

Lutheran and Reformed Theology in Conversation

Dan Lioy and Robert Falconer

Abstract

The 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation occurred in 2017. That is the same year that a collaborative effort between Robert Kolb and Carl R Trueman was published by Baker. The title of the authors' work is *Between Wittenberg and Geneva*. The subtitle provides a clearer indication of the publication's focus, namely, *Lutheran and Reformed theology in Conversation*.

Kolb and Trueman are neither the first nor the last specialists to compare Lutheran and Reformed approaches to the classical theological loci. That said, their publication represents a fresh and irenic contribution to the ongoing dialogue between these two confessional traditions. Both theologians, in their respective ways, seek to ground their statements about hermeneutics, the law / gospel dialectic, and the Son's person and work (among other topics) to the teachings found in the Word. Along the way, both authors, likewise, highlight salient pastoral convictions that arise from their deliberations.

An examination of each chapter within the book surfaces the shared historical and theological legacy between the Lutheran and Reformed communions. Also, while being appropriately self-critical of their own faith traditions, both authors delineate what they

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¹ The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

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regard as the key differences between the two confessional groups. Moreover, as the dialogue unfolds between Kolb and Trueman, readers discover areas of agreement and disagreement between the Lutheran and Reformed camps and Roman Catholicism (on the one hand) and nonconfessional Protestant groups (on the other hand). Doing so helps to elucidate the major areas of theological differentiation among all these ecclesial communions.

What follows is a chapter-by-chapter distillation of the information appearing in the treatise. It is interspersed with supplementary observations of varying depth and detail made by both of us—Dan Lioy (who brings a Lutheran perspective) and Robert Falconer (who brings a Reformed perspective). Our intent in doing so is to promote further conversation within the SATS community about doctrinal issues of shared interest.

Prof. Dan Lioy's Lutheran Orientation

I am a confessional Lutheran who is rostered (ordained) with the North American Lutheran Church (NALC).² As a mission-driven synod, the NALC affirms the following: 'We believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and to make disciples for Christ. We believe that making disciples—in our congregations, in our communities and nations, and around the world—must be a priority of the Church in the present age'.³ Because confessional Lutherans affirm a unity throughout the Judeo-Christian canon, they also recognise a connection between the Old Testament and New Testament. Specifically, the Old Testament points forward to Jesus and his work, while the New Testament tells us how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies. So, when the New Testament speaks of an Old Testament passage as fulfilled by Jesus, Lutherans view this as the full and correct theological meaning of the Old Testament passage.

Dr Robert Falconer's Reformed Orientation

I consider myself Reformed in the general sense, although my primary theological interests have shifted from the traditional Calvinistic emphasis on TULIP,⁴ to Neo-Calvinism. Neo-Calvinism's progenitors are Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck, and others. The focus here is placed on the following four emphases: (1) cosmic redemption; (2) the lordship of Christ over all things (the sovereignty of God over all creation); (3) an affirmation

2 The following is the main website for the NALC: <https://thenalc.org>.

3 The *Book of Concord* (or *Concordia*) is the historic, doctrinal standard of the Lutheran Church. An English language translation of the texts of the Lutheran Confessions can be found here: <http://bookofconcord.org/index.php?>

4 An acronym for Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, Perseverance of the Saints, which is so pervasive in Calvinism. The *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, by John Calvin, is a seminal text dealing with Reformed theology. An English language translation of the *Institutes* can be found here: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes/>. For additional online resources related to Reformed theology, cf. the links curated and maintained by the Dutch Reformed Translation Society, which can be found here: <https://www.dutchreformed.org/resources/>.

of all vocations as callings from God; and, (4) the Christian's embrace of mission in all life's contexts. So, perhaps, I am not purely Reformed as is Carl R Trueman, and neither would I agree with all that is associated with traditional Calvinism. I am therefore Reformed in the Kuyerian sense; yet, even the Kuyerian tradition builds on the foundation of classical Calvinism.

Preface

In the Preface to *Between Wittenberg and Geneva* (pp. ix-xiii), Trueman draws a distinction between the 'Lutheran and Reformed confessional traditions' and 'Evangelicals'. Trueman explains that those within the Lutheran and Reformed camp affirm the 'gospel of justification by grace through faith' (and so, are 'small e' evangelicals); yet, they do not self-identify with contemporary 'Baptist and parachurch' organizations that have their historical roots in the 'revivals of the eighteenth century'. Likewise, underappreciated is that while Luther and his adherents were lowercase 'reformers', it is inaccurate to refer to them as uppercase 'Reformed'. Those who ignore this point gloss over the substantive doctrinal differences between the Lutheran and Reformed 'communions'.

It is incorrect to allege that emphasizing the preceding theological lines of demarcation smacks of pedantry; instead, at its core, these sorts of distinctions signify an acute recognition of one's own ecclesial 'identity'. For example, consider the tendency among 'Evangelicals' to give pride of place to 'soteriology' (that is, the doctrine of salvation). One consequence is that they are less likely to appreciate why 'sacraments' (namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper) receive so much attention within the Lutheran and Reformed camps. Indeed, the prevailing 'antisacramental culture of modern Evangelicalism' leads adherents to be 'confused' and 'distressed' by what they perceive as strident forms of sacramentalism, particularly among Lutherans.

It is worth noting that both Lutherans and the Reformed affirm the following three tenets: (1) the centrality of the Lord Jesus; (2) the inspiration and authority of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures; and, (3) the reliability of the ancient creeds and confessions of the church as faithful guides in interpreting God's Word. Furthermore, the preceding affirmations help to preserve the clarity of the gospel message, particularly, as it pertains to the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. In turn, doing so reflects the

ecclesial ethos of the Lutheran and Reformed communions, which are evangelical, creedal, and sacramental.

Returning to the Kolb and Trueman treatise, the ‘points of sharp disagreement’ between Lutherans and their Reformed counterparts are most acute when considering the ‘person of Christ’, ‘baptism’, and the ‘Lord’s Supper’. The preceding statement having been made, there remains ‘significant commonality’ between the two groups on numerous ‘elements’ of the apostolic ‘faith’.

Kolb’s methodology in the volume entails directing considerable attention to ‘Luther’s expression of the biblical message’, along with ‘ways it can function today’. Though he is regarded as the ‘central and dominant figure’, other Lutheran confessional writings help to broaden and deepen Kolb’s discourse. In contrast, Trueman’s methodology is considerably more ‘eclectic’. Put another way, his approach is not explicitly tied to any Reformed luminary, particularly that of John Calvin; rather, Trueman’s discourse gleams from a broad spectrum of Reformed theologians and various confessional expressions of faith. Also, like Kolb, Trueman engages the ‘ecumenical creeds of the ancient church’ (Kolb and Trueman 2017:xii).⁵ It should be remembered that both Lutheran and Reformed churches hold the ecumenical creeds together with their confessions⁶ and catechism as authoritative summaries of sacred Scripture.⁷

There are historical reasons for the two divergent approaches taken by Kolb and Trueman. For instance, Luther was a ‘central and dominant figure’ among his peers. Likewise, his ‘personal and theological commitments’ exercised a strong ‘influence’ on the contours of ‘Lutheran theology’ in the years and centuries to follow. Unlike the Lutheranism, which has Martin Luther as its central figure in theology, the Reformed tradition, or Calvinism, has always been rather diverse, consisting of a number of ‘Reformed thinkers’ who have influenced the focus and direction of the ecclesiastical tradition.⁸ As one might expect, this is counterintuitive in popular Evangelical discourse. Calvin did not so ‘dominate the tradition’ that his personal theological preferences became the guiding light for other Reformed theologians to follow, despite Calvin still being a major figure in Reformed theology. It is for this reason that Trueman draws from a wide range of the ‘confessional documents’ to communicate his thoughts (Kolb and Trueman 2017:xii).

5 cf. Bettenson (1963:23-26); Grudem (1994:1168-1203); Horton (2011:192).

6 For a discussion on creeds and confessions, cf. Horton (2011:215-18).

7 cf. Horton 2011:187.

8 These Reformed theologians include, along with John Calvin, Huldrych Zwingli, Martin Bucer, William Farel, Heinrich Bullinger, Theodore Beza, John Knox, and the Puritans like John Owen and Jonathan Edwards (cf. Frame 2013:175). Reformed theologians from the twentieth century include Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, B B Warfield, J Gresham Machen, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Cornelius Van Til. Today, among others, JI Packer, DA Carson, John MacArthur, the late RC Sproul, John Piper, Wayne Grudem, Sam Storms, and Michael Horton are contemporary theologians in the Reformed tradition, yet even their ecclesiastical traditions are diverse.

Chapter 1: Scripture and Its Interpretation

The first chapter (pp. 1–30) of *Between Wittenberg and Geneva* deals with Scripture and its interpretation. The authors begin by drawing a distinction between Catholics and their Lutheran and Reformed counterparts. Specifically, the ‘medieval church’ considered the ‘Mass’ to be the ‘heart’ of its ‘public ministry’. In contrast, both the Lutheran and Reformed traditions focused on the proclamation of the Word of God and the exposition of Scripture⁹ (Allison 2011:90–93), downplaying the centrality of the ‘altar’ and making the ‘pulpit’, along with the ‘public proclamation’ of Scripture, to be the locus of ‘church life’ (Kolb and Trueman 2017:1).

