf. LW 30.159.
who lack the spiritual maturity needed to handle it rightly. “Flippant spirits” rush in, attack the matter “from the top,” and try to reason out whether they are elected “in order that they may be sure (gewis) of where they stand.” But that’s a surefire way to fall and break your neck, not to find true assurance. “Get away from this quick—it’s not the handhold (der gryff) you need to grasp!” Rather,

If you want to become sure (gewis), then you must come through the way which St. Peter suggests here ... If your faith is well exercised and applied, then at last you will become sure of the matter (zu letzt der sach gewis), so that you will not fail, as now it follows further: “For if you do this, you will not fall” [2 Pet. 1:10b]. That is: you will stand fast, you will neither stumble nor sin, but rather you will go forth rightly and vigorously, and everything will fall out well.

Thus in the course of exegeting 2 Pet. 1:10, Luther teaches a steady maturation into the assurance of election commensurate with the saint’s growth in faith and holiness. If the animated denial of this kind of assurance is the preferred pastoral method for dealing with lazy or impenitent souls, the “Petrine” path to certainty via progress in sanctification is very much a live option for sincere believers exercising the gift of faith within (for lack of a better word) the “normal” conditions of everyday discipleship.

But the experiential crucible in which Luther’s pastoral theology of assurance developed was anything but “normal”—to wit: the acute Prädestinationsanfechtungen that tormented him in the 1510s. In the 1542 lecture on Gen. 26:9, the old Reformer was still offering the remedy his wise Beichtvater had given him some three decades before:

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1179 WA 14.23.11-14 [B], cf. LW 30.159.
1181 WA 14.23.15-19 [B], cf. LW 30.159.
Staupitz used to console me with these words: “Why do you torture yourself with these speculations? Look at the wounds of Christ and the blood shed for you. From these predestination will shine.”

In short: if predestination frightens you, then stop thinking about it, and look by faith to Christ crucified instead. “Kill the other thoughts and the ways of reason or the flesh, for God detests them. That one thing do: receive the Son, so that Christ is welcome in your heart in his birth, miracles, and cross. For there is the book of life in which you have been written.” In particular, the Christian afflicted with the terror of a fixed damnation must take refuge in the objectivity of the external Word and sacraments:

For God did not come down from heaven to make you uncertain (incertum) about predestination, to teach you to despise the Sacraments, absolution, and the rest of the divine ordinances. Indeed, he instituted them to make you completely certain (certissimum) and to remove this disease of doubt from your soul, in order that you might not only believe with the heart but also see with your physical eyes and touch with your hands. Why then do you reject these and complain that you do not know whether you have been predestined? You have the Gospel, you have been baptized, you have absolution, you are a Christian, and nevertheless you doubt and say that you do not know whether you believe or not, whether you hold as true what is preached about Christ in word and Sacraments ... He has given his Son in the flesh and death, and he has instituted the Sacraments in order that you may know that he does not want to be deceitful, but truthful. Nor does he confirm this with spiritual proofs; he confirms it with tangible proofs. For I see water, I see bread and wine, I see the minister. All this is bodily, and in these physical forms he reveals himself. If you must deal with men, you may be in doubt as to the extent to which you may believe a person and as to how others may be disposed toward you; but concerning God you must maintain with assurance and without any doubt (certo et indubitanter) that he is well disposed toward you on account of Christ and that you have been redeemed and sanctified through the precious blood of the Son of God. And in this way you will be sure (certus) of your predestination, since all the curious and dangerous questions about GOD’S secret counsels have been removed—questions to which Satan tries to drive us.

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1182 WA 43.461.11-13, LW 5.47.
1183 WA 43.459.35-8, cf. LW 5.45.
1184 WA 43.460.4-13, 462.17-27, cf. LW 5.45-6, 49.
Faith’s turn “outward” from the sinful intricacies of one’s “self” to the gracious truth of the Gospel, which is also a turn “downward” from rationalistic or mystical ascent (and its vain attempts to grasp the hidden decree of election) to the One who came down low for us, and makes himself graspable in Word and sacrament, is always the order of the day. This “outward” and “downward” turn, this resolute focus on Jesus Christ in the preached gospel and sacraments, is the center of that steady growth in faith and holiness which brings with it an assurance of its own. But for Luther, this Staupitzian christocentrism is especially needful in the darkness of afflictions in regards to predestination itself. When the accuser’s dread attacks rise to this peak, and he fires the deadly shaft of threatened eternal reprobation into the Christian’s heart—then the believer fights back, refuses to play the devil’s predestinarian game, stakes his eternal salvation upon the promise of redemption in Christ given to him in preaching, baptism, Eucharist, and absolution, and lets this “one little Word” be assurance enough for him.

