CHAPTER 4

Predestination and Justification by Faith: Was Luther a Calvinist?

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The Protestant Reformation Martin Luther initiated in October 1517 not only altered the theological landscape of Christianity but also forever changed the Western world. Even though he is not considered a systematician of Reformation thought—a title later attributed to John Calvin—Luther's contribution to Christian theology cannot be overestimated. His call for a return to the teaching of Scripture in all areas of Christian life and theology reverberated throughout Europe and still echoes today. His Ninety-Five Theses provided a starting point for a new theology of justification, where believers were to be reckoned righteous by God rather than made righteous, as taught by medieval Catholicism. Most important, this entire miraculous process of transforming an enemy of God into a believer was accomplished solely by faith rather than through meritorious action. Unsurprisingly, such radical teachings shook the late medieval Christian establishment to its core and changed the matrix of Christianity forever. Luther, argues Alister

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McGrath, "must be regarded as a transitional figure, standing at the junction of two rival understandings of the nature of justification."[1]

In some ways, all Protestant denominations trace their roots to Luther's insurgency against medieval soteriological conventions and consider him a theological forefather. The same applies to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which is a denomination that considers itself firmly rooted in the Protestant Reformation. For Adventists, writes Johann Heinz, the Reformation "is not simply a historic turning point but an act of God on behalf of the Christian world for a renewal of the center of the gospel and for the adjustment of faith and life according to the Word of God and not according to human tradition. This event can be summed up in the person and work of Martin Luther, for 'he *is the Reformation.*' "[2] Bert B. Beach further concludes that "Adventists see themselves in many ways as 'children' of Luther, the great Reformer."[3] Many decades earlier Ellen G. White speaks of Luther as "God's chosen instrument" and as a man raised by God "to do a special work."[4] Luther's particular theological contribution, she believes, lies in highlighting again the doctrine of justification by faith. "The great doctrine of justification by faith, so clearly taught by Luther," White writes, "had been almost wholly lost sight of," being replaced by the "principle of trusting to good works for salvation."[5]

As breathtaking as it was, however, Luther's doctrine of justification by faith has proven challenging to interpret. It has been the subject of scrutiny by generations of theologians; many arriving at different conclusions regarding his understanding of the doctrine of justification by faith. This is likely because Luther was not a systematic theologian and tended to react to various theological controversies somewhat imprecisely and often with erratic language.[6] Thus, it is not an easy task to pigeonhole Luther's views.

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Many Protestant theologians and lay members, Adventists and others, agree with Luther on the definition of justification: "The doctrine of Justification is this, that we are pronounced righteous and are saved solely by faith in Christ, and without work."[7] This belief is also expressed in the classic Reformation slogan that refers to salvation as *sola gratia et fides*; that is, by grace and faith alone. It is a common assumption that this definition of justification means that God offers His righteousness to all humanity and it is the role of those who believe to grasp God's offer by faith and respond affirmatively. Clearly, such a view precludes the view of salvation accomplished by God's eternal decree or election, as taught by John Calvin. While Luther certainly used the term *predestination* in his writings, it is a popular belief that his understanding of predestination was not the same as that of Calvin.[8] More often than not, Luther's view of predestination is perceived as based on God's

foreknowledge of the free action of those who would believe, rather than on His eternal, immutable decision.[9]

Luther did not hold such a view. The view of justification presented above is more akin to the synergistic views of Philip Melanchthon and is echoed, to some extent, in the Formula of Concord (1577), rather than the views of Luther himself.[10] While Luther's *sola gratia et fides* doctrine is clearly present in the articles of the Formula of Concord, it is also evident that, under the influence of Melanchthon's synergism, the authors of the document deviated from the classical Lutheran understanding of justification by faith. Clearly, this was facilitated by the authors' decision to depart ever so slightly from Luther's understanding of predestination. During later centuries, this departure aided a large-scale Lutheran abandonment of Luther's monergism in favor of a synergistic understanding of salvation, while at the same time creating clear discontinuity between the teachings of Luther and modern Lutheran churches. We now turn to Luther's understanding of predestination and the implications for his doctrine of justification by faith. To further elucidate Luther's teachings on predestination, we begin with a brief clarification of the term *predestination.*

