

1: Review of Robert Reymond: Contending For The Faith

In his article, "Aquinas Was a Protestant," which appeared in the May issue of Tabletalk, the popular monthly devotional publication of Ligonier Ministries, Inc., edited by R. C. Sproul, Jr., Dr. John H. Gerstner declared that Thomas Aquinas () "was a medieval Protestant teaching the Reformation doctrine of justification by.

John Gerstner The following is taken from Dr. Predestination will not bring it. Providence cannot produce it. It does not rest on foreknowledge, divine decrees, or even the atonement itself. Eternal life is Christ dwelling in His righteousness in the soul of the justified person. So eternal life is union with Jesus Christ. And the word for that union with Jesus Christ is faith. The sinner comes to Him, rests in Him, trusts in Him, is one with Him, abides in Him and this is life because it never, ever, ends. The united soul abides in the Vine eternally. This is the heart of the Bible. This is the heart of the gospel. This is the heart of Christianity. This is the heart of the saint. This is the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are the reasons it was the heart of the Reformation; and this is the reason the contemporary attempt of some Protestants to unite with those who do not even claim this heart of the life of Jesus Christ is to commit spiritual suicide. No lover of Jesus Christ can consent to this apostasy. It is coming to Him. It is casting all your cares on Him. No text of Holy Scripture tells it quite as well as Romans 4: The justified one trusts not in himself but in another: The justified one does not have faith in his faith. You and I are a minus quantity, and all fallen mankind with us. Justification can only be by faith alone. Faith is workless, worthless. According to Roman Catholicism, those works, so far from being worthless, are worth eternal life. They entitle a person who has perfected them to nothing less than eternal heaven. The audience was largely Protestant. I guess he would have appeared to evangelicals to be bragging. Then, and only then, did he admit how good Roman Catholic works are thought to be. And they sometimes fool themselves when they are more evangelical than a Romanist can honestly be. Romanists are saved by their works which come from grace, according to their teaching. It is not the grace but the works which come from it that save them! If a person believes that grace saves him he is a Protestant and belongs with us. He is in the wrong church if he believes the evangelical way and is not witnessing honestly. A dishonest person can never be saved, be he Protestant or Roman. I remarked that if that were so he was also the most dishonest man in the whole area. We have many Protestants today who are claiming to be one with Romanists as fellow evangelicals. Unless such Protestants are utterly ignorant of the meaning of evangelicalism, they cannot be Christians, much less Protestants or Roman Catholics. Labels are supposed to tell contents. So Scripture is teaching us that the faith which saves is not a work. It has no spiritual value in itself. Strictly speaking, the true Christian church does not teach justification by faith. It teaches justification by Christ. Where does the faith come in? It is simply the uniting with, joining with, becoming one with, the Lord Jesus Christ. A wife becomes a co-heir of all that belongs to her husband simply by being his wife, by her union with him in marriage. That is the fact: There is no virtue or merit in that. She simply possesses what now belongs to her by that relationship. He teaches the justificatio impii, the justification of the impious or wicked, just as Paul teaches in Romans 4: It is justification by Jesus Christ alone. It is His righteousness, which He achieved for His people by fulfilling all righteousness, that becomes heirs as His bride. Romanists refer to the righteousness which Christ works into the life of the believer or infuses into him in his own living and behavior. It is an imputed righteousness not an infused righteousness. It is a gift of God versus an accomplishment of man. These two righteousnesses are as different as righteousnesses could conceivably be. It does come down to the way it has been popularly stated for the last four and a half centuries: That is not a technically accurate way to state this vital difference, but it points to the truth. The Protestant trusts Christ to save him and the Catholic trusts Christ to help him save himself. It is faith versus works. Or, as the Spirit of God puts it in Romans 4: And we want Romanists to be saved. We agree with Roman friends -salvation is by grace. That is the reason it must be by faith. The works that come from grace must prove grace but they cannot be grace. They may come from, be derivative of, a consequence of, but they cannot be identified with it. Faith is merely union with Christ who is our righteousness, our grace, our salvation. Christ is our righteousness. Our righteousness does not result from His righteousness, it is His righteousness. Faith is Not a Work, but it is

Never without Work - Romanists have always tried to hang antinomianism on Protestantism. If this were a true charge it would be a fatal one. If Protestantism thought that a sinner could be saved without becoming godly, it would be an absolute, damning lie. And He saves His people not only from the guilt of sin but from its dominating power as well. If a believer is not changed, he is not a believer. No one can have Christ as Savior for one moment when he is not Lord as well. We can never say too often: Why does Rome continue to make that centuries-long misrepresentation of justification by faith alone? First, she knows that faith without works is dead. Let me explain, therefore, once again what the Protestant biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone apart from works means. Justification with God is apart from the merit of works. That does not mean that justification is apart from the existence of works. Christianity teaches justification apart from the merit of works. Easy-believism teaches justification apart from the existence of works. Faith without the existence of works is dead. Faith without the merit of works is antinomianism. Faith with the merit of works is legalism. Strong Baptist Theologian, uses the analogy of a locomotive engine, its cars, and couplings. All the power to move the cars is in the locomotive. None of the power is in the couplings. Yet the locomotive, with all its power, cannot move one car without the coupling. The mills of the gods grind slowly but they grind exceedingly fine. In other words, justification by faith alone seems to violate the built-in moral perception that each person must pay for his own bad deeds. He cannot be let off without penalty. God is not a respecter of persons. A moral being does not play favorites. So far is justification by faith alone from violating this principle that it honors it more than damnation itself. But let me be more explicit. God cannot die in His own infinite, spiritual, unchangeable, eternal nature, but He could and did die in the real human nature to which He united Himself for the very purpose of suffering and dying so that His people need never suffer ever at the hand of a holy and just God. Surely, mercy and truth kissed each other in perfect justice.

