

ILMARI KARIMIES

Martin Luther's Under-
standing of Faith
and Reality (1513–1521)

*Spätmittelalter, Humanismus,
Reformation*

Mohr Siebeck

Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation

Studies in the Late Middle Ages,
Humanism, and the Reformation

edited by Volker Leppin (New Haven, CT)

in association with

Amy Nelson Burnett (Lincoln, NE), Johannes Helmrath (Berlin),
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Klaus Unterburger (Regensburg)

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Martin Luther's Understanding
of Faith and Reality
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The Influence of Augustinian Platonism and
Illumination in Luther's Thought

Mohr Siebeck

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ISBN 978-3-16-156531-1 / eISBN 978-3-16-161031-8

DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-161031-8

ISSN 1865-2840 / eISSN 2569-4391 (Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

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The book was printed on non-aging paper by Gulde Druck in Tübingen, and bound by Buchbinderei Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

*To my sons Titus an Justus
and
to my wife Iida*

Preface

The study you have at hand is the product of years of engagement with Luther and the Augustinian tradition. I first encountered Luther and Augustine as a student at Parola High School around 1996, when by the suggestion of the local Youth Pastor Jari Wihersaari I read Luther's *De servo arbitrio* and Augustine's *Confessions*. These encounters helped to spark my interest in systematic theology. The epistemological theory of Augustine, the doctrine of illumination, has fascinated me ever since.

Already in 2003 when I entered Professor Antti Raunio's master's thesis seminar, my aim was to investigate the relationship of ontology and epistemology in Luther's understanding of faith with special regard to how the focal point of Finnish Mannermaa School, Christ present in faith, was related to faith as a cognition. That preliminary work only scraped the surface of the subject, but it demonstrated that the concept of *lumen fidei* played a central role in Luther's view of faith as cognition.

After I had graduated as a master of theology, I worked at the Diocesan Chapter of Helsinki under Bishop, Professor Emeritus Eero Huovinen, a Luther scholar known for his work on *fides infantium* and Luther's theological anthropology. This study is a continuation of his investigations, too. I thank Eero for his encouragement to take up this task when the opportunity arose.

When I started my doctoral studies it was still common in Finland to write a licentiate thesis and then expand upon it. My study was accordingly intended to consist of two main chapters: ontology (cosmology) and epistemology, first being the topic of my licentiate. However, as I was underway, the Finnish government, following the international trend of introducing Neoliberalism at the Universities and preferring quantity over quality, cut the degrees in half with respect to contents and time, among major cuts at research funding. An ongoing study built on two pillars could not be adapted accordingly without unsettling the whole. This resulted in challenges near the end of the work.

My doctoral thesis, upon which this study is based, was defended at University of Helsinki during Reformation Jubilee year 2017. In it I was able to bring my examination regarding Luther to completion and to elucidate the manner in which these topics are intertwined. I am grateful to all the parties who helped me bring this work to completion: Especially to my *Alma Mater*, University of Helsinki, her Faculty of Theology and its Department of Sys-

tematic Theology. To Professor of Ecumenics Risto Saarinen for supervising my thesis, and to Professor Antti Raunio for guiding me at the preliminary stages of this work. To our University Lecturers: Pekka Kärkkäinen for his expertise in late medieval anthropology, Olli-Pekka Vainio and Pauli Annala for their feedback as the inspectors of my licentiate thesis, and to Pauli for his help in understanding the mystical traditions behind Luther's thought, too. I also thank Docent Sammeli Juntunen for being the other pre-examiner of my doctoral thesis. I wish to express my appreciation to the two academic giants of our Faculty, also: Professor Emeritus Simo Knuuttila, the chair of the Center of Excellence in which this work was carried out, and late Professor Emeritus Tuomo Mannermaa, (1937–2015), who served as an example to us junior researchers, sometimes inviting us to his home.

I also express my thanks to all parties which funded my work: To the Finnish Graduate School of Theology, Philosophical Psychology, Morality and Politics Center of Excellence, Church Research Institute, STI – Theological Institute of Finland, and the Doctoral School in Humanities and Social Sciences (HYMY) of the University of Helsinki. I also thank the Department for International Relations of the ELCF for its travel grants. My final financial thanks go to KEVA, the public section pension provider in Finland, which allowed me to complete the editing phase of this volume after I had a stroke in 2019, and to Open University of the University of Helsinki, where I have been teaching courses on Reformation before and after. My stroke significantly delayed the editing of this work, and I therefore wish to thank Mohr Siebeck for their patience. I also thank Professor Volker Leppin for recommending my study to be taken in this series. I extend my thanks for academic collaboration to colleagues at a number of international organisations. Of you I will only mention Professor Anna Vind from Copenhagen, whom I have known since 2004. I thank her for serving as the opponent of my doctoral defense and as the other examiner of my thesis. I also thank Dr. Grant White for revising the language of this study. I also wish to thank the ecclesial organizations which have invited me to give presentations on my work.