Degrees of predestination

Luther used the word *predestination*; but after John Calvin, theologians began to speak of degrees of predestination—that is, double predestination, single predestination, and predestination based on God's foreknowledge of future human free action.[11] The term *double predestination* generally refers to God's sovereign election for both salvation and condemnation (reprobation).[12] The rise of this understanding of predestination has traditionally been associated with John Calvin.[13] His emphasis was not so much on the fact that there are two groups of people in existence—one elected for heaven and one for reprobation—but rather on the belief that humans cannot make a choice regarding their ultimate destiny. The stress is on the proposition that our salvation and damnation depend *solely* on God's grace rather than on any human action.[14] In other words, humans possess no ability to influence their destiny. Salvation is *all* by God's grace and His volitional election. It is this ideology that forms the backbone of the well-known Reformation slogan *soli Deo gloria* (glory to God alone).[15]

On the other hand, the term *single predestination* is distinguished from *double predestination* and indicates that God only determines the saved but allows for the natural consequence of sin to determine the lost. It is, in Ted Campbell's words, a "milder" view of predestination because "God does not really choose persons for damnation; rather, damnation was chosen for all human beings by Adam and Eve."[16] This understanding of predestination seeks to absolve God of the culpability involved in the decisions of sinners.[17]

It is often argued that the authors of the Formula of Concord adopted a single rather than double predestination theory.[18] A single predestination view, however,

is fraught with complications. First, it quickly becomes evident, once a person moves away from the strict monergism of double predestination, that the lines between monergism and synergism become blurred. This was precisely the problem faced by the authors of the Formula of Concord.[19] Attempting to steer a middle course between Luther's monergism and the view that salvation involves human choice, they made it impossible for future theologians to clearly understand their intentions.[20] Second, the single-predestination view does not absolve God of evil; it still makes Him, albeit passively, responsible for the demise of reprobates. Finally, a single-predestination view may lead to a universalist soteriology, in which God saves all indiscriminately, thereby making a mockery of God's justice.[21] In an attempt to soften the hard edges of strict determinism, some are willing to conclude that Luther taught single, rather than double, predestination.[22]

The final view of predestination is the traditional synergistic interpretation; that is, predestination as God's foreknowledge of future human choices, also referred to as conditional predestination or conditional election. This view is adopted by most nonmonergistic Christians, including Seventh-day Adventists.[23] The view among many Protestants is that this was Luther's understanding of predestination.

While the debate about degrees of predestination belongs in the post-Reformation era, the concept of deterministic predestination has been debated throughout Christian history, finding its roots in the anti-Pelagian writings by Augustine of Hippo.[24] Alister McGrath argues that Luther's view on predestination is the fruit of a well-concluded Augustinianism. In an attempt to counter the human-centered synergism of the medieval church, Luther took Augustine's view to the extreme, resulting in a firm determinism. As McGrath states, "Luther explicitly teaches a doctrine of double predestination, whereas Augustine was reluctant to acknowledge such a doctrine, no matter how logically appropriate it might appear."[25] Luther's views on predestination are correlated with his understanding of human free will and are encapsulated in *The Bondage of the Will*, written against Erasmus, in 1525. It is in this work where one finds a systematic and scathing rebuke of libertarian free will.

God's deterministic foreknowledge and assurance of salvation

Luther's acceptance of double predestination goes hand in hand with his views on God's foreknowledge. *In The Bondage of the Will*, he stressed that "God foreknows nothing contingently"—that is, nothing that God foreknows is subject to change. All that God foreknows, therefore, must come to fruition, because the basis of such foreknowledge lies in His "immutable, eternal, and infallible will." Such a view of God's foreknowledge and His will led Luther to conclude that "free choice is completely prostrated and shattered, so that those who want free choice asserted must either deny or explain away this thunderbolt, or get rid of it by some other means."[26] He further wrote,

> From this it follows irrefutably that everything we do, everything that happens, even if it seems to us to happen mutably and contingently, happens in fact nonetheless necessarily and immutably, if you have regard to the will of God. For the will of God is effectual and cannot be hindered, since it is the power of the divine nature itself; moreover it is wise, so that it cannot be deceived. Now, if his will is not hindered, there is nothing to prevent the work itself from being done, in the place, time, manner, and measure that he himself both foresees and wills.[27]