2: Luther: The Rest of the Story, Part III: Through Open Doors Into Paradise - The Coming Home Network

In his article, "Aquinas Was a Protestant," which appeared in the May issue of Tabletalk, the popular monthly devotional publication of Ligonier Ministries, Inc., edited by R. C. Sproul, Jr., Dr. John H. Gerstner¹ declares that Thomas Aquinas () "was a medieval Protestant teaching the Reformation doctrine of justification by.

Download the Kindle version of this review. But in spite of these doctrinal deficiencies, Dr. In the teachings of Thomas Aquinas we have, with one or two exceptions [the Protestant doctrine of justification not being one of them-RLR] the doctrinal tenets of the Latin Church in their perfect exposition as we have them in the Decrees of the Council of Trent in their final statement He who understands Thomas understands the mediaeval theology at its best and will be in possession of the doctrinal system of the Roman Church No distinction was made by the mediaeval theologians between the doctrine of justification and the doctrine of sanctification, such as is made by Protestant theologians. Justification was treated as a process of making the sinner righteous, and not as a judicial sentence by which he was declared to be righteous Faith is a virtue, not a justifying principle, and is treated at the side of hope and love. I say again, all this is quite startling, coming as it did from a renowned Reformed church historian who knew and accepted the Protestant doctrine of justification. Gerstner went on to fault in quick succession several Protestant theologians by name for what he represented as their sub-biblical view of justification. Now one could agree with Dr. Gerstner here if he had gone on to say that what God did to the sinner in justifying him was to constitute him righteous in His sight by the divine act of imputation, but this is not what he said. Rather, what God does to the sinner, Dr. Gerstner criticized as illogical J. But it is Dr. Gerstner who is confused here. While faith in Jesus Christ, as a Spirit-wrought mental act, is surely a subjective experience, it is not justification per se and it is not what the Bible means by justification. Gerstner could not deny that Aquinas wrote in his Summa Theologica, ii, 1, question , article 12, that First, according as man is made just by becoming possessed of the habit of justice; secondly, according as he does works of justice, so that in this sense justification is nothing else than the execution of justice. Now justice, like the other virtues, may denote either the acquired or the infused virtue The acquired virtue is caused by works; but the infused virtue [of the execution of justice] is caused by God Himself through His grace. The latter is true justice, of which we are speaking now, and in respect of which a man is said to be just before God, according to Rom. It was directly from the Schoolmen, including Aquinas, 12 that Trent derived its teaching of the condign and congruous merit of good works. It is not McGrath, therefore, who has failed to distinguish carefully the Protestant doctrine of justification from regeneration, faith and sanctification. Regrettably, it was Dr. Gerstner who confused all these doctrines when he wrote: In this act [! Of course, what Dr. Gerstner hoped thereby to combat Antinomianism. His concern about Antinomianism was proper, but the way he made his case 1 sacrificed the Biblical meaning of justification on the altar of sanctification and works; 2 was an erroneous reading of Aquinas; 16 and 3 confused distinct soteriological concepts that must always be distinguished in theological writing for the sake of accurate communication of the redemptive truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures. No, Aquinas was not a medieval Protestant teaching the Biblical and Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone. Rather, Aquinas taught that justification was the making of the sinner righteous by means of the sacraments of baptism and the Mass as well as by acts of penance. In fact, Rome endorsed the theology of Aquinas not exclusively, of course , and the Reformation was indeed necessary because it did. The neglect of Paul in the middle ages was not the result of a direct denial of his significance. Thomas Aquinas has left us a commentary on Romans. But one need only lay this commentary alongside of that of Luther to become aware of the profound difference between them. The words of Paul were exegeted by Roman Catholic scholars, but they were not allowed to function in their original, radically evangelical power. It was first in the Reformation that the old words of Paul came through again in unprecedented religious clarity. They unleashed a storm over Europe, and yet brought peace and comfort to a generation of restless souls. Gerstner this response to his article and requested that he carefully peruse it and indicate to me any place where he thought I may have misrepresented his view or had betrayed my main objective-to speak the truth in love. Gerstner entered into the presence of his Lord in

March before he had the opportunity to respond. I deeply regret that I and my readers will not have the benefit of his reactions. An earlier version of this essay appeared in the Westminster Theological Journal, Volume 59, , pages Gerstner would have disagreed with Carl F. Justification he depicted in terms of operative divine grace transmitted in the sacraments. Eerdmans, reproduction of the edition , V, , , Blackwell,], 82 also writes: The concept appeared to provide a solution to a dilemma which the theological renaissance of the twelfth century had highlighted: Underlying the implication of a created habit of grace in justification is a particular concept of causality. Gerstner said here in so many words that Aquinas believed that the soul would first have to be justified in the Protestant sense before God would infuse it with sanctifying grace. I am unaware of any place in his writings where Aquinas states this. Rome regularly denies as a matter of course what Dr. Gerstner said here of Aquinas. It has been argued, as does H. Denifle Luther und Luthertum in der erste Entwicklung [Mainz: Encyclopaedia Britannica, , Yet they form the foundation of the papacy, and on them it rests to this very day. For this is what every monk imagines: By observing the sacred duties of my order I can earn the grace of congruence, but by the works I do after I have received this grace I can accumulate a merit so great that it will not only be enough to bring me to eternal life but enough to sell and give it to others. The works of others are of benefit to no one, not to themselves either; for the statement stands: An Anthology [Saint Louis: Concordia,], II, Stranger things have happened in church history, I suppose, but I cannot think of one offhand. One may be pardoned were he to conclude that it is far more likely that it was Dr. Gerstner who was misreading Aquinas. Banner of Truth,], I, Berkouwer, Faith and Justification Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, , emphasis supplied. The Trinity Foundation hereby grants permission to all readers to download, print, and distribute on paper or electronically any of its Reviews, provided that each reprint bear our copyright notice, current addresses, and telephone numbers, and provided that all such reproductions are distributed to the public without charge.