Finally, I thank my friends who have contributed to bearing the burden of this work. These thanks also apply to Hämäläis-Osakunta student nation. Most of all I thank those who suffered from my years of hard work with this study: my sons Tiitus and Justus. I also thank my wife Iida Karimies, who nursed me back to health after my stroke. To them this book is dedicated.

Helsinki, Pentecost June 5th 2022



Ilmari Karimies

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List of Abbreviations

AWA	Archiv zur Weimarer Ausgabe der Werke Martin Luthers.
DP	Johannes Gerson <i>Opera Omnia</i> . Edidit Louis Ellies Du Pin.
FC	Formula concordiae.
LW	Luther's Works. American Edition.
NPNF	A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church.
StA	Martin Luther Studienausgabe.
Sth	Sancti Thomae de Aquino Summa Theologiae.
STKSJ	Suomalaisen teologisen kirjallisuusseuran julkaisuja. Publications of The Finnish Theological Literature Society.
WA	D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe.

Other abbreviations are according to RGG 4th edition.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Rationale of the Study

Near the beginning of his second encyclical, *Spe salvi* (2007), Pope Benedict XVI presents the question of how the definition of faith given in Hebrews 11:1 should be interpreted. Seeing in the issue a major dispute between Lutherans and Catholics not only with regard to exegesis, but in the definition of faith as well, he states:

Ever since the Reformation there has been a dispute among exegetes over the central word of this phrase, but today a way towards a common interpretation seems to be opening up once more. [...] “Faith is the *hypostasis* of things hoped for; the proof of things not seen”. For the Fathers and for the theologians of the Middle Ages, it was clear that the Greek word *hypostasis* was to be rendered in Latin with the term *substantia*. The Latin translation of the text produced at the time of the early Church therefore reads: *Est autem fides sperandarum substantia rerum, argumentum non apparentium*—faith is the “substance” of things hoped for; the proof of things not seen.¹

Thus for Benedict there are two conflicting interpretations of the verse with regard to the words *substantia* and *argumentum*, as to whether they are understood to refer to a present reality or to an absent object of hope. Presenting the Catholic stance, Benedict refers to Thomas Aquinas, whom he sees as substantiating the first view:

Saint Thomas Aquinas, using the terminology of the philosophical tradition to which he belonged, explains it as follows: faith is a *habitus*, that is, a stable disposition of the spirit, through which eternal life takes root in us and reason is led to consent to what it does not see. The concept of “substance” is therefore modified in the sense that through faith, in a tentative way, or as we might say “in embryo”—and thus according to the “substance”—there are already present in us the things that are hoped for: the whole, true life. And precisely because the thing itself is already present, this presence of what is to come also creates certainty: this “thing” which must come is not yet visible in the external world (it does not “appear”), but because of the fact that, as an initial and dynamic reality, we carry it within us, a certain perception of it has even now come into existence.²

¹ BENEDICT XVI, *Encyclical Letter Spe Salvi of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious and All the Lay Faithful on Christian Hope* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007), 7.

² *Ibid.*, 7.

Against the view of Thomas, the Pope sets Luther, who according to him understood faith only in the subjective sense, as an expression of interior attitude, devoid of any reality present within the believer:

To Luther, who was not particularly fond of the *Letter to the Hebrews*, the concept of “substance”, in the context of his view of faith, meant nothing. For this reason he understood the term *hypostasis/substance* not in the objective sense (of a reality present within us), but in the subjective sense, as an expression of an interior attitude, and so, naturally, he also had to understand the term *argumentum* as a disposition of the subject.³

After analysing the modern exegetical discussion, the Pope thus arrives at the following conclusion:

“Yet there can be no question but that this classical Protestant understanding is untenable”. Faith is not merely a personal reaching out towards things to come that are still totally absent: it gives us something. It gives us even now something of the reality we are waiting for, and this present reality constitutes for us a “proof” of the things that are still unseen. Faith draws the future into the present, so that it is no longer simply a “not yet”.⁴