Tellingly, however, even in this exceedingly seelsorgerlicher excursus on affliction and predestination, Luther still admits the provisional nature of assurance:

God says to you: “Behold, you have my Son. Listen to him, and receive him. If you do this, you are already sure (certus) about your faith and salvation.” “But I do not know,” you will say, “whether I will remain in the faith? (an maneam in fide?)” At all events, accept the present promise and predestination (praesentem promissionem et praedestinationem), and do not inquire curiously about the secret counsels of God. If you believe in God revealed, and you receive his word, gradually he will reveal even the hidden God.\footnote{WA 43.460.23-7, cf. LW 5.46.}

To be sure, I believe the gospel now—but the haunting questions remain: will I continue in the faith to the end? have I been chosen in love from before the
beginning? In this kind of affliction, the final answer to such questions is to refuse them, clinging quite alone to that predestination which is “present” together with the promise itself. I suspect that tried souls who read this book will agree with the old Luther, and with me, that Dr. Staupitz was a wise and good pastor indeed.

Thus far I’ve sketched three distinct “pastoral”-theological stances on the question at hand: fear, not assurance, must be preached to the impenitent and indolent; whereas to disciples, the incentive of steadily deepening assurance as a concomitant to real growth in holiness is to be set forth; but to afflicted souls, the wise pastor banishes the question of predestination altogether, and sets nothing but Christ in the gospel before their eyes. There is one final pastoral situation, and with it a fourth nuance on election and assurance, to consider before I suggest my dogmatic correction; and I have reserved it for this last place, because it approaches the Reformed doctrine I intend to defend here. In a word, the Sitz im Leben is the exhausting, bewildering, and intensely discouraging situation described not just in Rom. 7, but from the baptismal catechesis of Rom. 6 through the battle with one’s fleshly “self” in that moral-psychological laboratory to the “sufferings” and “groanings” and fierce opposition catalogued in Rom. 8. In his 1522 Preface to Romans, Luther explains that when the Christian has not only read these chapters, but begun to experience the realities they attest, then at last he is ready to think soberly about the great matters St. Paul sets forth in Rom. 9—11.

You had better follow the order of this epistle. Worry first about Christ and the gospel, that you may recognize your sin and his grace. Then fight with sin, as the first eight chapters here have taught. Then, when you’ve come into the
eighth chapter under the cross and suffering, this will teach you rightly of predestination in chapters 9, 10, and 11, how comforting it is. For in the absence of suffering and the cross and the perils of death, one cannot deal with predestination without harm and without secret anger against God. The old Adam must first die before he can suffer this thing and drink the strong wine. Therefore beware that you do not drink wine while you are still a suckling. There is a limit, and a time, and an age for every doctrine.\footnote{WA DB 7.23.39-24.11, cf. LW 35.378.}

When the disciple has become a real theologian through suffering and the cross, when he has begun to grow up into Christ by sharing in his bitter passion and death, he is finally ready to drink this strong wine. Indeed, once a chosen soul has borne the cross all the long way through Rom. 1—8, predestination has morphed from a terrifying riddle into a deep well of evangelical comfort: an elixir of grace to gladden the battle-scarred soul. For predestination is nothing but the promise of a love that is steadfast and a grace that is strong: stronger than my own flesh, stronger than all the forces of hell marshaled against my pitiful little soul. Paul, a well-tried man, wants the amici crucis to know that salvation has been taken entirely out of their frail and treacherous hands, and put into the merciful, faithful, strong hands of God. “For we are so weak and uncertain (vngewiss) that if it depended upon us, not even a single person would be saved; the devil would surely (gewisslich) overpower us all. But since God is sure (gewis)—his predestination cannot fail, and no one can withstand him—we still have hope against sin.”\footnote{WA DB 7.22.30-34, cf. LW 35.378.} Near the end of de servo arbitrio, Luther reiterates the confession of the embattled saint whose despair has given way to hope’s quiet confidence in the unshakable purpose of God:

I frankly confess that, for myself, even if it could be, I would not want free choice to be given me, nor anything left in my own hand by which I would be able to endeavor after salvation; not only because in the face of so many
adversities and dangers, and assaults of devils, I could not stand my ground and hold fast my free choice (for one devil is stronger than all men, and on these terms no man could be saved); but because, even were there no dangers, adversities, or devils, I should still be forced to labor in constant uncertainty (perpetuo in incertum), and to beat my fists at the air. If I lived and worked to all eternity, my conscience would never become certain and sure (certa et secura) as to how much it must do to satisfy God. Whatever work I had done, there would still be a scruple as to whether it pleased God, or whether he required something more. The experience of all the self-righteous proves that; and I learned it well enough myself over a period of many years, to my own great hurt. But now that God has taken my salvation out of my choice and received it into his, and has promised to save me, not by my own work or performance, but by his own grace and mercy [cf. Rom. 9:16], I am sure and certain (securus et certus) that he is faithful and will not lie to me, he who is so powerful and great that no devils and no adversities can break him or pluck me from him. “No one,” he says, “shall pluck them out of my hand, because my Father who gave them, is greater than all” (John 10:28-29). Thus it is that, if not all, yet some, indeed many, are saved; whereas, by the power of free choice none at all could be saved, but we all would have perished in the one man. Furthermore, we are certain and sure (certi sumus et securi) that we are pleasing to God, not by the merit of our works, but by the favor of his own mercy promised to us. And if we work too little, or badly, he does not impute it to us, but with fatherly compassion pardons and corrects us. This is the boasting (gloriatio) of all the saints in their God.\(^{1189}\)

The core Augustinian doctrines are all present and accounted for: destruction in Adam (... in unum omnes perderemur); election by grace to salvation in Christ; the non-imputation of those flaws which remain in the redeemed, and God’s fatherly correction of the same; the saints’ wholehearted “boasting” in this gracious God alone. So too are the more characteristically Lutheran emphases on conscience, certainty, scruples, devils, and the promise of grace. But here these components are fused together and recast in a manner that evokes Paul’s boast of certain triumph at Rom. 8:31-39 and opens the door to John 10:28-29 as the matter-of-fact claim of the tried, tested, steadfast, stumbling little believer in Christ.

It comes to this: for weary, devil-clobbered, flesh-lugging souls, seemingly stuck in Rom. 7 forever with no hope of escape, predestination is not the cause of Anfechtungen, but the remedy. For it assures the saints that not even their worst and nearest enemies—viz., their own selves—are able to cast them out of the affections of their Father. He knew far better than they did that they were sinners when he chose them by grace, and he will not let them go now that the battle for holiness has begun to bring the depth of their sinfulness to light. For—to switch now to the apostolic first-person—he is for us, and has bound himself to us in a covenant of love and grace as steadfast as the perfections of his infinite being. No one, not the devil, not my own warped will, is strong enough to pluck me out of his hand. If this is true—and the gospel promises me that it is—then there is hope! That, Luther knew and on occasion let on to, is what the biblical doctrine of predestination and grace is all about: the thrilling hope—as potent to cheer the sorrowing heart, and to rouse and refresh it for battle, as the best of wines (cf. Ps. 78:65, 104:15)—that God is irrevocably for me as my Father, that he fights for me, and that nothing, neither tribulation, distress, persecution nor death, life, angel, ruler, present, future, past, etc., will ever separate me from his strong love in Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:31-39).

What then of my dogmatic correction? I think Luther's nuanced pastoral theology of assurance, carefully tailored to each of the four settings in life that I have set out, is quite wise. Pearls ought not to be cast before swine, and surely assurance of election (as Thomas Watson probably wrote) is a precious jewel in the Christian's crown. Faithful, untroubled disciples do well to be patient in well-doing and to make use of the means of grace in the Church. The artful pastor does all in his power to tear
the severely afflicted soul off of his self, point him to Christ alone, and let
predestination shine from his wounds. And the battle-weary pilgrim, in view of the
promised land but without hope of reaching it in his own strength, casts himself upon
the eternal purpose and promised faithfulness of God. In this last respect, it’s hard to
see how Luther’s “spirituality of predestination” differs in any real way from the
Reformed doctrine: grasping hold of texts like Rom. 8:31-9 and John 10:27-30 in
extremis, Luther’s ancient Augustinian wine begins to burst its skins and call for fresh
ones instead. What I propose, then, is that the Reformed spirituality which Luther
himself, in this fourth pastoral situation, occasionally adumbrates be outfitted with
the Reformed dogmatics which is able to sustain it for the long-haul. I lack the space
and the skill required to do this doctrine justice, and point you to John Owen’s
masterful exposition and defense of it in his 1654 The Doctrine of the Saints’
Perseverance Explained and Confirmed. But I do wish to conclude this book by
gesturing toward the way this sturdier dogmatics of election, grace, and perseverance
is profitable for afflicted, Lutheran souls.