3: CAMPONTHIS: The Nature of Justifying Faith by the last great Puritan, Dr. John Gerstner

John H. Gerstner wrote an article for the May issue of Tabletalk entitled "Aquinas Was a Protestant" Prof. Gerstner pointed out not only what a fine Christian thinker Aquinas was but also why he should be regarded as a protoprotestant, because he seemed to share Luther's understand of the doctrine of justification.

King Arthur--Rewriting History Dr. A film about a true Hercules by the name of Samson sent by the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, approx. And when they sacrificed a young goat to the Angel of the Lord and He went up in the flame, "And Manoah said to his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God! Samson had miraculous strength and was a Nazirite. Samson did have a weakness for beautiful women, especially Delilah. She found out his secret: His strength was from his long hair. Of course, his true strength came from Yahweh. Yes, this is a true story that occurred in time and space. The Ten Commandments by Cecil B. DeMilles in starring Charlton Heston is a classic. Based on a true story about Moses approx. Moses was adopted by the Egyptian royal family and raised as a Prince in Egypt, but was born to Hebrew parents from the tribe of Levi. Yahweh used him to free the Israelites who were slaves in Egypt for years. The films above can be purchased at various stores such as Amazon. Recommended that teenagers see these classic movies. Also, see book entitled "The Trinity" by Dr. Yes, the Hebrew teaches a distinction in the Godhead, but only One true God. This is why they were amazed that they were not struck dead for seeing God v. They did not understand that, while to see God in His essential glory would mean instant death, to see God in a form of a Man did not mean death see page in The Trinity book. Why has the Evangelical Church turned to counseling based on psychology and therapy whose ideas came from Sigmund Freud, which is contrary to the Bible? Christian psychologists justify visualizing "Jesus" as a necessary "inner healing" therapeutic technique for dealing with "traumas" that are supposedly buried in the unconscious. This is nothing more than shamanism witchcraft --visualizing "inner guides" that are also used in self-improvement techniques. What happened to prayer, repentance, obedience, faith, filling of the Spirit, etc.? Did you know that some pastors today are taking over churches and church bank accounts and then selling the land and the church? See the following website: The Perfect Peace Plan. Tal lived in England and then moved to India where he was converted. He tried to find meaning in life by adhering to Hinduism--it demanded all-or-nothing commitment to finish the course of sadhana. His quest for enlightenment failed until the true God of the universe saved him.

4: Romanism, Dispensationalism, and the Soteriology of Dr. John Gerstner - Called to Communion

Robert Reymond, "Dr. John Gerstner on Thomas Aquinas as a Protestant," Westminster Theological Journal 59 no. 1 (): A closer analysis of Aquinas's exegetical reasons for his doctrine of justification.

Between and he lectured through the Psalms and St. It was during this time that Luther discovered something in St Paul, something that changed everything for him "and for the Church of the late Middle Ages as well. Wrestling with Romans Luther was struggling with the meaning of St. For I am not ashamed of the gospel: My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him. Is it good news that God is going to condemn me as unrighteous? For Luther, this realization came like a flash of light from heaven: A few years later Luther would use this very image in one of his most famous works, *The Freedom of the Christian*. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. His eventual rejection of the entire sacerdotal and sacramental system of the Catholic Church was rooted in this one thought: Because James says in 2: Its authority is not great enough to cause me to abandon the doctrine of faith "If they [referring to other teachers] will not agree to my interpretations, then I shall make rubble of it. I almost feel like throwing Jimmy into the stove. It is flatly against St. I do not admit that my doctrine can be judged by anyone, even the angels. I have a book in my library titled *Justification by Faith Alone*: In this book a number of contemporary Protestant scholars contribute chapters on various aspects of the doctrine of sola fide. John Gerstner writes about the conversion to the Catholic Faith of his former seminary student Scott Hahn. Because he believed that no one could be saved who had understood, and then rejected, justification by faith alone. Instead of leaving the Protestant Church, [Scott] was leaving the lost world into which he was born "and from which he was never actually separated "for the false church of Rome. Being in the Church of Rome is the same as being lost? In their thinking only two options exist: Then and only then does God receive all the glory for the work of redemption. This is how serious Protestants think about this issue. When Catholics walk forward at Mass to receive Communion, their hearts instinctively resonate with this prayer of St. I come sick to the doctor of life, unclean to fountain of mercy, blind to the radiance of eternal light, and poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth. Catholics know it is grace, from first to last! The difference between Rome and the Reformers is not theological hair-splitting. A right understanding of justification by faith is the very foundation of the gospel. You cannot go wrong at this point without corrupting every other doctrine as well. I know it well. I was taught it as a new Christian. It was believed and taught at the Bible college and seminary I attended. For years my favorite theologians were men who believed and taught it, such as Luther, Calvin, the puritans John Owen, John Bunyan, and Jonathan Edwards. I also believed it and taught it. But, over time, I began to have questions. A Life of Martin Luther, p. To subscribe to his personal email list and browse his many recorded talks on Catholic apologetics, visit his website at kennethhensley.com.