⁹ Cf. Deut 31:11; Luke 24:27; John 5:39; Rom 15:4; 2 Pet 1:20.

Furthermore, for those who are either Lutheran or Reformed, the ministry of Word and sacrament go together. The core conviction is that the Spirit ‘confronted’ parishioners, whether for the purposes of ‘judgment’ (i.e. law) or ‘salvation’ (i.e. gospel), depending on whether congregants responded in ‘faith’ or ‘unbelief’. Noteworthy in this regard is the emphasis on the notion of *sola Scriptura* or ‘Scripture alone’. In particular, only God’s Word is supremely authoritative for the faith and practice of believers.

As noted earlier, the preceding stance does not eliminate for Lutheran and Reformed adherents the importance of the church’s historic creeds and confessions, including their underlying ‘doctrinal and exegetical traditions’; yet, even then, it is held that the Creator speaks through what is written in Scripture. Within Lutheranism, it is taught that the Creator is ‘present and at work in and through his Word’. In particular, the Spirit uses ‘oral, written, and sacramental forms’ of the divine ‘promise’ to give ‘assurance’ to believers that they are the Father’s pardoned and redeemed children.

Furthermore, the Lutheran tradition maintains that the Spirit joins the heralding of the Word with the sacraments as means of God’s grace. Put another way, the Lord works through the proclaimed Word along with the enacted Word to bestow such blessings as his salvation, forgiveness, and eternal life to believers. Accordingly, confessional Lutherans maintain that the Lord uses his ‘recreative Word’ to actualise and sustain the reality of the new birth within Christians. More generally, the Father uses ‘human language’ as the ‘instrument’ through which he brings to pass his ‘will’.

Reformed theologians concur with their Lutheran counterparts that Scripture is the ‘normative criteria for all theological discussion’ (Kolb and Trueman 2017:14; Vanhoozer 2005:231,

233).¹⁰ In comparison to a hermeneutic of suspicion, the Reformed engage the Bible with a ‘hermeneutic of trust and obedience’¹¹ (Grudem 1994:81–82; Vanhoozer 2005:207; Westminster Confession 2018:6–7). The Reformed also consider the heralding of Scripture to be ‘one of the marks of the true church’¹² (Horton 2011:751–63). The ‘administration of the sacraments’ would be a second ‘non-negotiable mark’ of the church (Allison 2011:565, 579; Erickson 1998:1038; Grudem 1994:864–65).

Moreover, the Reformed look to the Bible to provide the ‘framework for understanding reality as the creation of a sovereign God’¹³ (Kolb and Trueman 2017:16). Horton explains that we are unable to know the meaning of our daily lives and of our world, or even our human identity and development, until God interprets our lives and history in light of his actions (2011:200–201). Nonetheless, the ‘interpretation’ of God’s Word is a predominant ‘issue’ that divides the ‘Lutheran and the Reformed’. A case in point would be how these two confessional traditions explain and understand Jesus’ statement, ‘This is my body’. Chapter 7 of the jointly authored treatise takes up this matter in earnest.

Another area of distinction involves the hermeneutical lens through which each camp views Scripture. For those who are Reformed, God’s omnipotence¹⁴ is the starting point and his sovereign grace¹⁵ is the central doctrinal focus of the Bible.¹⁶ While Lutherans affirm the sovereignty and omnipotence of the Creator, they see the Lord Jesus as the locus of Scripture’s testimony and justification by faith as the core teaching of the Judeo-Christian canon.

When it comes to the ‘importance, sufficiency, and clarity of the Word’,¹⁷ the Reformed further differentiate themselves from ‘Roman Catholicism and evangelical biblicism’ (Kolb and Trueman 2017:14). On the one hand, Catholics hold to an ‘extrascriptural stream of authoritative revelation’, that is, the Tradition of the Church (Carson 2010:34; Horton 2011:187–89; Kolb and Trueman 2017:16); on the other hand, Evangelicals are prone to ‘ignore the tradition of church teaching’, especially out of expediency or convenience (Kolb and Trueman 2017:17). While this is unfortunately true, the Reformed systematic theologian, Kevin Vanhoozer, in his treatise, *The Drama of Doctrine*, makes a rigorous argument that *sola scriptura*¹⁸ (‘by Scripture alone’) is not intended to say, *nulla traditio* (‘no tradition’). It is not meant as a protest against tradition; on the contrary the Reformers had much respect for tradition;¹⁹ instead, *Sola scriptura* is to set Scripture alone as the supreme norm of faith (Vanhoozer 2005:231–36).

10 For further discussion of Scripture’s sufficiency and necessity in the Reformation, cf. Allison (2011:151-58); Horton (2011:186-98).

11 cf. Exod 19:5; Deut 11:1; Luke 11:28; John 10:35; 14:15; 15:14; 17:17; Rom 1:5; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 John 1:6; Rev 14:12.

12 cf. Acts 2:42.

13 cf. Lioy (2005:35).

14 cf. Gen 18:14; Deut 33:27; Job 42:1-2; Isa 14:27; 26:4-5; 43:13; Jer 32:27; Dan 4:35; Matt 19:26; Luke 1:37; Acts 26:8; Eph 1:19; Rev 19:6.

15 e.g. Ps 105:24-25; Isa 46:8-11; 1 Pet 1:3.

16 cf. Frame (2013:343-44); Grudem (1994:216-17); Horton (2011:260).

17 cf. Grudem (1994:54-140); Horton (2011:196-218); Bavinck (2008:475-94).

18 cf. Barrett (2016); Sproul (2013); White (2004).

19 cf. 1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thess 2:15; 3:6.

For the Reformed, the remedy to the preceding excess is to engage God's Word through a 'mastery of the biblical languages' (Carson 2010:40–41; Kolb and Trueman 2017:17; cf. DeRouchie 2012). This is accompanied by an in-depth 'acquaintance with the history of interpretation' (Carson 2010:47–48; Kolb and Trueman 2017:17). Such 'ecclesiastical documents' provide a 'framework' for explaining the meaning of biblical passages (Kolb and Trueman 2017:21). Both of us—Dan and Robert—maintain that any skilful and critical reading of Scripture, no matter how well-informed by reason and intuition, is characterised by methodological preferences. Consequently, deductions arising from any exegetical analysis of Scripture remain provisional, fragmentary, and imperfect.

20 e.g. Liroy (2005).

Another area of deliberation among those who are Lutheran and Reformed concerns the relationship between the Old and New Testaments.²⁰ In some academic literature, the phrase 'continuity and discontinuity' is used to characterise the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. A contrasting option favoured by Dan (and Robert) is the phrase 'continuity and advance'. This is regarded as a more accurate way to denote the integral, nuanced connection between these two portions of the Judeo-Christian canon.

In Dan's teaching ministry, he emphasises to his students that Scripture's reliability encompasses the content, form, and function of the theological message the human authors communicated, as agents of God's revelation, to the original recipients in their ancient languages and cultures. Dan's view is that even though the human authors of the Bible wrote for the spiritual benefit of present-day readers about God's acts as Creator, Judge, and Redeemer, the authors did not write to present-day readers.

Furthermore, Dan stresses that because the Judeo-Christian canon contains, in part, historical narrative motivated by theological concerns, the human authors' primary goal was not to provide an exhaustive, strictly chronological, and absolutely precise report of raw data; instead, it was to explain, through a process involving the selection and arrangement of composed and compiled information, the redemptive-historical significance of actual, past events that occurred in space and time. As a missionary in Kenya, Robert gave a similar explanation in teaching the course, *Grasping God's Word*,²¹ to young Kenyan adults. Dan also underscores that the goal is to exegete the final canonical form of God's Word, especially (though not exclusively) through the prism of a law / gospel dialectic. Dan maintains that the metanarrative of

21 cf. Duvall and Hays (2005).

Scripture bears witness to the Lord Jesus, and the scandal of the Cross is Scripture's interpretive key.

Chapter 2: Law and Gospel

The second chapter (pp. 31–58) deals with the 'distinction between law and gospel'. On the one hand, the Spirit uses the 'law' to convict people of their sins; on the other hand, the Spirit uses the 'gospel' to present the Messiah and the salvation he offers to people. Within Lutheranism, the terms 'law' and 'gospel' are intentionally used in a 'narrow' and focused manner. In turn, doing so helps to accentuate the dialectical tension between law and gospel. Specifically, while the law issues commands, the gospel holds forth God's promises. On one level, the law censures sinners and condemns them to death; yet, on another level, the gospel puts forward the Father's gift of new life through faith in his Son.

Lutherans and the Reformed part company with Roman Catholics by rejecting the teaching that believers must 'merit' God's 'grace' by performing a range of 'truly worthy good works' in their 'daily behaviour and attitude'.²² Indeed, Lutherans and the Reformed emphasise that the Creator alone intervenes to 'rescue sinners' from 'missing the mark' of his infinite glory²³ (Kolb and Trueman 2017:31–32). Within both Lutheranism and the Reformed traditions, the Son is regarded as the sole and sufficient agent of the believers' redemption. The Spirit uses the proclamation of the gospel to plant the seed of faith in the soil of the sinners' heart. In turn, the Spirit enlivens them to repentance, to receive the good news, and to become the Father's reborn children.

