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Imputatio iustitiae: Its Origin in Melanchthon, its Opposition in Osiander

The doctrine of forensic justification has often been viewed as expressing the very essence of all that the Reformation intended to say on the matter of salvation. In direct contrast to the essential righteousness which the Catholic Church infused into the soul of the believer, the Reformers are thought to have constructed and contended for a doctrine of imputed righteousness, which did not substantially alter or touch the object of its decree. It might therefore come as a surprise to many of those who think this way that the concept of forensic justification according to most scholars did not arise at the very beginning of the Reformation and was never accentuated in the theology of such pillars of the movement as Luther, Zwingli and Calvin.[1] In fact, it was not until the 1530s that the doctrine began to emerge in the writings of Philipp Melanchthon, and its initial inspiration was not so much engendered by the seminal ideas of Protestantism, but, if anything, the exegetical and theological analysis of Catholic scholars.

Through the exegetical analysis of Erasmus, the great Catholic scholar, and certain theological concepts, inspired by Nominalism, Melanchthon began to promote in his Roemerbrief-Kommentar of 1532 a more forensic understanding of justification. While this doctrine might not be without some antecedents in Protestantism and Melanchthon's earlier writings,[2] it was here for the first time

[1] B. Hamm, Was ist reformatorische Rechtfertigungslehre? ZThK 83/1 (1986) 12 ff.; C. Gestrich, Zwingli als Theologe, Zürich 1967, 163–64. Zwingli, while not specifically addressing the issue, does not hesitate to use the terms *Rechtmachung* und *Rechtwerdung*, ZW 2.29–30, 172, 642; 5.625. Calvin, while employing the term *imputatio*, pictures justification as a result of union with Christ and his daily work in us, *Inst.* 3.1.1, 3; 3.9; 11.10; 4.7.11. Luther as we shall see is very close to Calvin on this point. Zwingli's position, if anything, since it goes on to isolate the cross as the instrument of salvation and circumscribes Christ in heaven away from the believer, would need someway to apply that past work of Christ to the present through such a devise as *imputatio* and thus can be understood as a precursor of Melanchthon's position. Luther and Calvin depend more on Christ's present work.

[2] R. Stupperich, Die Rechtfertigungslehre bei Luther und Melanchthon 1530–36, in: Luther and Melanchthon, ed. by V. Vajta, Philadelphia 1961, 82–83. Before this time there is some limited testimony to forensic concepts, including the word *imputatio*. L. C. Green points to his Baccalaureatsthesen of Sept. 9, 1519, where among the doctrines to be defended is that *omnis iustitia nostra est gratuita dei imputatio*, SA 1.24. L. C. Green, Faith, Righteousness and Justification: New Light on their Development under Luther and Melanchthon, SCJ (3) 1972. In his *Loci* of 1521, Melanchthon does speak at one point of grace as separate from any *qualitas* in us and residing within the benevolent will of God, but this is all, CR 21, 158. The Augsburg Confession (1530) has a small article on justification, but summarizes the message of Rom 3 and 4 with the sentence, *Hanc fidem imputat Deus pro iustitia coram ipso.* Die Bekenntnis-

under the inspiration of Catholic sources that a pronounced emphasis appeared upon the forensic terms *imputatio* and *acceptio*, along with a demarcation between justification and any *novitas* or *qualitas* in the believer[3] – terms and concepts which are so fundamental to the doctrine.