In his text Pope Benedict therefore sets against each other the Thomist definition of faith as a *habitus*, that disposes the subject towards eternal life by setting the person into connection with what he does not yet see, but what is nevertheless as an initial reality already present, and a supposedly Lutheran definition of faith according to which faith would only be a subjective interior attitude, a conviction of things that are not yet present reality. The juxtaposition presented by Benedict is incorrect, however.⁵ The present work will argue that the actual fact is quite the opposite: Luther sees faith as an even stronger participation in the divine reality than the notion of *habitus*, used by Thomas Aquinas, is able to convey. For Thomas, namely, faith as an infused theological virtue is a created similitude of the divine light. But for Luther the light of faith is in itself divine, having God as its immediate object.

The comparison of Pope Benedict allows us to approach the question of the nature of faith in general. As a broad generalization one can make a distinction between two different approaches to defining the concept of faith. The first approach is to analyse faith as being composed of two constituents: an assent (*fides qua*), and the content of faith (*fides quae*). Premodern, mod-

³ Ibid., 7.

⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁵ In his conception of the Lutheran understanding of faith Benedict XVI seems to rely on the older German existentialist reading of Luther, represented among others by Gerhard Ebeling and Wilfrid Joest. The ontological presuppositions of Joest and Ebeling are subjected to critical examination especially in chapters 2.3.3.2 and 3.4.1 of this work. On similar criticism by Catholic philosopher Jean Borella of the Lutheran concept of faith, and for refutation of that criticism, see also LARRY RINEHART, “Intelligence on the Siege of Augsburg,” *JES* 48, no. 1 (2013), 107–113; LARRY RINEHART, “Sola Fide: The Mystery of Salvation by Faith,” *JES* 49, no. 1 (2014), 577–600.

ern and postmodern theologians and theologies very often follow this option, differing in the emphasis they place on each of the elements. For example, in doctrinal orthodoxy the accent usually lies on believing the right doctrinal propositions (*fides quae*), so that “faith” primarily means the conceptual content of faith. Classical liberal theology, on the other hand (illustrated for example by Schleiermacher), puts the accent on the subjective faith of the individual (*fides qua*), defined in Schleiermacher’s case as a feeling. An existential and personalist emphasis would define faith as consisting of a relation (*fides qua*) and the object (*fides quae*), the latter understood as a person. A second and structurally different approach, however, that can be characterized as mostly premodern, attempts to define the concept of faith using the notion of intellectual light and illumination. The classical theories of illumination, such as those of Augustine and Bonaventure, contain an ontological link between the object of knowledge and the cognition itself. In this approach the two cannot be separated, as the quality of the cognition is dependent on the nature of the object. When this theory is applied to explain the epistemic nature of faith, faith acquires the nature of immediate and intuitive cognition, i.e., “knowledge of acquaintance”, over against representational and propositional knowledge. Mediating between these two alternatives are the Thomistic and late Franciscan (Scotist and Nominalist) theories of illumination, which also use the notion of the light of faith, but in which the concept of light is interpreted more metaphorically, not as immediate knowledge of an object, but as propositional knowledge granted certainty by supernatural means. For them, faith becomes an infused supernatural virtue, but it grants only a mediated cognition of its object.⁶

The specific background of this study, which examines the nature of Martin Luther’s understanding of faith in relation to its ontological preconditions, has been the work of the so-called Finnish “Mannermaa School” of Luther research. Its basis lies in the work of Tuomo Mannermaa (1937–2015), who

⁶ As a comprehensive overview of the uses of the concept of faith in different theological contexts see ANDREAS GRÜNSCHLOß et al., “Faith,” in *RPP*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz et al., 4th edition (Brill, 2011), doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1877-5888_rpp_COM_08687. Classical and medieval interpretations of the theory of illumination will be analysed in chapter 3.2. For a modern Catholic synthesis and definition of the nature of faith see (Pope) FRANCIS, *Encyclical letter Spe Salvi of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI to the bishops, priests and deacons, men and women religious and all the lay faithful on Christian hope* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013). In Medieval theology the question of the relation faith as cognition has to its object, especially in the sense of whether the certitude of faith is of an epistemological or volitional nature, is connected to the debate around whether theology can be considered as a science. If certitude is not based on the evidentiality of the contents of faith, but on the effect of grace on the will, then theology is not a proper science. See BENGT HÄGGLUND, *Theologie und Philosophie bei Luther und der occamistischen Tradition: Luthers Stellung zur Theorie von der doppelten Wahrheit* (Lund: Gleerup, 1955), 22–42.