5: The Trinity Foundation

In this excerpt from John Gerstner's Primitive Theology, Dr. Gerstner carefully sketches the basic differences between Evangelicalism and Roman Catholicism, focusing on the differing views on justification. Over the coming days we will highlight this unique resource. Several years ago, a.

History of the Doctrine of Justification - by Dr. There is no new theology. There are new books published every month. John Gerstner explores the history behind the formulation of the doctrine. But was that the historic Christian view? One may say generally of the history of the doctrine of justification that solafideanism justification-by-faith-alone-ism was taught implicitly, but not explicitly, from the beginning of the church. That is, it was known in the early church that salvation was by faith alone, but not until the sixteenth century was the church called upon to define that teaching more precisely. Those in the church who had quietly apostasized opposed this essential truth adherents of Tridentine Roman Catholicism , while the faithful Protestants , affirmed it. The Reformers defined and refined the doctrine in the fires of controversy. Article VI of the Confession speaks of solafideanism: Many historical theologians interpret him as confusing justification with sanctification, of which justification is merely a part. This is not accurate, however. Though Augustine finds justification and sanctification inseparable, they are not indistinguishable. Augustinian justification leads into sanctification, but is not confused with it. Confession of Christ is efficacious for the remission of sins. We are justified by the blood of Christ, and we have no merits which are not the gifts of God. Of course, faith is active through love *fides quae caritate operatur* , but this does not imply that justification is on the basis of love. Before we leave Augustine, a relatively recent Roman Catholic work requires attention. Bergauer shows clearly that Luther disagreed not only with the Epistle of James but with Augustine as well. Bergauer also notes that in so doing, Luther was consciously departing from Augustine as well. We agree with Bergauer that Luther erred with respect to James and Augustine. The Reformer erred, apparently because he could not find explicit forensic language in either James or Augustine. But Adolf Harnack insisted that if the medieval church had followed its favorite teacher, Thomas Aquinas, on justification, the Reformation would not have been necessary. The great earlier Scholastic theologian, Anselm, was also solafideian. He wrote his belief in a tract for the consolation of the dying, quoted by A. Dost thou believe that the Lord Jesus died for thee? Dost thou thank him for his passion and death? I do thank him. Dost thou believe that thou canst not be saved except by his death? The above quotation gives us reason to believe that the New Testament doctrine of justification by faith was implicitly, if not explicitly, held by many pious souls through all the ages of papal darkness. Thus medieval Scholastics still taught justification as an instantaneous act. It was not until the Council of Trent that justification was officially confirmed as a process based on human merit derived through divine grace. Out went all human merit from indulgences to works of supererogation. God imputes this faith for righteousness in his own sight. Thus, he who was innocent became guilty of depravity, while we who were depraved became innocent. Calvin, in his Institutes, citing Augustine and Peter Lombard, taught the same doctrine. Though the Genevan saw union with Christ preceding faith whereas for Luther it followed faith. However, this does not justify Boehl in saying that later Reformed theologians did so identify and thus approached the Lutheran heretic, Osiander. Nevertheless, John Tillotson;, Samuel Clarke, and some other Anglicans did introduce Tridentine thinking into the Church of England by confusing the inseparability of faith and works with the meritoriousness of each. This same tension toward meritorious righteousness in and by the justified threatened Puritanism from the beginning. That Anglican John Donne and Congregationalist John Owen , champions of solafideanism, admitted infused righteousness while denying any merit in it shows their sensitivity to the problem. Puritanism could admit " in fact, insist upon " sanctification infused righteousness as strenuously as imputed righteousness. It was inseparably connected with it. The one thing sanctification did not do, for the Puritans, was supplant justification. As we saw, Owen did not even hesitate to speak of *justitia inhaerens*. Righteousness was wrought in a man because it was first imputed to him. The evidence that it was imputed to him was its being wrought in him. There is a sense in which Puritans saw righteousness as being wrought-in before being imputed " to. This was the prior union with Christ as the

psychological basis of justification. Thus the foundation of imputation became union. The offense which some found in solafideanism was that it taught acceptance by faith only. If this is so, the Arminians argued, an unsanctified man could go to heaven, and that could never be. They were partly right, since an unsanctified man can never go to heaven " without holiness. But they were partly wrong, for one justified by faith alone is not justified by the faith that is alone. Faith is inseparably connected with works, or sanctification, or inherent righteousness. Once again, the error was in a failure to understand the truth. A correct objection was based on an incorrect apprehension. How often had the Reformers proclaimed with James and Paul that faith without works was dead. Justification without sanctification did not exist. As we have seen, solafideans were not opposed to inherent righteousness except as a justifying righteousness, which was precisely what Rome claimed it to be. The orthodox were as opposed " more opposed " to Antinomianism than the unorthodox. Not understanding that solafideanism gave works a proper role, Arminians found an improper role for them. That is, they saw the work of Christ as satisfying God with the imperfect works of men. Our inadequate righteousness was made acceptable through Christ. Commenting on Arminianism, A. It amounts to a pun on the word impute. The imputation of faith in this contrast means regarding faith as acceptable which, by legal definition, it is not. So it became a lapse into justification by works which were not even works.