Lutherans regard maintaining the categorical distinction between law and gospel as imperative. Doing so ensures 'absolute clarity' among congregants in recognizing the 'seriousness' of their iniquities and grasping the full-orbed 'comfort' found in the Messiah's 'death and resurrection'. Lutherans refer to God's gift of 'righteousness' as being 'alien', that is, originating with the Creator apart from the recipients of his unconditional declaration of pardon. In contrast to this 'passive righteousness' is an 'active righteousness', which is displayed in 'service and love for others'. Lutherans also speak of 'civil righteousness'. By this is meant 'external adherence to God's plan for life'. It is taught that even in this realm, people 'fail to conform perfectly' to the Creator's 'expectations'.

22 cf. Rom 3:20-25; Eph 2:8-9; Gal 2:16; Allison (2011:505-14).

23 cf. Matt 1:21; Acts 5:31; Rom 3:23; 5:8-10; 6:23; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 2:8-9.

Among Lutherans, a lively debate exists concerning whether there is a twofold or threefold use of the law, as follows: (1) a *civil* use: to restrain evil in the world through punishment; (2) a *soteriological* use: to point out sin and the need for salvation; and, (3) a *moral* use: to provide a guide for sanctified living among the regenerate. Those in the Reformed camp approach the preceding discussion from a different starting point. In particular, their theologians start off by dividing the Hebrew sacred writings into the ‘three categories’, namely, the ‘moral, ceremonial, and civil’ law. Duvall and Hays, however, make a compelling argument that these distinctions in the traditional approach are too inconsistent and ambiguous; instead, they advocate a careful examination of ‘the narrative and covenant contexts of the Old Testament legal material’ without such fixed distinctions (2005:ch. 19).

24 cf. Westminster Confession (2018:19.2)

The ‘Decalogue’ is regarded as the premier expression of the ‘moral law’.²⁴ The Old Testament ‘sacrificial system’ is identified with the ‘ceremonial law’. The ‘political administration of ancient Israel’ encompasses the ‘civil law’. Furthermore, the Reformed maintain that the Son’s advent brought about the fulfilment of the ‘ceremonial’ facets of the law and the abrogation of the its ‘civil aspects’. For instance, Jesus’ sacrificial death at Calvary eliminates the need for animal sacrifices²⁵ (Bavinck 2006:328–40; Erickson 1998:822–23; Horton 2011:486–93). Likewise, his resurrection from the dead and his ascension into heaven have transformed ‘Israel from a political and ethnic entity into a spiritual body’ (Kolb and Trueman 2017:47).

25 cf. Heb 9:24-28; 10:1-18.

26 cf. Matt 5:18; 22:37-40; Acts 15:19-20.

Those of us who are Reformed stress that the ‘moral law’ has continuing ‘relevance’ for believers.²⁶ After all, it is argued that this aspect of God’s law ‘reflects’ his eternal and abiding ‘character’, and so ‘remains in place’ (Westminster Confession 2018:19.5–6). The Reformed tradition affirms the Lutheran ‘distinction’ between ‘law’ and ‘gospel’. Also, Reformed theologians see threefold demarcations in the law; yet, they more often refer to these as ‘functions’ of the law, rather than ‘uses’ of the law (Kolb and Trueman 2017:48).

Those in the Reformed camp tend to emphasise the soteriological function first and the civil function second (Kolb and Trueman 2017:48; Westminster Confession 2018:19.4). Also, whereas Lutherans typically highlight the soteriological use of the law in congregational preaching, the Reformed place more emphasis on the moral purpose of the law. Expressed differently, while the ‘law–gospel dialectic’ is recognised by Reformed adherents, its ‘role’ in theological and pastoral discourse is ‘much less prominent’ than in

Lutheran circles. The Reformed place greater import on the law's function of encouraging and guiding the 'behaviour' of Christians (Kolb and Trueman 2017:49).

The 'sharp antithesis' Lutherans see between law and gospel tends to be downplayed in Reformed discourse. Whereas Lutherans focus on the 'commands' made by the 'law' and the 'promises' offered by the 'gospel', Reformed theologians stress that both 'law and gospel offer promises'. To develop the preceding observation further, those in the Reformed camp maintain that the 'promises' made by the 'law' are 'conditioned' on a person's 'obedience'; yet, due to their 'fallen sinful nature', they are 'impotent' to satisfy their 'moral obligation to God'. In contrast, the gospel's 'promises' are 'unconditional,' due to the Son's 'life and work'.

The above emphases might explain why Reformed theologians maintain that in the ancient Eden orchard, the Creator 'gave to Adam a law', which is referred to as a 'covenant of works'²⁷ (Westminster Confession 2018:19.1). Lutheran theologians typically reject this teaching, in which they argue that, from the time God created humankind, humankind's relationship was defined by grace, not works. For Lutherans, the considerable emphasis in the Reformed tradition on the law as an 'external guide' for believers raises concerns that it might become a 'type of legalism'. To put it differently, there is the threat that 'works righteousness' could be 'smuggled back into the salvific equation'.

The Reformed response is that the Spirit 'internalises the law' on the hearts of believers.²⁸ Consequently, the Spirit gives 'Christians' both the 'desire' and the ability to fulfil the 'aspirational norm of behaviour' expressed in the third use of the law (Bavinck 2006:528; Frame 2013:989–90). Relevant to these observations is the Reformed understanding of 'justification by imputation'²⁹ (Grudem 1994:726–29; Horton 2011:620–21, 630–40), in which there is a sharp separation from 'actual good works' (Allison 2011:512–13). The declaration of righteousness³⁰ (Frame 2013:966–67; Grudem 1994:723–24) is followed by the believers' 'sanctification', in which there is an increasing separation from sin and being progressively set apart to holiness³¹ (Frame 2013:970–71, 983–86; Grudem 1994:747–48; Horton 2011:650–57). Chapter 5 of the jointly authored treatise takes up this matter in earnest.

Chapter 3: The Person and Work of Christ

The third chapter (pp. 58–86) deals with the person and work of Christ, otherwise known by the more technical term of *Christology*.

27 cf. Gen 2:16-17; Rom 5:12-21. For a compelling discussion on the *covenant of vocation* as an alternate to the *covenant of works*, cf. Wright (2016:73-87).

28 cf. Ezek 11:19; 36:26, Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10.

29 cf. Rom 4:4-5; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9. In contrast to Dan, it is at this point where I, Robert, find myself sympathetic towards Wright's New Pauline Perspective (NPP) view of justification and yet intrigued by what the Apocalyptic Paul school has to offer. Perhaps until such a time as I can untie the three threads in my own mind, I will leave them in knotted tension (cf. Allison (2011:518-19); Bird (2016); Frame (2013:972-73); McKnight (2015); Rutledge (2017:565, 571-612). For a disquisition of Paul's writings from a traditional (i.e. non-NPP), apocalyptic perspective, cf. Lioy (2016).

30 cf. Rom 3:26.

31 cf. Rom 6:6; 12:1-2; 1 Cor 6:11; 1 Thess 4:3; 2 Thess 2:13; Heb 10:10; 2 Pet 3:18.

The core theological issue in the exchange between Kolb and Trueman is the ‘question’ of the Saviour’s ‘identity’. The historic creeds and confessions of the church have affirmed that Jesus of Nazareth is ‘God manifest in the flesh’. Expressed differently, he is the ‘God of Israel’ incarnate.

Both the Lutheran and Reformed traditions hold to the doctrine of the hypostatic union. Specifically, because of the Incarnation, there is the joining together of two natures—undiminished deity and unfallen humanity—in the one Person of the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ.³² Even though there is a real and inseparable union of the two natures in one Person, there is absolutely no blending together of their unique essences. Each retains its own distinct properties or attributes unchanged and undiminished.

32 cf. Allison (2011:379-81); Bavinck (2006:256-59); Berkhof (1959:119-21); Calvin (2007: Book 2.1-2, pp. 309-310); Erickson (1998:749-55); Frame (2013:887-89); Grudem (1994:556-58); Horton (2011:468-79); Westminster Confession (2018:8.2-3).

Moreover, it was a divine person, not merely a divine nature, that assumed humanity or became incarnate. The implication is that the second Person of the Trinity did not unite himself with a human person, but with a human nature. For the preceding reason, Jesus’ human nature, when considered by itself, is ‘anhypostatic’. This technical term means that Jesus’ human nature receives its ‘personhood from union with the divine’ at the ‘moment of conception’. Accordingly, when ‘joined with the Logos’, Jesus’ human nature ‘receives’ the Son’s ‘personal subsistence’. Consequently, Jesus’ human nature becomes ‘enhypostatic’.

While there exists ‘much common ground between the two traditions’ with respect to ‘Christology’, Lutheran and Reformed adherents part company when it comes to the question of whether the ‘characteristics of one nature’ ever ‘become the possession of the other’. Lutherans teach that the attributes of the Son’s divine nature (e.g. his omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, and so on) are communicable, or shared, ‘directly’ with his human nature. In maintaining this doctrinal stance, Lutherans likewise affirm that ‘each nature retains its own integrity’. Put another way, while the ‘two natures’ are ‘distinct,’ they remain ‘inseparable’.