served as Professor of Ecumenics at the University of Helsinki from 1980 to 2000. Under Mannermaa the focus on Luther's ontological thought became a central aspect of Finnish Luther research.⁷ In his groundbreaking study *Christ Present in Faith* (originally published in Finnish as *In ipsa fide Christus adest*), Mannermaa observed that at the heart of Luther's teaching on justification lies an ontological or *real-ontic* idea of union with Christ in faith, who is present in the faith of the believer, and that this idea is analogous to the Orthodox understanding of justification as deification (*theosis*).⁸

⁷ KARI KOPPERI and RISTO SAARINEN, *Läsnäoleva Kristus. Tuomo Mannermaan koulu teologian ja kirkon asialla* (Helsinki: Suomalainen teologinen kirjallisuusseura, 2022) gives a comprehensive overview of Tuomo Mannermaa's life work with Luther studies and influence in Finnish. A shorter overview is presented in RISTO SAARINEN "Tuomo Mannermaa ja Suomen Akatemian Luther-projektit 1984–1997," *Teologinen Aikakauskirja* 1 (2015), 55–68. Up-to-date information on the Finnish Luther research can also be found on Professor Risto Saarinen's web page: <http://blogs.helsinki.fi/ristosaarinen/luther-studies-in-finland/> (accessed 27.7.2021). Recent published overviews of Finnish Luther research are also available in print in English (JUHANI FORSBERG, "Afterword: Finnish Luther Research since 1979," *Two Kinds of Love. Martin Luther's Religious World*, trans. Kirsi Irmeli Stjerna, 1st Fortress Press ed. [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010], 89–103; RISTO SAARINEN, "Finnish Luther Studies: A Story and a Program," in *Engaging Luther: A (New) Theological Assessment*, ed. Olli-Pekka Vainio [Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010], 1–26; RISTO SAARINEN, "The Study of Luther in Finland," in *Luther, reformaatio ja kirja = Luther, the Reformation, and the Book*, ed. Tuija Laine [Helsinki: Suomen kirkkohistoriallinen seura, 2012], 143–151) and in German (JUHANI FORSBERG, "Die finnische Lutherforschung seit 1979," *Lutherjahrbuch* 72 [2005], 147–182). There are also two collections of articles in English covering the Finnish research: Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Union with Christ. The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), and Olli-Pekka Vainio, ed., *Engaging Luther. A (New) Theological Assessment* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010).

⁸ TUOMO MANNERMAA, *In ipsa fide Christus adest. Luterilaisen ja ortodoksisen kristinuskäsitteiden leikkauspiste* (Helsinki: Missiologian ja ekumeniikan seura, 1979), published in German as TUOMO MANNERMAA, *Der im Glauben gegenwärtige Christus. Rechtfertigung und Vergottung zum ökumenischen Dialog* (Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1989) and in English as TUOMO MANNERMAA, *Christ Present in Faith. Luther's View of Justification*, trans. Kirsi Irmeli Stjerna (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005). The Finnish scholarship even influenced the ecumenical process that led to the signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. Especially important was the participation in the dialogues of former Professor of Dogmatics and colleague of Mannermaa, Bishop of Helsinki Eero Huovinen, who also wrote several works on Luther's theology of faith, as well as the dissertation of Simo Peura regarding *theosis* and justification (SIMO PEURA, *Mehr als ein Mensch? Die Vergöttlichung als Thema der Theologie Martin Luthers von 1513 bis 1519* [Mainz: Zabern, 1994]). This Finnish contribution to the dialogue process is described by JUHANI FORSBERG, "Der finnische Beitrag zum Dokument Gemeinsame Erklärung zur Rechtfertigungslehre," in *Caritas Dei: Beiträge zum Verständnis Luthers und der gegenwärtigen Ökumene: Festschrift für Tuomo Mannermaa zum 60. Geburtstag*, eds. Oswald Bayer, Robert W. Jenson and Simo Knuutila (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1997), 152–169.