More specifically, Melanchthon in his Roemerbrief-Kommentar began to translate Rom 4:3, the most oft-cited prooftext of the doctrine,[4] in accordance with the forensic terminology of Erasmus and his widely circulated *Novum Instrumentum*. [5] Erasmus had changed the translation of the Greek verb *logizomai* in Rom 4:3 and elsewhere in the passage from the Vulgate's *reputo* to read *imputo* – i.e., "Credidit Abraham deo & imputatum (not reputatum) est ei ad iusticiam."[6] He explains the substitution in his *Annotationes* as a better and more consistent rendering of the text,[7] and proceeds to define the word in terms of *acceptilatio* and its cognates. It is this definition which should be noted carefully, as it is here that the notion of a legal fiction which proves so essential to Melanchthon's concept becomes most manifest. This term *acceptilatio* is said to be a forensic concept which reckons a debt *as if* paid through a verbal agreement.

schriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche, Goettingen, 1967, 56. Melanchthon sought to fortify this article in his *Apologia Confessionis* of 1531, but does not speak decidedly on its forensic character. While near the end of the work he does speak of justification in a forensic manner – *iustificare vero hoc loco forensi consuetudine significat reum absolvere et pronuntiare iustum*, Bekenntnisschriften 219 (43) – such a statement is not typical, and throughout his work *reputo*, not *imputo*, is most often used as his term for justification as *iustos effici seu regenerari.* Bekenntnisschriften 175, 184. R. Stupperich, Die Rechtfertigungslehre 80–82. cf. A. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, Cambridge 1968, 25. Even the Formula of Concord admits that the *Apologia* uses regeneration and justification together, Bekenntnisschriften 783, 920.

[3] SA 5.132,135: *Deinde Paulus enarrat et agitat verbum "imputandi" et dialectice definit iustificationem, quod videlicet "iustificatio" significet non qualitatem aut virtutem in nobis aut infusionem habitus, sed relative acceptationem, qua gratis per misericordiam a Deo reputamur iusti. … Ceterum haec omnia idem significant: Iustificatio est remissio peccatorum, est non-imputatio peccati, est reconciliatio seu acceptatio, qua Deo per misericordiam, non propter nostras virtutes, accepti sumus.*

[4] SA 5.126,130: Melanchthon before this time was generally using *reputo* and not *imputo.* Hereafter *imputo* will become prominent in his translation of the verse, CR 15.519, 596, 893, 895; 21.425, 748. However, he begins to use *acceptus* for *iustus* in the eighth edition of *Apologia* in the Fall of 1531. M. Greschat, Melanchthon neben Luther, Witten 1965, 136.

[5] Melanchthon was greatly influenced by Erasmus and his NT, SA 1.17; CR 1.77; A. Schirmer, Das Paulusverständnis Melanchthons 1518–1522, Wiesbaden 1967, 26; L. Green, The influence of Erasmus upon Melanchthon, Luther and the Formula of Concord in the Doctrine of Justification, CH 43 (1974) 183–84.

[6] *Novum Instrumentum*, Basel 1516, reprinted in Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1986, pt. 2.7.

[7] He explains this substitution more fully in his 1535 edition. *Reputo* concerns more the contemplation of its object *(considerare)* where *imputo* means to accept or receive into favor *(acceptum ferre… citra reprehensionem)*, See on *reputo* Estienne, *Dictionariolum Puerorum*

A formal, verbal release or acquittance of the debt is provided, *just as if* the obligation had been paid.[8] Melanchthon must have been thoroughly convinced by Erasmus on this point at the time of his Roemerbrief-Kommentar, for throughout his works thereafter he can be seen as highlighting in his treatment of justification this verse, this translation and this definition of imputatio, using it constantly in parallel with the word *acceptatio*.[9] And so, Erasmus, even if it is true that he never develops the notion further in his writings,[10] did apparently supply, however ironically, the necessary terms and concepts in his *Novum Instrumentum* for Melanchthon to construct his own, more fully developed doctrine.

Tribus Linguis Latina Anglica & Gallica, London 1522, reprinted Amsterdam, NY 1971. T. Cooper, *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae et Britannicae*, 1565, reprinted in Menston, England, 1969; J.M. Gesner, *Novus Linguae et Eruditionis Romanae THESAVRVS, LIPSIAE* 1749; J. Ridder, *Bibliotheca Scholastica*, Oxford 1589, 1487. Green overstates an essentially correct point that *reputo* is analytical and *imputo* is synthetic. "The Influence", 185.