Lutherans reject the charge made by some of embracing the ‘Eutychian heresy’, namely, ‘denying the continued existence’ of the Son’s ‘human nature’. Adherents of Lutheranism assert that Jesus’ human ‘nature’ is able to ‘exercise the characteristics of the divine nature even if it never possesses them’. Dogmaticians in the Lutheran tradition recognise the ‘paradoxical nature of the incarnation’. It is a divine mystery that defies the attempts of human logic to explain by sophisticated rationalizations.

In Lutheranism, there is a profound difference between the mystery of the faith versus a sceptical questioning of the faith. The

first option recognises the presence of deep paradoxes. In contrast, the second option rejects the faith. This is because human reason fails to provide a satisfying elucidation for doctrines which on the surface seem to be baffling and contradictory. Lutherans, by affirming the mystery, argue that they are not committing intellectual suicide; instead, they humbly acknowledge that intellectuals, despite their self-proclaimed acumen, are finite and feeble creatures who lack the ability to resolve many of life's paradoxes.

The preceding observations have implications for the Lutheran understanding of the Lord's Supper. It is taught that in the sacrament of holy communion, the bread and the wine become the real, true, and objective presence of the Saviour's 'body and blood' through the 'power of his Word'. For this, the Lord Jesus gives to the communicants his body and blood in, with, and under the bread and the wine. Through this sacrament, the triune God brings the gift of forgiveness to the worshipping congregation and strengthens their faith.

Those in the Reformed camp deny the Son's real, 'eucharistic' presence in the bread and wine; instead, they hold to his spiritual presence. Likewise, it is taught that when communicants partake of the bread and the wine during the Lord's Supper, the Spirit metaphysically transports them to heaven and unites them with the Son,³³ where his physical body is located³⁴ (Allison 2011:654; Bavinck 2008:576; Calvin 2007: Book 4. 17.32; Frame 2013:1069; Horton 2011:814–18). The Reformed stance is due, in part, to a rejection of the Lutheran teaching that Jesus' body shares the divine property of ubiquity. The term, 'ubiquity', means the 'ability to be in more than one place in more than one form at the same time' (Allison 2011:653–54; Bavinck 2008:575–77; Horton 2011:810; Sproul 2013).

Reformed Theologians maintain that it is physically impossible for the Son's body—even in its glorified, resurrected, and ascended state—to be 'spatially' present in multiple locales and in differing modalities at any given moment (Bavinck 2008:557–58, 576; Frame 2013:1067; Horton 2011:809–10). It is reasoned that the 'material and spiritual realms' are 'so distinct' that the 'finite cannot comprehend or contain the infinite'. Moreover, Reformed theologians teach that the communication of attributes takes place in the person of the Son (Bavinck 2006:258–257; Berkhof 1959:119–20; Grudem 1994:562–63; Horton 2011:476–79; cf. Erickson 1998:754–55). In turn, this ensures that each nature retains its own distinctive properties. As previously noted, for Lutherans, the

33 cf. Matt 28:20; Eph 2:6-7; Col 3:1; Rom 6:3; 8:9-10; 16:7; Gal 2:20; 3:26-27; Col 3:3-4.

34 cf. Luke 22:66-69; Mark 16:19 (N.B. some of the earliest manuscripts do not include 16:9-20); Acts 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20-22; Heb. 1:3.

35 cf. Allison (2011:380-81).

36 cf. Acts 4:12; Eph 3:11; Heb 9:28; 10:4-18 (esp. v. 14); 13:20; 1 Pet 3:18.

37 cf. John 1:14; 1 Tim 2:5; Phil 2:7; Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*; Calvin (2007: Book 2.12.1-3, pp. 297-298); For further discussion on atonement theology in the reformation and post-reformation, cf. Allison (2011:398-405); Berkhof (1959:187-96).

38 cf. John 1:29; 1 Cor 15:3; Eph 1:7.

39 cf. Calvin (2007: Book 2.14.3, p. 311); Frame (2013: 903); Horton (2011: 493, 499-500).

40 cf. Gen 3:15; Luke 11:21-22; John 10:10; 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Rom 15:24; 1 Cor 15:22-25; Col 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 Pet. 3:21-22; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 3:21; 11:15.

41 cf. Col 2:15; Heb 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8.

42 cf. Isa 53:5-6; Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 3:16; 15:13; Rom 1:18; 3:21-28; 4:22-25; 5:8,16-19; 8:32; 1 Cor 15:1-58; Gal 2:20; 3:10-13; Heb 2:17; 1 Pet 1:18-19; 2:21-25; 3:18; 1 John 2:2.

43 cf. Rom 3:25-26; Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 2:2; 4:10. For a synthesis of the *Christus Victor* motif and penal substitution, cf. Falconer's (2013) doctoral thesis, titled, *A Theological and Biblical Examination on the Synthesis of Penal Substitution and Christus Victor Motifs: Implications for African Metaphysics*, which can be accessed here: <http://bit.ly/2Kr20yf>. Also, cf. Ferguson (2010: ch. 9); Treat (2014: chap. 8).

44 cf. Matt 16:24; John 8:12; 15:12-13; Phil 3:8-21; 1 Pet 2:21-24; 1 John 2:6.

45 cf. Rom 5:8; 1 John 3:16; 4:7-12.

46 This gives expression to atonement synthesis (Falconer 2013); cf. 1 Cor 15:20-28; Gal 1:4; Col 2:12-15, 20; Heb 2:14-17; 1 Pet 3:18-22; 1 John 3:4-10; Rev 5:5-10.

sharing of attributes occurs between the Son's divine and human natures.³⁵

With respect to the Son's incarnation, both Lutheran and Reformed adherents maintain that for Jesus' sacrificial death to be infinite in its saving efficacy³⁶ (Berkhof 1959:187–88), he had to be fully divine. Also, for Jesus' to be a suitable representative and substitute for sinners, he had to be fully human³⁷ (Allison 2011:503–4; Grudem 1994:540–42, 553). In this regard, Romans 3:25 states that the Father presented the Son as a 'sacrifice of atonement'³⁸ (Bavinck 2006:337–40, esp. 338; Horton 2011:493–500). The underlying Greek noun, *ἱλαστήριον*, is translated more literally as 'propitiation' (Bauer 2001:474). This word communicates the idea that Son's redemptive work at Calvary averted the Father's justifiable wrath against sinners.³⁹ Jesus' sacrifice also provided 'expiation', or the removal of personal guilt. Paul was making a parallel between the atoning sacrifices offered in the Jerusalem temple and the Son's death on the cross.

As articulated by Wittmer (2013), the 'four arms of the cross' are a useful illustration for making sense of what Jesus did on behalf of the lost: (1) 'downward, toward Satan'—this *Christus Victor*⁴⁰ aspect of the cross was a reminder that the Son 'died to defeat Satan, who held the power of sin and death'⁴¹ (Aulen 2003; Boersma 2004:182–201; Boyd 1997:238–68; Erickson 1998:810–13; Horton 2011:500–503; McDonald 1985:125–37, 258–65; McKnight 2007:104–5, 110; Rutledge 2017:348–94; Stott 2006:264–92). (2) 'upward, toward God'—this *penal substitutionary*⁴² aspect of the cross was a reminder that the Son appeased the 'Father's wrath' and 'satisfied' his eternal justice by bearing the 'penalty' of humanity's sin in their 'place' and as their perfect substitute⁴³ (Boersma 2004:153–79; Edwards and Shaw 2006; Erickson 1998:830–32; Frame 2013:902; Grudem 1994:579; Horton 2011:493–500, 504; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach 2007; McKnight 2007:113; Morris 1965:296–98; Packer and Dever 2008; Stott 2006:157–92); and, (3) 'sideways, toward' the lost—this aspect of the 'cross' provided a 'moral influence'⁴⁴ and 'example' by demonstrating 'how much God loves' humankind⁴⁵ (Erickson 1998:802–6; Frame 2013:904; Grudem 1994:581–82; McDonald 1985:174–80; McKnight 2007:114).

In short, the divine goal was *Christus Victor*, and the means was penal substitution,⁴⁶ and one benefit (among many) was Jesus' example of love for all people. Where Lutheran and Reformed theologians differ is the extent of the atonement. While the

Reformed hold to a 'limited' or 'definite atonement view'⁴⁷ (Erickson 1998:843–46; Frame 2013:904–7; Grudem 1994:594–96; Horton 2011:517–20; Owen 1959), Lutherans teach that Jesus' 'atonement' is infinite in its saving value and unlimited in its 'extent'.⁴⁸

Chapter 4: Election and Sanctification

The fourth chapter (pp. 87–115) deliberates the subject of 'election and the bondage of the will'. Various issues are discussed, including the 'nature of human freedom', the 'understanding of biblical references to election and predestination', the 'impact of the fall on subsequent humanity', and the 'definition of grace'. Both Lutheran and Reformed theologians endeavour to 'articulate an understanding of salvation' that engages the 'writings of Augustine'.⁴⁹ These theologians also labour to situate their teachings within a broader ecclesial 'tradition' that stresses the Creator's 'powerful and decisive sovereignty'.