However, when one looks at the different definitions of faith, simply citing the concept of union does not suffice to explain what faith is. Even if faith is defined as union with its object, Christ, one also needs to explain what the relation of the ontological union is to the cognition – e.g. knowledge, trust or assent – of the faithful subject. Could the supposition of the union be abolished without affecting faith as cognition, or is there an intrinsic connection between them? The question of the specific ontological or metaphysical⁹ nature of the union that has been the central finding of the Finnish School has up until now remained open.¹⁰

Mannermaa's first and major study on the subject, *Christ Present in Faith*, brings to light the widely known text in which Luther describes faith as darkness that sees nothing and a cloud in the heart, where Christ is present.¹¹ Though Mannermaa's emphasis in this work is on the ontological idea of Christ as the form of faith, he also makes some brief comments regarding the cognitive nature of faith. First, he interprets the dark cloud which surrounds Christ as signifying partially the law through which the believer is humbled, partially the obscurity of God's providence.¹² Mannermaa also argues that in Luther's view human beings cannot gain any knowledge of the presence of

⁹ In this study I use the term "ontology" to refer to considerations concerning the nature of being in general, and the term "metaphysics" as a reference to elaborated and defined systems of ontology. See also footnote 25.

¹⁰ On the question of how the notion of the union might be understood see especially DENNIS BIELFELDT, "The Ontology of Deification," in *In Caritas Dei: Beiträge zum Verständnis Luthers und der gegenwärtigen Ökumene: Festschrift für Tuomo Mannermaa zum 60. Geburtstag*, eds. Oswald Bayer, Robert W. Jenson and Simo Knuutila (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1997), 90–113. Bielfeldt sketches seven possible models, but stresses that more historical research is required to link Luther's actual thought to them. A more modest attempt consisting of three models is given by RISTO SAARINEN, "Die Teilhabe an Gott bei Luther und in der finnischen Lutherforschung," in *Luther und Ontologie: Das Sein Christi im Glauben als strukturierendes Prinzip der Theologie Luthers: Referate der Fachtagung des Instituts für Systematische Theologie der Universität Helsinki in Zusammenarbeit mit der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg in Helsinki 1.–5.4.1992*, eds. Anja Ghiselli, Kari Kopperi and Rainer Vinke (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1993), 167–184.

¹¹ MANNERMAA, *Christ Present in Faith*, 26–28. See also WA 40/1, 228,27–229,32.

¹² "The 'darkness' and the 'cloud' of faith in which Christ, in Luther's view, is really present, is therefore obviously also the kind of 'darkness' and 'turning into nothing' that follows from gaining self-knowledge through the law. [...] It is true, however, that the 'darkness' of faith does not only refer to the darkness brought by the law. That 'obscurity', for example, which prevails when one believes in God's rule and providence, is also part of this darkness. On the other hand, it is nevertheless obvious that the 'nothingness' and 'darkness' brought about one's self-knowledge gained through the law is an essential dimension of the 'darkness' and 'cloud' in which Christ is really present." MANNERMAA, *Christ Present in Faith*, 35–36.

the spirit dwelling in them by means of their senses.¹³ Finally, Mannermaa cites Luther to point out that through the “image of Christ”, of which a believer becomes a participant through the means of grace, “God’s people understand and know in the same way as Christ does; that is, they understand and know Christ himself”.¹⁴ Mannermaa, however, does not further reflect what this knowing Christ means, or how it is related to the aforementioned darkness which surrounds Christ.

In a later work, *Two Kinds of Love* (original edition published in Finnish in 1983 as *Kaksi rakkautta*, expanded edition 1995, English translation 2010), Mannermaa returns to the theme, again with an emphasis on the darkness of faith.¹⁵ There he interprets the darkness in which God is hidden by the means of the theology of the Cross: God appears not only as nothing, but as that which is negative and repulsive to human love. According to Mannermaa’s interpretation, exactly how God is present cannot be understood by human reason. God dwells only in those who feel in themselves that they are furthest from God and nearest to Satan. Therefore, Mannermaa defines Luther’s notion of faith as trust in God and his love hidden in its opposite.¹⁶ Both portrayals are characterized on the one hand by a strong emphasis on the real presence of Christ, but on the other hand a heavy accent on the hiddenness of this presence and its contrariety to experience.

However, a very different image of the cognitive nature of faith emerges from the work one might consider the the most important of Mannermaa’s writings on the topic: the 1994 article *Hat Luther eine trinitarische Ontologie?*¹⁷ In the first and second parts of his article, Mannermaa discusses the

¹³ Ibid., 73–79.

¹⁴ Ibid., 83.