Thus, in Luther's view, the will of God is not dependent on future human action. Furthermore, it is the declarative property of God's will that is external to humans and, based on the ontology of God, that determines our status as saved or lost. God does not just will; He *is will.*[28] Accordingly, Luther advocated for the strongest form of determinism; that is, all things happen necessarily by divine decree.[29] Such determinism is concomitant with the irresistible grace of God to save and the unbridled power of God to condemn. With unmitigated directness, he continued, "I admit that the question is difficult, and indeed impossible, if you wish to maintain at the same time both God's foreknowledge and man's freedom."[30] For Luther, belief in human free will amounts to "a refusal to accept God's action on our behalf as the sole hope for salvation."[31]

Luther also believed that natural revelation confirmed his views. He argued that humans intuitively understood that the foreknowledge of God was determinative when they uttered such statements as, "God's will be done," or "God willing, we will do it." He wrote, "From this we can see that the knowledge of God's predestination and foreknowledge remained with the common people no less than the awareness of his existence itself. But those who wished to appear wise went so far astray in their reasonings that their hearts were darkened and they became fools . . . , and denied or explained away the things that the poets and common people, and even their own conscience, regarded as entirely familiar, certain, and true."[32]

For Luther, evidence of God's determinism in natural revelation was important, for it provided further support for what was already known about God's foreknowledge from the Scriptures. This foreknowledge was not contingent on humans and was only revealed to those who were saved, for whom Christian assurance was found through trusting that God had saved them. Luther passionately believed that assurance of salvation came from the revelation that God keeps His promises to the elect; therefore, faith was about the faithfulness of God to save those whom He had chosen. Luther wrote the following:

> "But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his' " (II Tim. 2:19). . . .
>
> Therefore, Christian faith is entirely extinguished, the promises of God and the whole gospel are completely destroyed, if we teach and believe that it is not for us to know the necessary foreknowledge of God and the necessity of the things that are to come to pass. For this is the one supreme consolation of Christians in all adversities, to know that God does not lie, but does all things immutably, and that his will can neither be resisted nor changed nor hindered.[33]

From this passage, it is clear that the foundation of a believer's assurance was God's necessary and irresistible will. At the same time, Luther never addressed the subject of what happens to reprobates and why. The question of why God saves some and condemns others if He has the ability to save all does not appear to be addressed. Instead, Luther appeals to the distinction between "God preached" and "God hidden." God's love, mercy, forgiveness, and justification—truths that are revealed to humans through Scripture—belong to the sphere of "God preached"; however, the reason why some are saved and some damned belongs to the category of "God hidden." Thus, Luther wrote, "To the extent, therefore, that God hides himself and wills to be unknown to us, it is no business of ours. For here the saying truly applies, 'Things above us are no business of ours.' "[34]

This is perhaps why, in his later years, Luther refused to engage in conversation on predestination, essentially forbidding any debate on this topic.[35] As a result, some commentators conclude that Luther rejected deterministic predestinarianism; however, as Harry Buis notes, "Luther is not condemning predestination, he is simply pointing out one abuse of the doctrine against which we must guard ourselves."[36]

Double predestination in Luther

By the time Luther published *The Bondage of the Will* in 1525, he had embraced a strict view of God's sovereignty, also referred to in theological literature as God's "meticulous providence."[37] There seems to be little doubt that, while he did not use the term *double predestination*—a phrase that postdates the Magisterial Reformation—Luther was comfortable with its premise: human salvation and damnation are based on God's foreordination rather than contingent foreknowledge. Luther clearly spoke of strictly unmovable foreknowledge in the fate of both the saved and the lost. While Luther might, at times, have implied that humans had a degree of what could be termed as *compatibilist free will* in relation to God's foreknowledge,[38] he never taught that God bows His will to human will.[39]

If predestination goes together with deterministic foreordination, speaking of degrees of predestination, whether single or double, is irrelevant and can only be used as an attempt to mitigate or disassociate Luther from the Reformed theology of Calvin. As stated above, there is then only a short step from speaking of single predestination to the synergistic understanding of predestination. Such a

softening of purely deterministic predestination would surely be unacceptable to Luther. He strongly objected to Erasmus's view on human free will:

> In these and similar bits of juggling with words, her [Erasmus's Diatribe] only aim is to gain time by distracting our attention for a while from the main issue ["the First Cause does everything"] to something else. She credits us with being as stupid and senseless or as little concerned about the subject as she is herself. . . . Just as little children in fear or at play will put their hands over their eyes and then imagine that nobody sees them because they see nobody, so in all sorts of ways Diatribe . . . pretends that she does not see the real truth of the matter.[40]

Luther's beliefs about God's foreknowledge (the First Cause) comingled with his belief in the ultimate sovereignty of God, which inevitably resulted in a Calvinistic understanding of predestination. Buis writes: "Martin Luther held as strong a doctrine of predestination as did John Calvin."[41] Similarly, Jairzinho Lopes Pereira concludes, "Although it may not seem so to the unprepared reader, [double] predestination lay at the core of Luther's understanding of the salvation process."[42]

Thus, as Luther was a strict determinist, distinguishing between single and double predestination in his thinking was irrelevant, as the latter was his only choice. But the question remains: how did Luther's determinism affect his doctrine of justification? Before we turn to justification, however, we must first unpack Luther's concept of *alien righteousness.*

Alien righteousness

The adjective "alien" in the construct *alien righteousness* points to the fact that such righteousness stands apart from any human derivation. This righteousness is foreign and external to the sinner; it never belongs to the sinner, even when the sinner becomes a believer. Luther's earliest views on righteousness and justification were influenced by nominalist soteriology (via moderna) that formed the backbone of his theological education.[43] The most important feature of *via moderna soteriology* was a pactum between God and humanity, where humans were encouraged to do their best according to their internal abilities (inherent righteousness).[44] Luther was uncomfortable with the nominalist focus on inherent righteousness, as he felt he could never measure up to God's righteousness with his own internal righteousness, and thus, he felt condemned by God. At some point before 1517, Luther broke with *via moderna* soteriology, concluding that humanity had nothing to offer as far as salvation was concerned and that the only righteousness that counted in salvation was God's.[45] This is often referred to as "Luther's theological breakthrough."[46]

This concept of alien righteousness, or Christ's righteousness, is grounded

in Scripture, particularly in Pauline writings. For Luther, any hint of "human" or inherent righteousness implies a return to some form of postbiblical Pelagianism. At the same time, in his quest against medieval synergistic *pactum* theology, Luther embraced the Augustinian version of divine determinism. It is the marriage of these two conceptions—alien righteousness and Augustinian determinism—that transformed the biblical notion of Christ's (alien) righteousness into a mutant form of Christianity, which was an amalgam of biblical faith and Greek philosophy. This amalgam is the a priori lens through which all of Luther's writings on salvation must be read. The implications for the doctrine of justification by faith are troubling.

Justification by faith

Left unpolluted, the doctrine of justification teaches that humans who avail themselves of God's offer of salvation are pronounced righteous and saved solely by faith in Christ. Biblically speaking, this righteousness is always Christ's, and never inherently human. When determinism is added to the mix, however, all this changes because the process of salvation no longer has a human element. Thus, for Luther, justification of the sinner did not involve human faith or faithfulness. Rather, it was God's declaration that justified the sinner, *not on account of his or her faith* but *solely* through the efficacy of God's eternal decree. Such an understanding of justification by faith was so essential to Luther that he declared:

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> Nothing in this article can be given up or compromised. . . .
>
> On this article rests all that we teach and practice against the pope, the devil, and the world.[47]

In Luther's deterministic soteriology, God was active and humans passive. This was also why Luther often referred to God's righteousness as "passive,"[48] Faith, or *trust*, as Luther would often refer to it, was the believer's discovery that he or she was reckoned as righteous through the eternal decree of God and nothing more. Faith was not instrumental in salvation; it was passive.[49] For Luther, the phrase "justification by faith" was synonymous with determined salvation based on God's declarative will and did not include the human action of accepting God's offer by faith. Accepting God's offer of righteousness involves human choice, and that was not acceptable to Luther. He was devastatingly clear on this point when he wrote the following:

> [The apostle Paul wrote,] "We hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law" (Rom. 3:28), and as he [Paul] has said above: "No human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law" (Rom. 3:20). From all of which it is very clearly evident that all the devoted endeavors of free choice are worth absolutely nothing. For if the righteousness of God exists apart from law and the works of law, must it not much more exist apart from free choice? Especially as the highest aspiration of free choice is to practice moral righteousness, or the works of the law, with the help afforded by the law to its own blindness and ignorance.[50]

It is evident that the Reformation slogan *sola fide* has different meanings for different believers. For the majority of Protestants, the slogan means receiving God's offer of salvation through the means of faith, based on a free human choice. Not so for Luther, for whom *sola fide* was basically reduced to the "aha" moment when the elect believer recognized what had been already accomplished. For Luther, introducing any human element into the process of salvation, including faith based on a free human choice, implies a return to medieval Catholicism.