The doctrine itself is established on the firm foundation of texts that Luther
did not exposit as often as he might have. In addition to Rom. 8:31-39 and John 10:27-
30, these include especially the promises of the new, eternal covenant of grace, life,
and peace found in Isa. 44:2-3, 54:10, 61:1-8, Jer.31:31-4, 32:37-41, Ezek. 16:60-63, 34:11-31,
36:22-29, 37:1-28, and Hos. 2:19-20, as well as NT passages like Heb. 8—10, Gal. 3:6—
5:1, and Eph. 1:3-14 which announce the realization of this promised grace in Jesus
Christ for the edification and consolation of the freeborn filii promissionis. In them all,
the twofold blessing of forgiveness and holiness, justification and life, are bound up
together, promised, realized, proclaimed, and given in Christ by his Spirit, all of it being the gracious outworking in time of the Father’s eternal purpose of love for his beloved. Therefore Isaiah and Paul, John and Jeremiah do not hesitate as Augustine and Luther tend to do. Quite plainly, and in all simplicity and truth, the prophets and apostles teach the Church: in love, the Father graciously chose to redeem, adopt, and preserve us for himself forever, and sent his dear Son to see to the purchasing of the riches of this grace by his blood and his Spirit to lavish these riches upon the ransomed people of God. Luther, I have argued, adamantly insists on the inseparability of grace and gift, and sometimes (especially against radical Lutherans) takes the further step of urging their causal interconnection. But the prophets are not so modest: “The mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you ... No weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the inheritance of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness from Me, declares the LORD” (Isa. 54:10 & 17).

Of course, all Augustinians agree that in regards to the elect, the covenant of peace cannot and will not be broken: for “God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: ‘The Lord knows who are his’” (2 Tim. 2:19). The question is, can the sojourning saints know that they are his, viz., that they in fact belong to God in Christ by virtue of this covenant and grace? Paul thought so, for the all-conquering note of triumph at Rom. 8:31-39 is based on the sober dogmatics of v. 30. The predestined, the called, the justified, and the glorified are not discrete sets of persons, but the Beloved herself, the
Church. The saints, therefore, are free to rest—and to rejoice—in the assurance that God loved and chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world, that he will faithfully preserve them by his great grace, and that at the last he will bring them to glory. Or is it better for the called and justified to waver about the promises of God? Should they hedge their bets, and put some degree of trust (however slight) not just in God's faithfulness to them, but in their own faithfulness to God? Perhaps, if not in one's holiness per se, at least a little stock should be put in that heroic faith which defies the “hostile” God himself, refuses his threatened refusal, and demands that he remain true to his word? I know a man in Christ who once read magnificent lectures on Gen. 32, and entertained this kind of folly about himself. But as I have shown above, at his best (that is to say his very weakest) moments Luther knew better, and rejoiced in the promise of a salvation that is by grace alone from first to last.

So did holy Asaph. For the consolation of the saints, he confesses that when his soul was embittered and his heart pricked, he was not pious but brutish, ignorant, and beast-like toward God. “Nevertheless,” he sings to the Lord, “I am continually with you; you hold my right hand; you guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory” (Ps. 73:21-24). Why, Asaph, do you fancy this? For in the agony, did not your heart cast off all hope in God? Didn't you just admit frankly that you consented to your despairing flesh, and gave up? Or did you keep up faith in the gospel even when you behaved like a beast toward the Lord? Were you wrestling with him then by steadfast faith in the promise, refusing to let go of him until he blessed you? Admit it, Asaph: in the time of trial, your heart failed you! “Indeed my friends, not only my flesh but my heart too failed me; but no matter, for my heart is not the
strength of my heart; God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever” (Ps. 73:26). Or have you not learned to pray your Psalter?

The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way; though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the LORD upholds his hand ... For the LORD loves justice; he will not forsake his saints; they are preserved forever; but the children of the wicked will be cut off (Ps. 37:23, 28)

As for you, O LORD, you will not restrain your mercy from me; your steadfast love and your faithfulness will ever preserve me (Ps. 40:11)

Love the LORD, all you his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful (Ps. 31:23)

You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance (Ps. 32:7)

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me. The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever (Ps. 138:7-8)

To this true and living God, whose promise is faithful and whose grace abounds because his love is strong, be endless glory now and forever. Amen.
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