¹⁵ TUOMO MANNERMAA, *Kaksi rakkautta: Johdatus Lutherin uskonmaailmaan* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1983); TUOMO MANNERMAA, *Kaksi rakkautta: Johdatus Lutherin uskonmaailmaan*, 2nd complete ed. (Helsinki: Suomalainen teologinen kirjallisuusseura, 1995). Published in English as TUOMO MANNERMAA, *Two Kinds of Love. Martin Luther’s Religious World*, trans. Kirsi Irmeli Stjerna, 1st Fortress Press ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010).

¹⁶ MANNERMAA, *Two Kinds of Love*, 37–38; 59–62; 82–84.

¹⁷ TUOMO MANNERMAA, “Hat Luther eine trinitarische Ontologie?” in *Luther und die trinitarische Tradition. Ökumenische und philosophische Perspektiven*, ed. Joachim Heubach (Erlangen: Martin-Luther-Verlag, 1994), 43–60. The original shorter German version (TUOMO MANNERMAA, “Hat Luther eine trinitarische Ontologie?” in *Luther und Ontologie: Das Sein Christi im Glauben als strukturierendes Prinzip der Theologie Luthers: Referate der Fachtagung des Instituts für Systematische Theologie der Universität Helsinki in Zusammenarbeit mit der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg in Helsinki 1.–5.4.1992*, eds. Anja Ghiselli, Kari Kopperi and Vinke Rainer [Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1993], 9–27) and Finnish version (TUOMO MANNERMAA, “Onko Lutherilla Teologian Ontologiaa?” in *Paralleleja: Lutherin teologia ja sen soveltaminen* [Helsinki:

Trinitarian ontology of Luther's early Christmas sermon of 1514.¹⁸ In this sermon Luther examines the whole structure of reality from the perspective of the identity of essence and act, first of all in God, but likewise in all Creation. As background for this idea, Luther uses the Aristotelian notion of the relation of potency (*potentia*) to its object, for example intellection and sense perception, where the potency in a certain way becomes identical with the form it perceives. Mannermaa stresses that according to Luther's view expressed in this sermon, God is the essence itself of the blessed (*ipsa essentia beatorum*).¹⁹ In the third part of the article, Mannermaa discusses the way Luther speaks about faith as a light in which God and the believer become one. He refers to Luther's agreement with the so called Platonic principle of epistemology, *simile simili cognosci* (like is known by like), which Luther explicitly quotes in his writings. According to Mannermaa, union with Christ in faith reflects the ontological aspect of Luther's thought, but this union also has its epistemological side. In accordance with the Platonic principle it is exactly through this union between the believer and Christ that God becomes knowable. In contrast to the two previous works (i.e., *Christ Present in Faith* and *Two Kinds of Love*), in this article, Mannermaa speaks of faith as light: God is the light, by the participation in which a human being is able know God.²⁰ Thus the divine nature becomes the central concept of knowledge instead of human nature, and faith is not portrayed as darkness and trust, but as a cognitive light that is ontologically divine.

The picture that emerges from Mannermaa's writings regarding the cognitive nature of faith thus seems very unclear. Is God known only through the human nature which Christ assumed in the Incarnation, or through the divine nature in which one participates in the union through faith? Is faith a darkness in which Christ is secretly present, or an ontologically divine light making the presence of God known? Or perhaps it is both – but if this is the case, then what is the relation of these two? Mannermaa fails to relate the different views to each other, no doubt because he discusses these different aspects in different works. Neither of Mannermaa's students, Simo Peura in his doctoral dissertation *Mehr als ein Mensch?* (1994)²¹, or Sammeli Juntunen in his dis-

Suomalainen teologinen kirjallisuusseura, 1993], 11–24) lack the discussion on *vestigia trinitatis*.

¹⁸ *Sermo Lutheri In Natali Christi*, WA 1, 20–29.

¹⁹ MANNERMAA, "Trinitarische Ontologie?" in *Luther und die trinitarische Tradition*, 43–53.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 57–60.