Conclusion

While Protestants, including Seventh-day Adventists, look to Luther as a forefather, his views on predestination are not widely known or accepted. As a result, it is a popular misconception that Luther was either not deterministic[51] or he embraced a mild version of deterministic predestination (single predestination). This misimpression is perhaps due to the fact that many Protestant scholars and historians appear to filter Luther's soteriology through the lens of the Formula of Concord. This document was strongly influenced by Philip Melanchthon and later Lutherans.[52] In contrast to Luther, Melanchthon eventually rejected the divine determinism taught by his mentor and embraced an understanding of synergism[53] that allowed for participation of human will in the salvation process.[54] Ultimately, seventeenth-century (and later) Lutheranism deviated from Luther and warmed up to Melanchthon's synergistic, albeit still thoroughly Protestant, understanding of salvation.[55]

Within Adventism, the popular misconception that Luther taught a Pauline version of justification by faith most likely resulted from the high praise the Reformer received from Ellen White, especially in *The Great Controversy*. To be sure, the Protestant Reformation initiated by Luther in 1517 was a major turn away from medieval Catholicism and toward a scriptural understanding of justification by faith. This is probably why Ellen White lavished such praise on Luther. And rightly so! Luther's embrace of divine determinism, however, significantly hampered his complete return toward a scriptural understanding of justification by faith. In his desire to move away from the high anthropology

and merit-based view of salvation, which was advocated by the Catholicism of his day, Luther embraced the view that advocated God's extreme sovereignty to the complete exclusion of human free will. As a result, "faith," in the "justification by faith" phrase, became a passive acceptance of the election that was accomplished without human input. Luther's journey toward a Pauline understanding of justification by faith was stopped a few centuries short when he lingered too long in conversation with Augustine. It was left to others, including Philip Melanchthon and Jacobus Arminius,[56] to offer a correction to Luther's deterministic understanding of salvation. An Adventist understanding of salvation finds its roots in their theology.

While Luther ceased to speak of deterministic predestination in his later years, even forbidding speculation on the topic, he never departed from Augustinian determinism. Such a departure certainly undermined his understanding of justification by faith, destroying what he treasured the most: complete assurance of salvation through election. Although he never used the term *double predestination*, Luther unquestioningly believed, both in his early and later years, that God's will determines the salvation and reprobation of humanity. In fact, as late as 1537, he insisted that of all the books he had ever written only two deserved preservation: *The Bondage of the Will* and the *Catechism*.[57]

We return to the original question posed in the title of this chapter: Was Luther a Calvinist? Being chronologically sensitive, we should rather ask, was Calvin a Lutheran, in a classical sense? The answer to both questions is an unequivocal Yes. Both of these great thinkers of the Reformation embraced a deterministic understanding of salvation. While their emphases and ways of expressing themselves differed to a significant degree, they both drank deeply from the Augustinian theological well.

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1. Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 213.

2. Johann Heinz, "Luther, Martin," in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, ed. Jerry Moon and Denis Fortin (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald® Pub. Assn., 2013), 954 (italics in the original).

3. Bert B. Beach, *Ambassador for Liberty: Building Bridges of Faith, Friendship, and Freedom* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald® Pub. Assn., 2012), 122.

4. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1948), 1:372.

5. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn.,

1950), 253; cf. Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald® Pub. Assn., 1945), 222, 223.

6. Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1999), 379; cf. Hans J. Hillerbrand, "The Legacy of Martin Luther," in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 230.

7. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 26, *Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 1–4*, ed. Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1963), 223.