Ligonier Ministries recently posted an excerpt from the late John Gerstner's Primer on Justification.. This article, taken together with things he has written elsewhere concerning the nature of faith, manifests an interesting and important inconsistency in Dr. Gerstner's thinking about justification.

The Nature of Justifying Faith - by Dr. There is no new theology. There are new books published every month. John Gerstner explains what it means to have true justifying faith. Predestination will not bring it. Providence cannot produce it. It does not rest on foreknowledge, divine decrees, or even the atonement itself. Eternal life is Christ dwelling in His righteousness in the soul of the justified person. So eternal life is union with Jesus Christ. And the word for that union with Jesus Christ is faith. The sinner comes to Him, rests in Him, trusts in Him, is one with Him, abides in Him; and this is life because it never, ever, ends. The united soul abides in the Vine eternally. This is the heart of the Bible. This is the heart of the gospel. This is the heart of Christianity. This is the heart of the saint. This is the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are the reasons it was the heart of the Reformation; and this is the reason the contemporary attempt of some Protestants to unite with those who do not even claim this heart of the life of Jesus Christ is to commit spiritual suicide. No lover of Jesus Christ can consent to this apostasy. It is coming to Him. It is casting all your cares on Him. We all know the old Greek acrostic for fish: I might coin a new acrostic on the Greek word for faith pistis: No text of Holy Scripture tells it quite as well as Romans 4: Notice how many different ways 7 this Scripture teaches justification by faith alone in one verse: The justified one trusts not in himself but in another: The justified one does not have faith in his faith. You and I are a minus quantity, and all fallen mankind with us. Justification can only be by faith alone. Faith is workless, worthless. According to Roman Catholicism, those works, so far from being worthless, are worth eternal life. They entitle a person who has perfected them to nothing less than eternal heaven. The audience was largely Protestant. I guess he would have appeared to evangelicals to be bragging. Then, and only then, did he admit how good Roman Catholic works are thought to be. And they sometimes fool themselves when they are more evangelical than a Romanist can honestly be. Romanists are saved by their works which come from grace, according to their teaching. It is not the grace but the works which come from it that save them! If a person believes that grace saves him he is a Protestant and belongs with us. He is in the wrong church if he believes the evangelical way and is not witnessing honestly. A dishonest person can never be saved, be he Protestant or Roman. I remarked that if that were so he was also the most dishonest man in the whole area. We have many Protestants today who are claiming to be one with Romanists as fellow evangelicals. Unless such Protestants are utterly ignorant of the meaning of evangelicalism, they cannot be Christians, much less Protestants or Roman Catholics. Labels are supposed to tell contents. If this is true of bottles of medicine that concern only this life, how much more of the medicine of immortality " the contents of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Evangelicalism means the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to " not infused into " the believer. So Scripture is teaching us that the faith which saves is not a work. It has no spiritual value in itself. Strictly speaking, the true Christian church does not teach justification by faith. It teaches justification by Christ. Where does the faith come in? It is simply the uniting with, joining with, becoming one with, the Lord Jesus Christ. A wife becomes a co-heir of all that belongs to her husband simply by being his wife, by her union with him in marriage. That is the fact: There is no virtue or merit in that. She simply possesses what now belongs to her by that relationship. He teaches the justificatio impii, the justification of the impious or wicked, just as Paul teaches in Romans 4: It is justification by Jesus Christ alone. It is His righteousness, which He achieved for His people by fulfilling all righteousness, that becomes theirs as His bride. Romanists refer to the righteousness which Christ works into the life of the believer or infuses into him in his own living and behavior. It is an imputed righteousness not an infused righteousness. It is a gift of God versus an accomplishment of man. These two righteousnesses are as different as righteousnesses could conceivably be. It does come down to the way it has been popularly stated for the last four and a half centuries: That is not a technically accurate way to state this vital difference, But it points to the truth. The Protestant trusts Christ to save him and the Catholic trusts Christ to help him save

himself. It is faith versus works. Or, as the Spirit of God puts it in Romans 4: And we want Romanists to be saved. We agree with Roman friends "salvation is by grace. That is the reason it must be by faith. The works that come from grace must prove grace but they cannot be grace. They may come from, be derivative of, a consequence of, but they cannot be identified with it. Faith is merely union with Christ who is our righteousness, our grace, our salvation. Christ is our righteousness. Our righteousness does not result from His righteousness, it is His righteousness. If this were a true charge it would be a fatal one. If Protestantism thought that a sinner could be saved without becoming godly, it would be an absolute, damning lie. And He saves His people not only from the guilt of sin but from its dominating power as well. If a believer is not changed, he is not a believer. No one can have Christ as Savior for one moment when he is not Lord as well. We can never say too often: Why does Rome continue to make that centuries-long misrepresentation of justification by faith alone? First, she knows that faith without works is dead. Let me explain, therefore, once again what the Protestant biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone apart from works means. Justification with God is apart from the merit of works. That does not mean that justification is apart from the existence of works. Christianity teaches justification apart from the merit of works. Easy-believism teaches justification apart from the existence of works. Faith without the existence of works is dead. Faith without the merit of works is antinomianism. Faith with the merit of works is legalism. Strong Baptist Theologian, uses the analogy of a locomotive engine, its cars, and couplings. All the power to move the cars is in the locomotive. None of the power is in the couplings. Yet the locomotive, with all its power, cannot move one car without the coupling. Justification is by Works "in One Sense With all the clear biblicality and truth of justification by faith alone, there is still in human nature a gnawing sense of something lacking here. The mills of the gods grind slowly but they grind exceedingly fine.