²¹ PEURA, *Mehr Als Ein Mensch?*, 200–202 discusses the nature of faith as light, pointing to the connection between the ontological and cognitive aspects in a similar manner as Mannermaa in 1994: God himself is the light through which he is known. But a few pages later, Peura (*ibid.*, 207) likewise states that faith is darkness. Like Mannermaa, Peura does not offer any explanation of the relationship between the two.

sertation *Der Begriff des Nichts bei Luther in den Jahren von 1510 bis 1523* (1996), sheds much light on this subject.²² The only Finnish scholar to clarify the relationship of the light and darkness of faith is Antti Raunio, who discusses the question in his short textbook article *Onko olemassa luterilaista spiritualiteettia?* There Raunio attempts to define faith separately in relation to reason and in relation to the intellect. According to Raunio, faith is gloom and darkness in relation to reason, but for the spiritual intellect, to which the natural light of the reason does not extend, it is also a looking at and beholding of Christ. Thus Luther, according to Raunio, conceives faith as a ray of divinity, which warms up the will up to love, and which illumines the intellect to view the image of God, present to help, inscribed onto the heart of the believer. In the light of faith, the illuminated heart and the illuminating God become one.²³ Raunio's article therefore offers a starting point for approaching the relationship between the light and darkness of faith, and also repeats the idea of the unity of the ontological and cognitive aspects of faith, initially offered by Mannermaa in his *Hat Luther eine trinitarische Ontologie?* Nevertheless, it remains but a short textbook article containing no references and published only in Finnish. It is not a proper academic research text. Furthermore, the significance of the humanity of Christ with regard to the nature of faith as light is left unclear in the text.

As can be seen, the question of the relationship of the ontological and cognitive aspects of faith: i.e., the relation between the union with Christ and the cognitive nature of faith, is to a great degree connected with the Finnish School of Luther interpretation for which the union is a central concept. With their mostly existentialist premises, the older German interpretations of Luther's concept of faith differ significantly from the Finnish approach. Over against the German tendency to read Luther through the lenses of modernity, the Finnish research is characterized by a systematic analysis of concepts and arguments within the text, as well as by the attempt to read Luther in closer contact with his Late Medieval background, building connections to the history of dogma and the history of ideas. For this reason, the work of previous Finnish researchers forms an important background for my own research. However, the above overview shows, that especially with regard to the relationship of the ontological and cognitive aspects of faith, faith as light and darkness, and faith as connected to divinity and humanity, no complete or

²² SAMMELI JUNTUNEN, *Der Begriff des Nichts bei Luther in den Jahren von 1510 bis 1523* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1996), 383–387; 396–400 offers some interesting points regarding the nature of faith. However, according to him, the object of faith is such in its nature, that human cognitive capacities are not suited to approach it. Juntunen therefore portrays the cognitive nature of faith primarily as darkness.

²³ ANTTI RAUNIO, "Onko olemassa luterilaista spiritualiteettia?" in *Johdatus luterilaisen spiritualiteetin teologiaan*, eds. Olli-Pekka Vainio and Jouko M. V. Heikkinen (Helsinki: Kirjapaja, 2003), 11–36; 28–32.

satisfactory explanation on the relationship of these aspects has yet been given in Finnish research on Luther. Nevertheless, the question of how these aspects are related is central for understanding the nature of faith in Luther's theology. The problem, however, is not constituted only by the previous research *per se*, but by the dichotomies between humanity and divinity, darkness and light, absence and presence contained in Luther's own texts which themselves require explanation.²⁴

Moreover, as this study will seek to demonstrate, the ontological nature of the union with Christ, which is of major significance for the cognitive nature of faith, cannot actually be treated separately from the entire ontological substructure of Luther's thought. Luther's whole theological cosmology or understanding of reality (*Wirklichkeitsverständnis*) has to be taken into consideration. This understanding includes the nature of God, the nature of the universe and the nature of the human being, and the way these are related to each other, both concretely and through the general ontological principles reflected by them. The rationale for this is that the notion of faith in the theology of Martin Luther has both the function of cognition of God and the function of an interpretative capacity with regard to the universe. Furthermore, faith as a capacity has its place in the constitution of the human being. As such, the cognitive capacity of faith is therefore related to three different areas of reality: 1) God and 2) the universe, which are in a certain way its objects; and 3) the human person, in whom faith is actualized. The system formed by the relations of these three can be called "theological ontology", "cosmology" or "understanding of reality" – each term meaning approximately the same, but with different connotations.²⁵ The nature of faith as cognition is related to the ontological nature of the system as a whole, as well as to its individual components.

From the above considerations it follows that one must take into account not only the general research on the notion of faith on Luther, but also research on many topics that intersect with the notion of faith. Both of the main chapters of the present study begin with a review of the research immediately relevant to its particular subject.²⁶ Moreover, in the subchapters more litera-

²⁴ See e.g. AWA 2, 106,28–108,5; AWA 2, 139,7–140,26 vs. AWA 2, 200,3–201,15.