On the one hand, adherents belonging to both groups affirm that since unsaved people are spiritually dead and have depraved 'fallen wills', they 'contribute' nothing to their salvation; on the other hand, and for the preceding reason, they 'need' the 'decisive, unilateral saving action' of the Lord to regenerate them. Moreover, there is a general consensus among Lutherans and the Reformed that divine election is unconditional, being due solely to the 'absolute predetermining sovereignty of God'. After all, the volition of the lost is 'bound to turn away' from the Creator to pagan deities. To take the preceding point further, it is jointly affirmed that all 'attempts' by the lost to 'turn their wills toward God' are doomed to failure. Instead of choosing God, people always select what is blasphemous and idolatrous.⁵⁰ The Spirit alone restores the corrupt human 'will' to a state of 'trust and godliness'.

Lutherans and the Reformed maintain both the 'total omnipotence of God' and his 'unconditional and total love' for 'sinners'. The outtake is that the Creator chooses the lost, apart from any 'merit or worthiness', to become his adopted, faithful children. Furthermore, what the Lord 'foreknows proceeds from what' he decrees. The implication is that God's selection of the lost for salvation is never based on the false premise that sinners have a preexisting, inherent disposition to choose God (i.e. that the Lord elects the unregenerate because of some ill-defined and 'foreseen faith'). Briefly put, there is no place for synergism in the salvific equation (i.e. human freedom to choose and God's grace work

47 cf. Matt 1:21; John 6:37–39, 65; 10:14–15; 17:2, 6, 9; Rom 8:30–35; Eph 1:4–13; 5:25–27; 2 Thess 2:13–14; Titus 3:4–5. The Reformed view of 'limited' or 'definite' atonement is laid out in the *Canons of Dort*; cf. Beeke (2018).

48 cf. Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 3:16; Rom 10:13; 2 Cor 5:15; 1 Tim 2:6; 4:10; Heb 2:9; 1 John 2:2; Erickson (1998:849–52); Kunhiyop (2008:86–89); Horton (2011:516–20).

49 cf. especially Augustine's *Confessions* (2009) and *The City of God* (2009).

50 cf. Eccles 9:3; Jer 17:9; Mark 7:21–22. Calvin (2007:97) trenchantly referred to the 'human mind' as a 'perpetual forge of idols'.

together to bring about a person's regeneration). Only monergism is the acceptable theological stance (i.e. a person's salvation is entirely the work of God, not the combined effort of the Creator and the sinner).

Lutherans affirm the notion of 'civil righteousness'. By this phrase is meant that people 'outside the faith' can 'perform works' that 'externally accomplish' the Creator's 'will in society'. Lutherans also teach that even then, the unsaved remain guilty of transgressing the Lord in their thoughts, words, and actions. Consequently, they are 'fully responsible' for spurning the Creator. In short, 'sinners', not God, are to blame for their 'evil' deeds. Furthermore, Lutherans acknowledge that the 'tension' between divine sovereignty and human free will 'defies logical mastery'.

Admittedly, there is a tendency on the part of Reformed theologians to use human reason to speculate about the underlying 'mechanics of God's unconditional choice'.⁵¹ Lutherans, however, resist the preceding inclination. Rather than offer a philosophically-nuanced explanation for how the above tension can be resolved, Lutherans focus on a pastorally-sensitive response, namely, the 'promise of forgiveness and new life' through faith in the Son. Within the Lutheran tradition, then, the Messiah 'stands at the centre' of the repentant sinners' 'restoration'. As the believers' great High Priest, the Son offers 'consolation' and 'assurance' to 'troubled consciences' plagued with fears about not being among God's 'elect'. The Reformed, too, give attention to the 'underlying pastoral concern'. Indeed, they regard the Creator's 'absolute sovereignty' as a 'source of comfort to the faithful'⁵² (Piper 2009).

While Lutherans teach unconditional election (Allison 2011:461–62), they reject the Reformed dogma of double predestination (or election to reprobation; Berkhof 1959:157). This is the tenet that God intentionally chooses some people for damnation, while at the same time designates others for salvation (Allison 2011:462–65; Bavinck 2008:456; Calvin 2007: Book 3.23.7, pp. 629-630; Grudem 1994:684–86; Erickson 1998:930–31; Westminster Confession 2018:10.1–4). This is an aspect of mechanistic logic in Reformed theology that I, Robert, personally find unpalatable and at this moment am unable to reconcile the problem, and thus on this point find myself more sympathetic towards Lutheranism.

Similarly, Lutherans maintain that the Son is the 'propitiation' (1 John 2:1) for the 'sins' of the 'whole world' (Allison 2011:398–99). This emphasis stands in sharp contrast to the Reformed notion of 'limited atonement' or 'particular redemption', namely, that Jesus' sacrificial death is meant only for the elect (Allison 2011:399–405;

51 I, Robert, found Piper's (2009) lectures, 'An introduction to TULIP: The Pursuit of God's Glory in Salvation' (cf. the Canons of Dort in Beeke 2018), helpful and enlightening; yet, it did feel contrived at times, and I have wondered whether the Lutheran 'tension' between divine sovereignty and human free will that 'defies logical mastery' might be a better and more helpful response.

52 Although I, Robert, find God's absolute sovereignty of some comfort, it raises other concerns for me, namely, double predestination (discussed in the next paragraph) and issues related to theodicy. An understanding of the Creator's divine sovereignty in the Kuyperian tradition (Neo-Calvinism) for me is more agreeable, and perhaps even more exciting, theologically. For an overview, cf. Bartholomew (2017); Kuyper (2008). Also, cf. Gen 50:20; Jer 31:35; Matt 10:29; Rom 11:32–34; Heb 1:3.

Bavinck 2008: 4:460–64; Beeke 2018; Grudem 1994:594–96; Horton 2011:572–77; Owen 1959). While on the one hand, I, Robert, am Reformed, affirming the notion of ‘particular redemption’ in one way or another, I would wish to say that there is ‘universal significance’ as well, notably in common grace (Bavinck 2008:4:420). It is ‘cosmic in scope’, a salvation that ‘encompasses nothing short of a renewal of the whole earth’ (Horton 2011:560), and I argue for the eschatological renewal of creation. Limited atonement to me seems to be half the picture,⁵³ but this is not the place to develop such a theology in detail. Moreover, Lutherans think that the unregenerate can resist God’s offer of saving grace and that believers can apostatise from the faith. Those who are Reformed, however, contend that God’s grace is irresistible, that the regenerate will persevere in their faith until the end of their earthly sojourn, and that they can never renounce or fall away from the Saviour (Bavinck 2006:510, 524, 594; Erickson 1998:928, 997–1000; Grudem 1994:700, 788–802; Horton 2011:680–84; Piper 2009; cf. *the Canons of Dort* in Beeke 2018).

Reformed theologians conceptualise the way of salvation (Latin, the *ordo salutis*) as a sequence of steps that correspond to the logic of human experience (Bavinck 2006:564–66; Berkhof 1959:224–26; Grudem 1994:669–70). In contrast, the Lutheran understanding of soteriology does not separate into siloed, dogmatic compartments such concepts as divine foreknowledge, predestination, the summons to salvation, justification, and glorification,⁵⁴ instead, all aspects of redemption are joined together in the wonderful truth that the believers’ salvation is due to the Creator’s unmerited favour.⁵⁵ So, instead of the Reformed tendency of depicting the biblical terms for salvation as individual links in a chain⁵⁶ (Bavinck 2006:491; Frame 2013:998; Horton 2011:561), Lutheranism portrays them as spokes on a wheel that are indivisibly connected to the hub, which is the Messiah. Even within the Reformed camp, there is no consensus over the presumed ‘logical ordering’ of the Creator’s ‘decrees’ (Frame 2013:935–37, 950). One critique is that the disputants’ quarrelling reduces the Lord’s ‘sovereignty over creation and salvation’ into ‘simplistic’, ‘one-dimensional’, and ‘linear categories’. In turn, these fail to ‘do justice to the intricate testimony of Scripture’ concerning the debated issues (Bavinck 2006:589–90).

Chapter 5: Justification and Sanctification

The fifth chapter (pp. 117–45) takes up the subject of justification and sanctification. On these matters, adherents of the Lutheran

53 cf. John 1:29; 3:14-18; Rom 8:19-24; 2 Cor 5:19; 1 John 2:2; 4:14.

54 cf. Rom 8:28-30.

55 cf. Eph 2:5, 8-10; Rom 3:20-25.

56 An example may be found in Grudem’s (1994:670) ‘Order of Salvation’ list: (1) election (God’s choice of people to be saved); (2) the gospel call (proclaiming the message of the gospel); (3) regeneration (being born again); (4) conversion (faith and repentance); (5) justification (right legal standing); (6) adoption (membership in God’s family); (7) sanctification (right conduct of life); (8) perseverance (remaining a Christian); (9) death (going to be with the Lord); and, (10) glorification (receiving a resurrection body).

and Reformed traditions share much in common, while at the same time maintain clear doctrinal distinctions. With respect to agreed-upon perspectives, both ecclesial communities teach that sin denotes people turning in on themselves (in Latin, *incurvatus in se*). The consuming focus is on self-love, self-improvement, and self-gratification. Both groups also teach that sin is more than just a repudiation of the worship of God and a refusal to honour, praise, and thank him. More importantly, sin is a hatred of God and a rejection of his supremacy and his lordship in one's life. The outworking of sin is seen in a refusal and failure to keep God's commands. Put another way, sin is a state of alienation from God, which manifests itself in displays of ingratitude, narcissism, and wrongdoing.