7: The Nature of Justifying Faith – by Dr. John H. Gerstner () | A Puritan's Mind

Josef Pieper was a Roman Catholic, Thomistic philosopher who said Aquinas is considered by the Roman Church to be doctor communis or doctor universalis, which means the general and universal teacher.² Dr. John Gerstner claimed, at least as it pertained to justification by faith alone, Aquinas was a Protestant, though Gerstner admitted Aquinas.

Since then, many lay Evangelicals have understandably wondered how a faithful Protestant could in good conscience seek wisdom from a man whose writings were used to condemn his own faith tradition. I was delighted, since any attention given to the Angelic Doctor will inevitably encourage more people to read his writings—even when that attention is negative. More importantly, I was happy to see Rev. To be sure, this can be said of any outstanding theologian. To offer just a few examples: The solution a Reformed theologian ought to adopt when reading someone in his own tradition is to presume his doctrine is within the bounds of orthodoxy until he is absolutely convinced via undeniable evidence that heresy has been committed. I believe this for two reasons: In short, Jesus himself endorsed the courtesy rule! A second reason I adopt a presumption of innocence while reading the works of my Reformed brothers is that they are my brothers. I would no more accuse a member of my spiritual family of heresy, apart from undeniable evidence to the contrary, than I would a member of my own physical family! And, in fact, reasonable interpretations of their heterodox expressions have shown their consistency with orthodoxy. What offended me about Rev. While I will reiterate my conviction that there is much in Aquinas that must be shunned by a Reformed thinker e. How can God be immense and immanent as well as transcendent if he is not altogether simple? How can God absolutely decree everything that comes to pass if he is not altogether unchanging which presupposes simplicity and omniscient? Roberts writes, Aquinas did not believe in Sola Scriptura. The purpose Aquinas had in writing [the] Summa Theologica was to combine the theology of the Scripture with the theological systems of the ancient Greek philosophers. There are times he begins his investigation of a theological issue with a quote [sic] of Scripture though more rarely than one would like. More frequently, he will begin with a quote [sic] from Augustine. Yet, on other occasions he will start with a quote [sic] from one of the ancient philosophers. For one who believes in Sola Scriptura, it was very disconcerting to read such an approach to theological issues. The ancient philosophers are in no wise on the same ground as the inspired authors of Scripture. First, a brief glance at the writings of Aquinas is sufficient to show that he would never place any author on a par with holy writ. In fact, and contrary to many Catholic and Protestant experts on Thomas, I believe Aquinas did affirm the material sufficiency of Scripture, which is the heart of sola scriptura. Historically, material sufficiency is the doctrine stating that everything necessary for salvation is taught in Scripture; formal sufficiency is the doctrine stating that anyone can read the Scriptures and understand what is required of them to be saved i. And, right at the beginning of his famous Summa, while addressing the question as to whether sacred doctrine i. This [sacred] doctrine [or theology] is especially based upon arguments from authority, inasmuch as its principles are obtained by revelation: Nor does this take away from the dignity of this doctrine, for although the argument from authority based on human reason is the weakest, yet the argument from authority based on divine revelation is the strongest. But sacred doctrine makes use even of human reason, not, indeed, to prove faith for thereby the merit of faith would come to an end, but to make clear other things that are put forward in this doctrine. Since therefore grace does not destroy nature but perfects it, natural reason should minister to faith as the natural bent of the will ministers to charity. Hence the Apostle says: Hence sacred doctrine makes use also of the authority of philosophers in those questions in which they were able to know the truth by natural reason, as Paul quotes a saying of Aratus: Nevertheless, sacred doctrine makes use of these authorities as extrinsic and probable arguments; but properly uses the authority of the canonical Scriptures as an incontrovertible proof, and the authority of the doctors of the Church as one that may properly be used, yet merely as probable. For our faith rests upon the revelation made to the apostles and prophets who wrote the canonical books, and not on the revelations if any such there are made to other doctors. Hence Augustine says Epis. But other authors I so read as not to deem everything in their works to be true, merely on account of their having so thought and written, whatever may have been their holiness and learning. Indeed, if the Dumb Ox is