²⁵ Of the previous researchers on this subject Hunzinger uses all three terms, whereas Ebeling and Wright prefer the term *Wirklichkeitverständnis*, or understanding of reality. In Finnish research the term ontology (Fin. "*ontologia*", Ger. "*Ontologie*") is often used. In this work I use the term 'metaphysics' to denote a strictly defined system, 'ontology' as a broader term emphasizing how the concept of being is understood, 'cosmology' when the structural analogies between God, the universe (major cosmos) and the composition of the human being (minor cosmos) is emphasized, and 'understanding of reality' to denote the general nature of ontological and cosmological thought.

²⁶ See chapters 2.1 The Question of Luther's Platonism and 3.1 Faith and Illumination in Previous Research.

ture relevant to each subchapter will be introduced. Regarding the view of the nature of God, especially Mannermaa is utilized, but also the previous research on Luther's relation to mystical theology and the concept of *deus absconditus*, as well as research connected to history of ideas in Medieval Trinitarian theology.²⁷ In relation to the question of the general nature of Luther's ontology or understanding of reality, the issue is approached based on the Platonism thesis of August Wilhelm Hunzinger and its critical reception by Gerhard Ebeling, Wilfrid Joest, Steven Ozment and William J. Wright, as well as the findings of Edward Cranx, Sammeli Juntunen and Leif Grane.²⁸ In theological anthropology the studies of Lauri Haikola, Herbert Olsson and Eero Huovinen are utilized side-by-side with the critical examination of Joest and Ozment.²⁹ Regarding Luther's understanding of faith, much of the previous research has major limitations: they wholly omit the notion of faith as illumination. Moreover, some of the prominent works focus only on one source (especially the *Dictata super Psalterium*), not on the entire period of Luther's early lectures, which due to the limited nature of the research mate-

²⁷ See MANNERMAA, "Trinitarische Ontologie?" in *Luther und die trinitarische Tradition*, 43–60. Discussion of Trinitarian theology can be found in chapters 2.2.1 to 2.2.2 and discussion of mystical theology and the *deus absconditus* in chapter 2.2.4.

²⁸ AUGUST WILHELM HUNZINGER, *Luthers Neuplatonismus in der Psalmenvorlesung von 1513–1516* (Naumburg a.S.: Lippert, 1905); GERHARD EBELING, "Die Anfänge von Luthers Hermeneutik," *ZThK* 48 (1951), 172–230; WILFRIED JOEST, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967); STEVEN E. OZMENT, *Homo Spiritualis: A Comparative Study of the Anthropology of Johannes Tauler, Jean Gerson and Martin Luther (1509–16) in the Context of their Theological Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969); WILLIAM JOHN WRIGHT, *Martin Luther's Understanding of God's Two Kingdoms: A Response to the Challenge of Skepticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010); FERDINAND EDWARD CRANX, *An Essay on the Development of Luther's Thought on Justice, Law, and Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959); JUNTUNEN, *Der Begriff des Nichts*; SAMMELI JUNTUNEN, "Luther and Metaphysics: What is the Structure of Being according to Luther?" in *Union with Christ. The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 129–160; LEIF GRANE, "Christus finis omnium. Eine Studie zu Luthers Erster Psalmenvorlesung," in *Caritas Dei: Beiträge zum Verständnis Luthers und der gegenwärtigen Ökumene: Festschrift für Tuomo Mannermaa zum 60. Geburtstag*, eds. Oswald Bayer, Robert W. Jenson and Simo Knuuttila (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1997), 171–191. See also the research history in chapter 2.1.

²⁹ See LAURI HAIKOLA, *Studien zu Luther und zum Luthertum* (Uppsala: Lundequistska bokhandeln, 1958); HERBERT OLSSON, *Schöpfung, Vernunft und Gesetz in Luthers Theologie* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universität, 1971); EERO HUOVINEN, *Kuolematomuudesta osallinen: Martti Lutherin kuoleman teologian ekumeeninen perusongelma* (Helsinki: Suomalainen teologinen kirjallisuusseura, 1981); EERO HUOVINEN, *Fides infantium: Martin Luthers Lehre vom Kinderglauben* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1997); EERO HUOVINEN, "Der Unsterblichkeit teilhaftig. Das ökumenische Grundproblem in der Theologie Luthers," in *Baptism, Church and Ecumenism: Collected Essays: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 2009), 124–142.

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