From a lexical perspective, 'justify' renders the Greek verb, *δικαιῶ*, which means 'to pronounce righteous or free'. When 'justify' is used in a narrow, technical sense to refer to the believer's relationship with God, it denotes a verdict or legal act in which a person is declared 'not guilty', pardoned, or forgiven apart from any merit of their own. The implication is that the justification of sinners does not depend on their obedience to the Mosaic Law (i.e. Torah observance); instead, God is the sole, supreme, and complete source of the believers' righteousness.

57 cf. Rom 3:20; 26, 28; 4:5; 5:1; 8:30; 10:4, 10; Gal 2:16; 3:24.

Justification relates to the divine law court⁵⁷ on the last day (Frame 2013:966–67; Grudem 1994:723–24; Horton 2011:630–35). In that specific sense, justification is fundamentally *eschatological*; yet, Lutherans and the Reformed affirm that, in baptismal union with the Son, the end-time gift has invaded salvation history (Horton 2011:594–97, 622; Erickson 1998:1100, 1110). The cosmic judgment to occur on the last day has now been revealed in the Son's atoning sacrifice on the cross. Accordingly, those who are joined to him by faith are even now declared to be in the right before the Father.

Some mistakenly think that the act of believing is a good work that earns one a place in heaven. Lutheran and Reformed dogmaticians counter that faith is simply receiving the benefits of salvation the Son freely offers in the gospel. Furthermore, both the Lutheran and Reformed camps affirm that faith is a belief in whatever God reveals. It is a trusting commitment. An exercise of faith involves the whole person—the mind, emotions, and will.

Lutheran and Reformed Theologians emphasise several interconnected, biblical truths related to the doctrine of justification. First, justification only arises through trusting in the Son.⁵⁸ Second, justification involves the imputation of the Son's

58 cf. Rom 4:1–5:21.

righteousness on repentant, believing sinners⁵⁹ (Allison 2011:509–14; Bavinck 2006:222, 455, 487, 491, 518–19, 583, 590–91; Calvin 2007: Book 3.11.1–4, 475–77; 3.11.23 p. 391; Erickson 1998:968–74; Frame 2013:914; Grudem 1994:722–33; Horton 2011:620–42; Westminster Confession 2018:11; cf. Johnson and Waters 2007; Schreiner 2015; Sproul 1995; White 2004). Third, justification is the consequence of Jesus’ atoning sacrifice on the cross. Fourth, the Spirit brings about sanctification⁶⁰ through the Father’s ‘justifying word’ (Cooper 2012:6).⁶¹

Lutheran sacramental theology teaches that justification is a reality that encompasses both ‘legal’ (Cooper 2012:2) and ‘ontological’ dimensions. Those who are righteous before the Father through faith in the Son have also received the Spirit. The preceding emphasis differs from the standard Reformed approach. Adherents tend to regard justification as a single, past, legal declaration, one occupying a forensic rather than a transformative sphere (Grudem 1994:724; Horton 2011:622). For Lutherans, justification is viewed as an ongoing, life-changing state of existence with real-world ramifications.

Lutherans teach that believers are declared to be completely justified through the Son’s alien righteousness (in Latin, *iustitia Christi aliena*; i.e. *extra nos* or outside of us; e.g. as seen in his obedience to the Father’s commands and the Son’s sacrificial death). Moreover, it is through the means of grace (i.e. Word and sacrament) that the lost receive the ability to believe, experience regeneration, and grow in holiness. Lutheran dogmaticians emphasise that ‘justification’ (Cooper 2012:2) has ‘legal’ and ‘ontological’ components, with the former preceding the latter. Expressed differently, God first pronounces the sinners righteous before making them righteous. Lutheranism also maintains that when God declares the sinner to be justified, eternal life is brought from spiritual ‘death’. Consequently, it would be incorrect to say that an ‘effective change in the heart’ is ever the instrument or ‘cause of imputation’; instead, ‘imputation is the cause of regeneration and a renewed life’.⁶²

In Reformed teaching, justification is a single, instantaneous, legal act of God in which repentant sinners are credited with the righteousness of Christ and thus pardoned (Calvin 2007: Book 3.3.11, p. 476; 11. 22, p. 491; Erickson 1998:968–70; Frame 2013:968; Grudem 1994:723). In short, justification is a ‘transfer term’ (Cooper 2012:4) that points to the chronological starting point of the believer’s walk with God (Grudem 1994:747–48; Westminster Confession 2018:11.1). Sanctification is understood to

59 cf. Rom 3:23-25; 4:3; 5:17; Phil 3:9. I, Robert, agree with much of the Reformed view of imputation of the Son’s righteousness on the repentant, believing sinner; yet, in contrast to Dan, I, Robert, find *in addition*, some of the theology on justification proposed by the New Pauline Perspective and the Apocalyptic Paul quite compelling. As with my synthesis of Penal Substitution and the *Christus Victor* motif (Falconer 2013), I wonder whether there might likewise be a synthesis for these three perspectives. I am yet to resolve the matter in my own mind.

60 In other words, the internal ‘spiritual transformation’ (Steinmann 2015:77) and renewal of believers.

61 In the upcoming discourse concerning the Lutheran perspective on justification and sanctification, I, Dan, have found the analysis provided by Cooper (2012) to be clarifying and incisive, as indicated by the various reference citations to his work.

62 With which this Reformed theologian would concur.

be an ‘ongoing process’ (Cooper 2012:4) in which the Spirit enables Jesus’ followers to experience growth in ‘holiness’⁶³ (Frame 2013:985, 987; Grudem 1994:748–53; Erickson 1998:980; Westminster Confession 2018:13.1); that is, they are progressively sanctified or ‘gradually made intrinsically righteous’ (Cooper 2012:4; cf. Erickson 1998:983–86; Horton 2011: 653–57). Lutherans counter that sanctification is principally going deeper into their justification. Expressed another way, sanctification entails the believer living in a pardoned state before the Creator.

The mechanism by which the process of sanctification unfolds is articulated differently by both communions. The Reformed emphasise that believers are increasingly conformed to the image of the Son when they obey the law by the power of the Spirit (Erickson 1998:980; Grudem 1994:758). Lutherans counter that sanctification occurs as a result of the constant experience of the law condemning them as sinners and their being renewed in their faith through the means of grace.

Furthermore, Lutherans teach that a purely legal and representative understanding of justification might lead to good works being regarded as the ‘essence’ (Cooper 2012:4) of the sanctified ‘Christian life’. It is a subtle yet important shift in emphasis from monergism to ‘synergism’ (6), in which acts of piety and charity precede and foster holiness, rather than originate and proceed from holiness. So, instead of cajoling believers to ‘Try harder!’ and ‘Do better!’, Lutheran pastors proclaim the good news that God’s children are the objects of his gracious work. They are the Spirit’s masterpieces, whom he is transforming through repentance by means of the law–gospel dialectic.

The preceding observations align with a Lutheran understanding of sanctification. As clarified by Steinmann (2015:77), in its ‘narrow’ theological ‘sense’, sanctification refers to the ‘inward spiritual transformation of a believer by the miraculous’ operation of the ‘Spirit through the means of grace’. In this process, the Spirit puts the ‘sinner’ to ‘death’, but ‘raises the saint’ to new life. On the one hand, the ‘Law of God kills the Old Adam as it exposes sin’; on the other hand, the ‘Gospel enlivens the new self’. Cooper (2012:5) explains that in Lutheranism, the ‘strict theological categories’ that emerged in ‘seventeenth-century scholasticism’ should be joined together. Specifically, ‘imputation, forgiveness, regeneration, and adoption are all encapsulated in the same reality that God saves sinners by grace alone, through faith alone’. Additionally, trusting in the Son is the ongoing basis for a person’s ‘standing’ (4)

in the presence of the Father being ‘evaluated, secured, and renewed’.

For Lutherans, then, the Creator’s announcement of his children being pardoned is not a single, unrepeatable episode (as it is regarded in Reformed teaching), but an ever-present experience. In particular, when Jesus freely offers himself as the ‘resurrected and ascended eschatological Son of God in the Eucharist’ (Cooper 2012:4–5), believers once more hear proclaimed the Father’s ‘verdict of justification’. Correspondingly, in Lutheranism, the believers’ baptismal ‘union’ with the Saviour (whose real presence is affirmed in holy communion) is ‘strengthened’. Also, his ‘alien righteousness is continually imputed as the means by which’ the believers’ ‘relationship’ with the Father is ‘mediated’. Lutherans teach that believers are righteous as well as sinners at the same time. In Latin, the phrase is *simul justus et peccator*. So, during the observance of the Lord’s Supper in the corporate worship service, when the minister announces ‘absolution to the penitent sinner’, the minister’s ‘human words become, sacramentally, God’s own declarative’ utterance. In this way, the Lord bestows eternal ‘life’, ‘forgiveness’, and Jesus’ ‘righteousness’.