to be criticized for quoting non-Christian scholars, will Roberts critique the Apostle Paul for doing the same? Along the way he cast off his former errors—one of which was concerning salvation that was very close to the Pelagian heresy, which he so effectively combated for the good of the church. Pelagius, like Aquinas and the younger Augustine, also sought to synthesize Scripture with the systems of the ancient philosophers. Many of the heresies of the early church were from the writings of the philosophers, particularly concerning the false ideas on the will of man. Because Aquinas tried to synthesize Scripture and Augustinianism with the teachings of the philosophers even as Pelagius had also tried to do, it is more appropriate to classify Thomism as Semi-pelagianism [sic]. Roberts here confuses synthesis with syncretism. However, these terms need not be synonymous. Syncretism is the act of fusing together different and even contradictory modes of thought into one gigantic stew, wherein the original meaning of all of them becomes lost. An ancient example of syncretism is Manichaeism, which combined elements of Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism into yet a fifth belief-system that contradicted the other four; and a modern example of religious syncretism is Sikhism, which is the fusion of various Hindu philosophies with Islam. Synthesis, on the other hand, can be defined as the attempt to parse out the good and bad elements of a particular perspective and then combine it with a larger whole. To be sure, some philosophers, such as Hegel, have attempted a synthesis whereby they sought to bring together different modes of thought that were admittedly contradictory—without parsing out the bad elements of each in an attempt to reconcile them. Barth, Brunner, and other dialectical theologians of the 20th century sought to do the same. Indeed, neither Hegel nor Barth nor Brunner believed the laws of logic applied to God, and so their method was to combine various contradictory notions into their respective systems and hold them in tension. Far from trying to show that the Bible is saying what the pagans were saying, Thomas accepted the word of a pagan only insofar as that thinker agreed with Scripture; but he was also insistent that, whenever a particular philosophy contradicts Scripture, holy writ cannot be broken. Aristotle is clearly a favorite pagan philosopher of Thomas—much in the same way Calvin was fond of quoting Cicero. However, Aquinas was quick to disagree with Aristotle whenever his view of God contradicted the Bible. As many Thomists would agree, Thomas was doing little more than placing the truths of Augustine in the terms of Aristotle. Pelagius rejected three Augustinian doctrines that Aquinas affirmed—namely, unconditional election, particular redemption, and the doctrine of effectual calling. Roberts admits the former. Two things are requisite for faith. First, that the things which are of faith be proposed to man: The second thing requisite for faith is the assent of the believer to the things which are proposed to him. Accordingly, as regards the first of these, faith must needs be from God. To some, indeed, they are revealed by God immediately, as those things which were revealed to the apostles and the prophets, while to some they are proposed by God in sending preachers of the faith—this according to Rom. How shall they preach, unless they are sent? As regards the second, viz. Hence, we must assert another internal cause, which moves man inwardly to assent to matters of faith. But this is false, for, since man, by assenting to matters of faith, is raised above his nature, this must needs accrue to him from some supernatural principle moving him inwardly: Therefore faith, as regards the assent which is the chief act of faith, is from God moving man inwardly by grace. In light of what we have just said, the reader can imagine my horror while reading Rev. In modern parlance, a person can lose his salvation. For the person who does lose his salvation, he was never elect in the first place cf. First, Aquinas did not believe in the great Protestant principle of Sola Fide—faith alone. Concerning the gospel, he wrote: There is a two-fold element in the Law of the Gospel. There is the chief element, viz. And as to this, the New Law justifies. The other element of the Evangelical Law is secondary: And as to this, the New Law does not justify Summa Theol. When we turn to the section of the Summa being quoted, we find the following words of Augustine: Why would Roberts leave these words of Augustine out? I am not sure. Then, he places faith on the same level as the commandments, neither of which justify us. In such a way, Aquinas contributed to the confusion of Rome on the doctrine of justification and the anathemas proclaimed by the Council of Trent against justification by faith alone. Again, where do we begin? Just as Scripture distinguishes between faith as a movement of the soul whereby we believe in or trust in or rely upon Christ Acts In short, one may infer from this text that Aquinas affirmed justification through faith alone. Of course, our inference is not necessary, since elsewhere Thomas explicitly states that a person is

justified through faith alone sola fide. For we apostles, being taught the truth by Christ, hold that a man, whomsoever he be, whether Jew or Gentile, is justified by faith: And this apart from works of the law. Not only without the ceremonial works, which did not confer grace but only signified it, but also without the works of the moral precepts, as stated in Titus 3: It is therefore faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone: But, then again, so did Luther. We will have no true revival until this gospel is restored in our Reformed churches and proclaimed to our dying culture! None of us are without error in our teachings, and so we should not be surprised to find errors in some of the great orthodox theologians of the past, even when those errors concern something as important as justification. What is important in all of this is that our best theologians, people like Augustine, Anselm, Luther, Calvin and, yes, even Aquinas got the absolute essential point rightâ€”namely, because of my wickedness, if I am to be saved at all, it must be via sola gratia. History teaches us that whenever we fail to make clearly the distinction between the proclamation of my righteousness and the process of my becoming righteous, abuses in the churches become inevitable. The Reformed doctrine of sola fide is the only way to fully and consistently preserve a cardinal doctrine all Christians have intuitively known, and what all of the great theologians of the past have explicitly affirmedâ€”i. Indeed, Thomas, like all of us, was saved by grace, not by doctrinal precision! Criticize him as much as you like. Something tells me Thomas would have welcomed such a critique. There is simply no better way to discover truth and to refute error than to defend yourself against those who oppose your position. One of the reasons so many Reformational Christians shy away from St.

8: The Trinity Foundation - John H. Gerstner on Thomas Aquinas as a Protestant

[14] *For a balanced treatment of Thomas' doctrine of justification by faith (which is in stark contrast to both John H. Gerstner, "Aquinas was a Protestant," Tabletalk, ed. R. C. Sproul and John H. Gerstner, May, 14; and Robert L. Reymond, "John H. Gerstner on Thomas Aquinas as a Protestant," Westminster Theological Journal 59/1.*