8. The centuries-long debate on Luther's determinism is well encapsulated in Harry J. McSorley's *Luther: Right or Wrong? An Ecumenical-Theological Study of Luther's Major Work,* The Bondage of the Will (New York: Newman Press, 1969), 256–260. Victor A. Shepherd states, "For Luther, predestination is simply the efficacy of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ surging over us in the power of the Spirit in such a way as to fulfill his promise and thereby eclipse our unbelief." Victor A. Shepherd, *Interpreting Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Thought* (Toronto: BPS Books, 2008), 115.

9. In the sixteenth century, Lutheran orthodoxy embraced the view that predestination was based on God's foreknowledge. Thus, it is possible that Luther has, at times, been interpreted through the lens of later Lutheran theological developments. See Gerrit C. Berkouwer, *Divine Election,* Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), 40–42; cf. Hans J. Hillebrand, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Protestantism*, vol. 3 (New York: Routledge, 2014), 1858; and Erwin Fahlbusch et al., eds., *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 342. This view concurs with the Adventist understanding of predestination. See F. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald® Pub. Assn., 1957), 575.

10. The Formula of Concord represents an authoritative confession of the post-Luther Lutheran Church. Completed in 1577, it was later included in *The Book of Concord* (1580). "The Formula of Concord," in *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 168, 171.

11. It is beyond the scope of this work to develop a systematic theology for the doctrine of predestination. A brief clarification of what is meant by these terms is, however, necessary.

12. Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 209.

13. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960), bk. 2, chap. 21, 920.

14. Ibid., 921; cf. Herman J. Selderhuis, *John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 190.

15. It must be emphasized that Protestants who do not subscribe to a monergistic view of salvation can also adopt the slogan *soli Deo gloria.* Those who follow Melanchthon's view of salvation, as well as that of Jacobus Arminius, can readily acknowledge that it is God who is solely responsible for human salvation through the agency of prevenient grace. While Melanchthon never wrote of prevenient grace, the concept is clearly present in his writings.

16. Ted A. Campbell, *Christian Confessions: A Historical Introduction* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 155.

17. Martin Luther, "The Bondage of the Will," in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, ed. E. Gordon Rupp and Philip S. Watson (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1969), 234.

18. Campbell, *Christian Confessions*, 157; cf. Ralph W. Quere, "The Community of Faith as a Confessional Norm: Universalism and Evangelism," in *The Difficult but Indispensable Church*, ed. Norma Cook Everist (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 86.

19. E.g., how can one reconcile statements such as, "Christ calls all sinners to him, and promises to give them rest. And he earnestly wishes that all men may come to him" and that "the cause of the damnation of the ungodly is that they either do not hear the Word of God at all, but contumaciously contemn it, stop their ears, and harder their hearts" with "[there is no] cause in us, on account of which cause God has chosen us to eternal life"? "The Formula of Concord," 167, 168, 172.

20. The original intent of the Formula of Concord was to unite the warring Lutheran factions. The hopes of its authors, however, were largely unfulfilled. While the Formula of Concord's teachings had some unitive effect, it also led to more divisions. For an excellent overview of the Lutheran struggles prior to the Formula of Concord, see Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 103–134. For a discussion of the mixed reception of the Formula of Concord, see Paul Douglas Lockhart, *Frederik II and the Protestant Cause: Denmark's Role in the Wars of Religion, 1559–1596* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 164; cf. Euan Cameron, "One Reformation or Many? Protestant Identities in the Later Reformation in Germany," in *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation*, ed. Ole Peter Grell and Bob Scribner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 108, 109.

21. Duane H. Larson, "Universality of the Church," in *The A to Z of Lutheranism*, ed. Günther Gassmann, Duane H. Larson, and Mark W. Oldenburg (London: Scarecrow Press, 2007), 338.

22. See, e.g., John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, who insist that Luther only spoke of single predestination: *Protestant Christianity* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), 34; cf. Jonathan Hill, *The History of Christian Thought* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 202; Campbell, *Christian Confessions*, 155.

23. See Nichol, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 6:575. For an excellent overview of this understanding of predestination, see Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 179–199.

24. Thus, Jairzinho Lopes Pereira concludes, "Augustine's notion of grace and the way it works points to an undeniably deterministic account of salvation. The fact is that, according to Augustine, humans do not even decide whether they want or not to be in God's path. By the time they will make such a decision (which is necessarily a predetermined decision), a previous decision has already been made in God's eternal decree of predestination. If that divine decision is for condemnation there is nothing that a human can do in order [to] change the course of things. That human being will necessarily desire to go astray from God and then meet condemnation." Jairzinho Lopes Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther on Original Sin and Justification of the Sinner* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2013), 262.

25. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 230.

26. Luther, "The Bondage of the Will," 118.

27. Ibid., 119.

28. Luther's ontology of God follows a voluntarist system of thought, according to which the will of God has primacy over all else. Voluntarism teaches that whatever God commands is necessarily good. In this view, God may be identified with His will. Peter Harrison, "Philosophy and the Crisis of Religion," in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 245; cf. J. B. Schneewind, *Essays on the History of Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 203.

29. Harrison, "Philosophy and the Crisis of Religion," 242, 243.

30. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works,* vol. 33, *Career of the Reformer 2*, ed. Helmut T. Lehman (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1955), 188.

31. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*, 383.

32. Luther, "The Bondage of the Will," 121, 122.

33. Ibid., 122.

34. Ibid., 200, 201; cf. John Peckham, "An Investigation of Luther's View of the Bondage of the Will With Implications for Soteriology and Theodicy," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 18, no. 2 (Autumn 2007): 294, 295.

35. Martin Luther, *Luther's Table Talk; or, Some Choice Fragments From the Familiar Discourse of That Godly, Learned Man* (London: Longman, 1832), 270, 271.

36. Harry Buis, *Historic Protestantism and Predestination* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 57.

37. Kenneth J. Stewart, *Ten Myths About Calvinism: Recovering the Breadth of the Reformed Tradition* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 54.

38. Ronald H. Nash, *The Concept of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 54.

39. *Compatibilism* is the belief that freedom of human will is compatible with divine determinism. In simple terms, it is an attempt to absolve God as the creator of sin and evil in the world. While some determinists, such as Huldrych Zwingli, did not shy away from naming God as the creator of sin and evil, both Luther and Calvin were decidedly uneasy with the idea. Instead, it is the human "free" will that is blamed for evil. Thus, Luther refers to the human free will as "the beast of burden." He thus wrote, "The human will is placed between the two [God and Satan] like a beast of burden. If God rides it, it wills and goes where God wills. . . . If Satan rides it, it wills and goes where Satan wills; nor can it choose to run to either of the two riders or to seek him out, but the riders themselves contend for the possession and control of it." Luther, "The Bondage of the Will," 140. At the same time, it must be stated that Luther had a difficult time maneuvering around the problem of God as the source of evil, as illustrated by the following passage: "Let no one suppose, therefore, when God is said to harden or to work evil in us (for to harden is to make evil), that he does so by creating evil in us from scratch. You must not imagine him like an evil-minded innkeeper, full of wickedness himself, who pours or blends poisons into an innocent vessel, which itself does nothing but receive or suffer the malignity of the blender. . . . God works in us good things and bad, and that we are subject by sheer passive necessity to God's working; for they do not sufficiently consider how unrestingly active God is in all his creatures, allowing none of them to take a holiday. But anyone who wishes to have any understanding of such matters should think as follows. God works evil in us, i.e., by means of us, not through any fault of his . . . he carries us along by his own activity in accordance with his omnipotence, good as he is

himself he cannot help but do evil with an evil instrument, though he makes good use of this evil in accordance with his wisdom for his own glory and our salvation." Ibid., 234. As Gregory Boyd rightly points out, in wanting to absolve God as the creator of evil, Luther places the blame for sin and evil on the human will; but, with other Augustinians, he sees the will as even performing evil for a greater good as part of God's foreordination. Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 47, 48.

40. Luther, "The Bondage of the Will," 240.

41. Buis, *Historic Protestantism and Predestination*, 2.

42. Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther*, 453. For a further study of Luther's position, the reader is directed to Brian G. Mattson, "Double or Nothing: Martin Luther's Doctrine of Predestination," Contra Mundum, accessed July 12, 2017, http://www.contra-mundum.org/essays/mattson/Luther-predestination.pdf.

43. Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*, trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 120–122. *Nominalism* was a medieval school of thought that emphasized free will and humanity's internal moral capabilities. Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther*, 295.

44. Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 151; cf. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 198–201.

45. Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 133; cf. Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther*, 280. In 1545, Luther himself admitted this move was precipitated by his rediscovery of Augustine. Martin Luther, "Autobiographical Fragment," in *Martin Luther*, ed. E. G. Rupp and Benjamin Drewery (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970), 6.

46. Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther*, 322; McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 224; cf. Michael G. Baylor, *Action and Person: Conscience in the Late Scholasticism and the Young Luther* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 125.

47. Martin Luther, "The Smalcald Articles," in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1959), pt. 2, art. 1, 292. Reading this article may give the reader the impression that Luther believed in an active human role in justification; however, it must once again be emphasized that only "to the untrained eye" does deterministic predestination not "assume a crucial role in young Luther's soteriology." Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther*, 362.

48. Luther, *Luther's Works*, 26:4–7. Even as late as 1545, Luther still strongly held to his views on "passive righteousness." Luther, "Autobiographical Fragment," 6. Keeping in mind that throughout his lifetime Luther held to an *a priori* presupposition of divine determinism allows us to truly comprehend his teachings on justification by faith. Without this knowledge, passages such as those found in *Luther's Works*, vol. 26, cited above, sound very much like a textbook soteriology.

49. Martin Luther, *Commentary on Psalm 51*, in *Luther's Works*, vol. 12, *Selections Psalms 1*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1955), 368; cf. Mark C. Mattes, *The Role of Justification in Contemporary Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 69.

50. Luther, "The Bondage of the Will," 307.

51. In recent years, a particular group known as the "Finnish school" avoided the topic of

Luther's determinism altogether by offering an alternative interpretation that makes Luther more palatable to ecumenically minded groups. As a result of ecumenical discussions between Finnish Lutherans and Russian Orthodox churches "from 1970 to 1995, significant soteriological statements were adopted in Kiev (1977), Turku (1980), and Järvenpää (1992). The best known and most influential of these have been the theses on 'Salvation as Justification and Deification,' drafted in Kiev in 1977." The most controversial aspect of these conversations regarding Luther's theology on justification and free will are found in this statement: "Grace never does violence to a man's personal will, but exerts its influence through it and with it. Every one has the opportunity to refuse consent to God's will or, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to consent to it." Risto Saarinen, "Salvation in the Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue," in *Union With Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jensen (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 167–169.

52. Harry Buis is certainly correct when he states that the Formula of Concord is a contradictory document that, on the one hand, appeared to oppose Melanchthon's synergism, but on the other hand, "it denied irresistible grace and affirmed the universality of the offer of the Gospel." As a result, Buis argues, "The position of the Formula of Concord amounted to conditional predestination which became the accepted Lutheran doctrine in the seventeenth century." Buis, *Historic Protestantism and Predestination*, 82.

53. In contrast to Catholic synergism, evangelical synergism rejects the possibility of inherent righteousness. In this view, salvation is still *soli Deo gloria* and thus not dependent on human merit.

54. Buis, *Historic Protestantism and Predestination*, 2, 3, 81, 82. To be sure, the Formula of Concord clearly rejects a synergism that suggests that humans have the ability to turn themselves to God and thus appears to advocate a single-predestination view. At the same time, however, the Formula appears to leave room for Melanchthon's view that "through and in the working of grace . . . one can be capable of one's own consent of the will." Such a position would be unacceptable to Luther. Peter Neuner, "Synergism," in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Erwin Fahlbusch et al., vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 272; cf. Buis, *Historic Protestantism and Predestination*, 82.

55. Joel R. Beeke, *The Quest for Full Assurance* (Carlise: Banner of Truth Trust, 1999), 25, 26.

56. It must be noted that while Jacobus Arminius was reacting to the extremes of Calvinism rather than that of Luther, Calvin himself was strongly influenced by Luther and Augustine. In one way or another, all Protestant theological roads lead to Luther.

57. In a letter to Wolfgang Capito regarding the publishing of his complete works, Luther says, "I would rather see them devoured. For I acknowledge none of them to be really a book of mine, except for perhaps the one *On the Bound Will*, and the *Catechism*." Martin Luther, "Letter to Wolfgang Capito, Wittenberg, July 9, 1537," in *Luther's Works*, vol. 50, *Letters 3*, ed. Gottfried G. Krodel (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1975), 172, 173; cf. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnson, "Historical and Theological Introduction," in *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1957), 40.