Reformed dogmaticians consider justification and sanctification to be distinct from each other both logically and temporally (Frame 2013:870–71; Erickson 1998:982; Grudem 1994:746–47; Horton 2011:648–49). Even so, while Calvin sees these as two distinguishable aspects, he likewise perceives them ‘to be united together in him’, or inseparable (Calvin 2007: Book 3.11.6, 478; cf. 3.11.11, p. 483). This view regards sanctification as the result of justification⁶⁴ (Horton 2011:650–51). Lutheranism counters that justification and sanctification are each ‘simultaneous benefits’ (Cooper 2012:6) of the Christians’ baptismal ‘union’ with the resurrected and ascended Messiah. Succinctly put, being declared righteous and set apart for service to the Saviour remain so interlinked that it is impossible to decouple and cordon them off. Here good ‘works’ are not to be ‘identified’ as the cause of ‘sanctification’; instead, they are the ‘result of sanctification’.

64 cf. Phil 3:9-14.

As noted earlier, in Lutheran theology, sanctification and justification come through the alien righteousness of the Son. Moreover, sanctification is the ‘declarative reality’ (Cooper 2012:6) of a believer’s imputed, extrinsic righteousness becoming an ‘effective intrinsic reality’. Lutherans teach that justification describes the believers’ relationship with God, in which sinners passively receive the Father’s gracious offer of the Son through the means of grace. In contrast, sanctification describes the believers’

relationship with the world, in which the Spirit empowers them to perform good works in an intentional and proactive manner.

Adherents to Lutheranism maintain that sanctification is rooted in the gospel, which in turn is the basis for believers producing fruit. Sanctification includes the Spirit recreating sinners as the Father's holy people and their manifesting to the world the new life they have in the Son. Both Reformed theology and Lutheranism stress faith and gratitude as the motivation for believers doing charitable acts. The prime objective is not God receiving glory through the inner piety and virtuous deeds performed by Christians; instead, the aim is God glorifying himself as the Spirit empowers believers to do good works for the benefit of others.

Reformed Theologians place a strong emphasis on God's sovereign decree on salvation⁶⁵ (Erickson 1998:927–31). In contrast, confessional Lutheranism shifts the emphasis to God's providential justification of repentant sinners, namely, those to whom he has given saving faith through his means of grace. Lutherans teach that while justification describes the believers' relationship with God, sanctification denotes their relationship to society. As previously stated, it is the manifestation of the Savior's resurrection life within believers to the world.

To recap the Lutheran perspective, 'justification is a monergistic act' (Cooper 2012:6) in which the Father 'imputes' the merits of the Son to sinners. Their faith in him is the basis for the Father declaring them to be righteous. 'Sanctification' is also a 'monergistic act' whereby God's renewing grace (provided by the Spirit through Word and sacrament) operates in the lives of believers. The Lord enables them to demonstrate their status as his holy people through virtuous deeds done on behalf of others.

To summarise the Reformed view, the understanding of justification is a monergistic and immediate legal act of God in which he forgives our sins and credits the righteousness of Christ to us, thus declaring us to be righteous (Allison 2011:498; Grudem 1994:723). Also, justification is by faith without works (Frame 2013:970). While in regeneration and justification, we are utterly unable to cooperate with God's grace,⁶⁶ having been acted upon by the Holy Spirit through the gospel; however, in sanctification, our own activity and good works are enabled by God's grace.⁶⁷ We are unable to work for our salvation, but we ought to work out our salvation in everyday life (Allison 2011:520; Grudem 1994:753–56; Horton 2011:662). It is alone God's work of justification (Calvin 2007, Book 3.11.7, p. 479) that enables fallen people to produce the fruit of righteousness. This is sanctification (Horton 2011:663);

65 cf. John 6:44, 65; 15:16; Eph 1:4-5; Acts 13:48; Rom 9-16; Westminster Confession (2018:5); Piper (2009). In recent years, Reformed theologians from two different schools, Neo-Puritanism and Neo-Calvinism, have put different emphases on God's sovereign decree. Neo-Puritanism emphasises the sovereignty of God over salvation (i.e. total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints, employing the acronym, TULIP), while the Neo-Calvinists (or Kuyperians) accentuate the sovereignty of God over all creation (i.e. creation order/cultural mandate, Christian worldview, common grace, antithesis, and sphere sovereignty). As mentioned, I, Robert, align myself with the Neo-Calvinist tradition.

66 cf. John 6:44; Rom 3:1-23; 2 Cor 4:3-4; Eph 2:1-3.

67 Erickson (1998:982-83) offers a more nuanced approach that seems to be monergistic.

however, with respect to sanctification, the dangers of legalism and antinomianism are to be avoided (Horton 2011:664).

Chapters 6 and 7: The Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

The sixth chapter (pp. 147–74) concerns the sacrament of baptism, while the seventh chapter (pp. 175–205) deals with the Lord's Supper. Since both topics have already been broached within the context of other related issues, their treatment below is less extensive. As with the preceding subjects covered in earlier chapters, Lutheran and Reformed adherents have a range of overlapping and divergent views regarding these Christian rites. For instance, both ecclesial communities affirm that baptism is intended for adult believers and their children. Similarly, the mode of baptism can involve immersion, affusion, or sprinkling.

Moreover, Lutherans and many Reformed Christians practise pedobaptism,⁶⁸ namely, the baptism of infants⁶⁹ (Allison 2011:623–31, 633; cf. Bavinck 2008:497; Grudem 1994:975–81; Horton 2011:794–98, 2012:171–75; Westminster Confession 2018:28.4; Calvin 2007: Book 4.16, pp. 871–892). This contrasts with those Evangelical groups, who restrict the rite to credobaptism or the baptism of those who believe (Allison 2011:633; Erickson 1998:1105–6; Grudem 1994:970–71; cf. Horton's response to Grudem in Horton 2011:795–97). I, Robert, *also* view credobaptism (which I affirm), as our proclamation of what Christ has done for and in us, namely, our burial with him,⁷⁰ resurrection, newness of life,⁷¹ and union with him⁷² (Rom 6:2–5; Bavinck 2008:520; Erickson 1998:1110; Wright 2008:272–73). Further, it is a political statement, a renunciation of the secular, those things that previously contended for our desires. Baptism, therefore, acts as vying for our unaltered devotion and allegiance towards Christ alone (Smith 2009).

To reiterate what was previously articulated, both Lutherans and the Reformed agree that through the 'Word of the Law' (Kurian and Day 2017:124), the Lord 'brings sinners to know their lost condition and repent'. This occurs as the 'Spirit awakens them to see their sin' (Larson 2015), as well as 'convicts them of their guilt' and summons them to 'repent and believe'. God also uses the law to restrain evil and show his will for people's lives. In contrast, through the 'Word of the Gospel', the Father enables sinners to put their faith in the Son, to be declared righteous, to 'enter the process of sanctification', and to receive 'eternal life'. The Spirit

68 For Lutheran dogmatians, baptism is viewed as a means of grace (Erickson 1998:1099-1102), whereas the position held by Reformed theologians is that baptism is a sign and seal of the new covenant (Erickson 1998:1102-5).

69 While I, Robert, understand and appreciate the theology of pedobaptism, I find myself more agreeable to credobaptism (i.e. believer's baptism). For both arguments, cf. Bavinck (2008:521-32); Grudem (1994:970-71).

70 cf. Col 2:12.

71 cf. Rom 6:1-11; Col 2:11-12.

72 cf. Rom 6:3-4.

summons and empowers the lost to ‘accept’ the Father’s ‘grace’ in baptismal union with the Son. Each person who believes is immediately pardoned and imputed with the Son’s ‘righteousness’.

73 cf. Horton (2012:177-78).

The Reformed define sacraments as outward signs and seals of God’s inward grace, which is offered to the elect in the gospel⁷³ (Bavinck 2008:461–63, 468–70, 473–77; Calvin 2007: Book 4.14.3, 6–7; Erickson 1998:1102; Horton 2011:766–69, 791–92, 820; Westminster Confession 2018:27.1, 28.1). According to this definition, only baptism and the Lord’s Supper qualify as legitimate sacraments (Bavinck 2008:463 cf. pp. 490–495; Horton 2011:771; Westminster Confession 2018:27.4). Reformed adherents maintain that each sacrament serves the purpose of sustaining and strengthening the faith of believers (Bavinck 2008:362) by confirming the promises of the gospel. Moreover, the Reformed teach that the sacraments give God’s children inward assurance that they are truly among the elect (Bavinck 2008:475; Horton 2011:788–91, 821; Westminster Confession 2018:27.1).

Lutherans go further by defining sacraments as those sacred acts that employ external, visible elements (i.e. the water of baptism and the bread and wine of holy communion) and provide internal, invisible gifts of grace. More specifically, a sacrament is a work in which God is present and active through the elements. Additionally, Lutherans teach that the Spirit operates through the sacraments to arouse faith, which originates with and is nourished by the Word of promise. The Word expresses what God commands, pledges, and accomplishes through the sacraments. To clarify a bit more, Lutherans maintain that God created people to learn through their senses, including what they see, hear, smell, touch, and taste. So, when the proclaimed Word is joined with the enacted Word—involving such elements as water, bread, and wine—communicants are more deeply impacted. In turn, the Spirit uses the ministry of Word and sacrament to strengthen the faith and deepen the love shown by God’s people.