John Gerstner I could have subtitled this message by Dr. Hell is not the absence of God, but the wrathful presence of God being poured out in unmitigated fury and gall upon Satan and minions and all who the Lord Jesus Christ has never known Matt. Therefore, the point of the gospel beloved, is not how do sinful men and women, like me and you, come to a holy God for salvation; but how does a holy God come to sinful men and women, like me and you, and save us without violating His holiness, justice, righteousness and wrath? The answer is the cross! And the doctrine which gives us our eternal hope on the narrow path is that we are justified by grace through faith alone; and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ in His active and passive obedience. With all the confusion circling around the gospel, sound doctrine, biblical theology, and what constitutes the essentials of the faith in our postmodern-church-age, this article by Dr. Gerstner is a must read. He was, as Dr. Don Kistler calls him: These are not words for the casual passer-by. They require attention; as of one who sits at a banquet table for a feast to enjoy a substantive meal that takes a few hours to slowly eat so that every bite can be savored--savor, beloved, these hearty words on "the Atlas of all doctrines". Praise be to God that the Sovereign Judge of universe has been fully satisfied propitiated through the once for all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross as our divine Substitute, secured for us eternal life through His bodily resurrection so that we by His electing love and grace, through regeneration of the Holy Spirit, may be granted saving faith and clothed with His perfect righteousness, to have peace with God forever Roms. As the Apostle Paul so richly says, "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" Titus 3: Predestination will not bring it. Providence cannot produce it. It does not rest on foreknowledge, divine decrees, or even the atonement itself. Eternal life is Christ dwelling in His righteousness in the soul of the justified person. So eternal life is union with Jesus Christ. And the word for that union with Jesus Christ is faith. The sinner comes to Him, rests in Him, trusts in Him, is one with Him, abides in Him; and this is life because it never, ever, ends. The united soul abides in the Vine eternally. This is the heart of the Bible. This is the heart of the gospel. This is the heart of Christianity. This is the heart of the saint. This is the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those are the reasons it was the heart of the Reformation; and this is the reason the contemporary attempt of some Protestants to unite with those who do not even claim this heart of the life of Jesus Christ is to commit spiritual suicide. No lover of Jesus Christ can consent to this apostasy. It is coming to Him. It is casting all your cares on Him. We all know the old Greek acrostic for fish: I might coin a new acrostic on the Greek word for faith pistis: No text of Holy Scripture tells it quite as well as Romans 4: Notice how many different ways 7 this Scripture teaches justification by faith alone in one verse: The justified one does "not work. The justified one "trusts. The justified one trusts not in himself but in another: The justified one confesses himself to be "wicked. The justified one does not have faith in his faith. The justified one sees his faith only as "credited" to him. The justified one sees his faith credited as "righteousness. You and I are a minus quantity, and all fallen mankind with us. Justification can only be by faith alone. Faith is workless, worthless. According to Roman Catholicism, those works, so far from being worthless, are worth eternal life. They entitle a person who has perfected them to nothing less than eternal heaven. The audience was largely Protestant. I guess he would have appeared to evangelicals to be bragging. Then, and only then, did he admit how good Roman Catholic works are thought to be. Romanists many times fool Protestants by their claim to teach "by grace alone" sola gratia. And they sometimes fool themselves when they are more evangelical than a Romanist can honestly be. Romanists are saved by their works which come from grace, according to their teaching. It is not the grace but the works which come from it that save

them! If a person believes that grace saves him he is a Protestant and belongs with us. He is in the wrong church if he believes the evangelical way and is not witnessing honestly. A dishonest person can never be saved, be he Protestant or Roman. I was in an area where some Protestant ministers told me of a "Father Joe" who, they said, was the most evangelical man in the whole area. I remarked that if that were so he was also the most dishonest man in the whole area. We have many Protestants today who are claiming to be one with Romanists as fellow evangelicals. Unless such Protestants are utterly ignorant of the meaning of evangelicalism, they cannot be Christians, much less Protestants or Roman Catholics. Christians are required to "provide things honest in the sight of all men" Romans Labels are supposed to tell contents. If this is true of bottles of medicine that concern only this life, how much more of the medicine of immortality — the contents of the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Evangelicalism means the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to — not infused into — the believer. So Scripture is teaching us that the faith which saves is not a work. It has no spiritual value in itself. Strictly speaking, the true Christian church does not teach justification by faith. It teaches justification by Christ. Where does the faith come in? It is simply the uniting with, joining with, becoming one with, the Lord Jesus Christ. A wife becomes a co-heir of all that belongs to her husband simply by being his wife, by her union with him in marriage. That is the fact: There is no virtue or merit in that. She simply possesses what now belongs to her by that relationship. That is the meaning of the word "reckons" or imputes or credits. The justified one "does not work, but trusts God who justifies the wicked. He teaches the justificatio impii, the justification of the impious or wicked, just as Paul teaches in Romans 4: It is justification by Jesus Christ alone. It is His righteousness, which He achieved for His people by fulfilling all righteousness, that becomes theirs as His bride. Romanists refer to the righteousness which Christ works into the life of the believer or infuses into him in his own living and behavior. It is an imputed righteousness not an infused righteousness. It is a gift of God versus an accomplishment of man. These two righteousnesses are as different as righteousnesses could conceivably be. It does come down to the way it has been popularly stated for the last four and a half centuries: That is not a technically accurate way to state this vital difference, But it points to the truth. The Protestant trusts Christ to save him and the Catholic trusts Christ to help him save himself. It is faith versus works. Or, as the Spirit of God puts it in Romans 4: And we want Romanists to be saved. How sad to see a banner raised against "faith alone" when that is the only way to be saved by grace. We agree with Roman friends — salvation is by grace. That is the reason it must be by faith. The works that come from grace must prove grace but they cannot be grace. They may come from, be derivative of, a consequence of, but they cannot be identified with it. Faith is merely union with Christ who is our righteousness, our grace, our salvation. Christ is our righteousness. Our righteousness does not result from His righteousness, it is His righteousness. They seem incapable even of understanding "justification is by faith alone, but not by the faith that is alone," though that formula has been present since the Reformation. If this were a true charge it would be a fatal one.

9: January 28 - Feast Day of St. Thomas Aquinas (What's Wrong with the World)

Dr. John Gerstner explores the history behind the formulation of the doctrine. "The doctrine by which the church stands or falls." So said Martin Luther about justification by faith alone.

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