In contrast to the Reformed, Lutherans teach that in the sacrament of baptism (done either by pouring, sprinkling, or immersing someone with water), the Father offers the benefits of the Son’s redemption to all people (including infants) and graciously bestows the washing of regeneration and newness of life to all who believe. Since baptism enables believers to share in the holy life of the triune God, believers likewise are joined to the body of Christ, the universal church. Similarly, in contrast to the Reformed, Lutherans maintain that in the sacrament of holy communion, the bread and the wine become the real, true,

objective, and localised presence of Jesus' body and blood through the Word. Hence, the Lord Jesus gives to the communicants his body and blood in, with, and under the bread and the wine. Lutherans think that through the sacrament of holy communion, the triune God brings the gift of forgiveness to the worshipping congregation and strengthens their faith. Lutherans acknowledge that the miraculous way in which the above occurs when Jesus' words of institution are read, is a profound mystery, whose solution is known only to the Creator.

Reformed theologians deny the Messiah's sacramental presence in the bread and wine⁷⁴ (Bavinck 2008:575–80; Horton 2011:810, 812; Sproul 2013; Westminster Confession 2018:29.5–6); instead, it is taught that Jesus is spiritually present through the work of the Holy Spirit and that the effect of the Lord's Supper is not automatic, but depends also on the participants receptivity and faith⁷⁵ (Bavinck 2008:470; Erickson 1998:1126–28; Grudem 1994:995–96; Horton 2011:768). As noted before, this emphasis is due, in part, to the Reformed rejecting the Lutheran teaching that Jesus' human body takes on the divine property of ubiquity⁷⁶ (Allison 2011:652–54; Calvin 2007: Book 4.17.17–18, 30–31; Grudem 1994:995). Further, the Lord's Supper is not a sacrifice, and so it ought to be served around a table and not at an altar of sacrifice (Bavinck 2008:541, 565–66; Westminster Confession 2018:29.2).⁷⁷

Chapter 8: Worship

The eighth chapter (pp. 207–34) exams the issue of worship. Both Lutherans and the Reformed affirm that, in relationship to God, the church's purpose is to worship him, especially through the ministry of Word and sacrament. Both communions also teach that worship in the church is not a tack-on activity that believers perform; rather, it occupies a central place in the corporate life of God's people.

Despite these common affirmations, there are meaningful distinctions. For instance, the Reformed hold to the regulative principle of worship, in which only what God has commanded in Scripture is permissible during the corporate gathering (Allison 2011:667–68; Westminster Confession 2018:21.1). In contrast, Lutherans maintain that believers can do in worship whatever God's Word has not forbidden. Moreover, within Reformed congregations, it is typically understood that worship is something congregants do for God⁷⁸ (Westminster Confession 2018:21.2). This

74 For devotional teaching on the Reformed perspective on the Lord's Supper, cf. Bruce (2005); Watson (2013).

75 Horton (2011:766) says, 'Faith, therefore, contributes nothing to the nature and efficacy of the sacraments; they are what they are and do what they do'. He continues, 'baptism and the Supper remain objective sacraments even apart from one's faith. Faith does not *make* a sacrament, but it does *receive* the reality of the sacrament; otherwise one receives only the sign without the thing signified' (p. 768, cf. p. 791).

76 For a dialogue on the different views of the Lord's Supper, cf. Armstrong (2007).

77 cf. the corresponding statement made at the beginning of the journal article in connection with chapter 1 of Kolb and Trueman (2017). To reiterate, in contrast to the centrality of the altar given by Catholics in their celebration of the Mass, both Lutherans and the Reformed give pride of place to the exposition and proclamation of Scripture.

78 cf. Matt 4:10; John 5:23; Rom 1:25; Col 2:18; 3:17; 1 Pet 2:5; Rev 19:10.

includes offering praise and thanks to the Lord, presenting and rededicating themselves to his service, and giving him their offerings to be used for his glory (Grudem 1994:1003–5; Westminster Confession 2018:21.2). Lutherans affirm that corporate worship is motivated by the parishioners' gratitude for the Creator's grace. Nonetheless, Lutherans consider the corporate gathering as an opportunity for God to minister to congregants, not for them to do something for God. Indeed, if the activity of worship is depicted as an arrow, it points from the Lord to his children, not from them to him.

Those within the Lutheran and Reformed traditions wrestle with how the gifts of the Spirit⁷⁹ factor into corporate worship. Admittedly, there are widely-differing views, especially with respect to the more miraculous manifestations of the Spirit⁸⁰ (Grudem 1994:1031, 1046; Grudem and Gundry 1996). For example, some argue that the sign gifts have ended (being confined to the age of the apostles), while others contend that all of them remain operative today in the church. Even within Lutheran and Reformed communions, there has been a charismatic renewal movement (Allison 2011:447; Theron 1999:194, 196–97, 199; cf. Williams 1996),⁸¹ and the responses among various synods and presbyteries have understandably been mixed.⁸²

In thinking through the above issues theologically, it is helpful to note that among Lutheran and Reformed adherents, there is an emphasis on the gospel, especially as it is centred in the person and work of the Son. Meanwhile, within some charismatic circles, there is a focus on the presence and power of the Spirit, especially in connection with the sign gifts (such as healing, direct prophecy, and speaking in tongues). On the one hand, some charismatics are preoccupied with the spiritual experience and sanctification of a believer's inner life; on the other hand, many Lutherans and the Reformed consider justification by faith as the primary area of concern.

Those within the Lutheran and Reformed traditions give foremost emphasis to God's revelation in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. Some charismatics, however, teach that God can use visions, dreams, and direct prophecy to lead the church and guide believers, even at times apart from the Word. Lutherans, and to a lesser extent the Reformed, affirm the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper as God's means of grace (Grudem 1994:950–55; Horton 2011:763, 766–69). In contrast, many charismatics regard these as mere ordinances and symbolic, external works (Grudem 1994:968–70, 996; Horton 2011:770).

79 cf. Rom 12:6-8; 1 Co. 7:7; 12:8-10, 28; Eph 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:11. For a generous discussion on spiritual gifts from a conservative, Reformed, charismatic perspective, cf. Grudem (1994:1016-83).

80 There are strong voices from both the continuationist and cessationist perspectives. For example, cf. Storms (2017) and MacArthur (2013), respectively.

81 This issue is not deliberated within Kolb and Trueman (2017), even though it is a subject of longstanding interest among Lutherans and the Reformed. For this reason, the charismatic renewal movement is briefly explored here.

82 For instance, cf. *The Lutheran Church and the Charismatic Movement: Guidelines for Congregations and Pastors*, which was published in 1977 by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Concerning a Reformed perspective, cf. Packer (1980a; 1980b).

Moreover, some charismatics believe they can trust their inner emotions when it comes to feeling certitude about their relationship with God⁸³ (MacArthur 2013: xii). Those in the Lutheran and Reformed traditions, however, look to God's objective Word and sacraments (Horton 2011:751–63), rather than their subjective emotions, for assurance. Some within the Lutheran and Reformed charismatic renewal movements state that they are giving needed emphasis to the doctrine of the Spirit⁸⁴ by offering believers a fresh experience of his presence in their inner lives (Allison 2011:447–49). Also, while there is an affirmation of the sacraments as means of grace, charismatic Lutheran and Reformed worshipers maintain that the Spirit can also move in fresh, experiential ways (Storms 2017).

83 One need only look at sermons and books by contemporary charismatics, such as Bill Johnson, Mike Bickle, Rick Joyner, Todd White, Randy Clark, Cindy Jacobs, and others.

84 cf. John 6:63; Acts 4:8, 31; 6:5, 8, 10; 8:11, 26; 10:44–47, 15:19; 1 Cor 2:4; 12:7; 2 Cor 3:6; Eph 2:18; 6:17; 1 Thess 1:5; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet 1:12.

Conclusion

The Conclusion (pp. 235–6) of *Between Wittenberg and Geneva* offers an abbreviated synopsis to the entire volume. Both Kolb and Trueman reiterate the publication's objective of clarifying the major tenets of the Lutheran and Reformed traditions. The process entails thoughtful and substantive dialogue on the range of issues explored in the preceding chapters. Likewise, we—Dan and Robert—intend our engagement with this dual-authored work to further the discussion within the community of SATS regarding the areas of overlap and distinction among members of the Lutheran and Reformed communions, and even from other theological and ecclesiastical traditions. This includes assessing 'settled solutions to questions' each group asks by their respective study and application of Scripture.

On the one hand, as the preceding discourse has noted, there remain 'serious differences' between Lutheran and Reformed dogmaticians, especially in their 'formulation' of key 'theological and philosophical presuppositions'; on the other hand, there is 'common ground' on 'specific points' involving 'teaching and proclamation'. We trust the readership of *Conspectus* are better informed and edified by our chapter-by-chapter distillation and deliberation of the information appearing in Kolb and Trueman volume, and that, despite differing theological views, the process remains characterised by unity and charity among Jesus' followers.

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