[8] *Novum Instrumentum*, pt. 2, 429: *Est autem acceptum ferre, debere, sive pro accepto habere quod non acceperis, quae apud iureconsultos vocatur acceptilatio*. In his *In Epistolam Pauli Apostoli ad Paraphrasis. Basileae* 1519, he says that *imputari* and *acceptum ferri* refers to money not paid, but deemed as such. The quittance is to be performed forensically and verbally. Cooper, *Thesaurus*. Gesner, *Novus THESAVRVS*; T. Thomas, *Dictionarium Linguae Latinae et Anglicanae,* 1587, reprinted in Menston, England 1972; R. Estienne, *Latina; Thesaurus Linguae Latinae,* (*Lipsiae* 100–71) 1.282. Oxford Latin Dictionary, Oxford 1983, 19. Melanchthon in his own treatment attempts to connect the forensic/verbal element with Hebrew concepts, but offers little evidence, CR 15.510, 543; 21.421, 742. He also concocts an analogy, using the acquittal of Publius Cornelius Scipio (ca. 236–ca.283 B.C.), a Roman general of the Punic wars, who, Melanchthon contends, was pronounced just before the tribunal. Scipio had been accused of taking bribes in his later years, but the people of Rome would not listen to the charges against him, considering all that the had done for Rome, Polybius 23.14. Livy 38.51.

[9] CR 15.895; 21.304; 23.450. CR 15.810; 23.178: *Sed persona, in qua adhuc multum est sordium, non propter tales virtutes in iudicio Dei accepta est, sed per misericordiam propter mediatorem... Sed aliud est loqui de iusticia Personae, aliud de iusticia operum seu virtutum. Iusticia personae est imputatio iusticiae seu acceptatio in iudicio Dei, quae fit propter mediatorem sola fide... Iustificari significat forensi more iustum reputari seu pronuntiari. Iustus in his Pauli disputationibus significat idem quod acceptus seu placens Deo. Et IUSTIFICATIO est remissio peccatorum, et acceptatio coram Deo, cum qua coniuncta est donatio Spiritus sancti... Est enim Gratia gratuita remissio peccatorum, et acceptatio propter Christum, cum qua coniuncta est donatio Spiritus sancti. Gratia* and *iustus* are also defined continually by *acceptus*, CR 7.894; 15.511; 21.303, 423, 734, 752.

[10] The only evidence of which I am cognizant in his theology of this type of theological concept is his somewhat reluctant acceptance of Duns' belief that the grace of justification could be merited *de condigno* and *ex pacto*. The disparity between God and man, between his righteousness and our works, demands that God must condescend to accept our work as meritorious of his grace, LB 1.1327; 2.1383, 1447–48, 1487.

Nevertheless, perhaps of even more importance than this direct exegetical source was the well-known and well-established meaning of the word *acceptatio* in the theological community. The Franciscan and Nominalistic tradition used this term to speak of the divine will as the ultimate arbitrator in the matter of justification.[11] For them, *nihil creatum formaliter est a Deo acceptandum*.[12] This meant that the person, his merit and even the grace which had been created in him, the *gratia gratum faciens*, had no inherent claim upon divine favor, but were subject to the unconstrained verdict of God's most free will or acceptation.[13] God when it came to justifying man merely accepted what was not acceptable or made acceptable (righteous) through a simple act of the will. Melanchthon by invoking this watchword of their theology certainly could not have been totally unaware of the import of such a well-established theological term. Even if it could possibly be construed as subsisting only on a subliminal level, as if he were unconscious of its etymology, the theological freight which had helped shape its meaning in the middle ages could not have been avoided in its mere usage. There are in fact striking parallels between the concept of justification in Melanchthon and his medieval forebears which bear witness to a most decided influence. Both speak of God as accepting what has not been made acceptable through his grace (regeneration) and both separate the forgiveness of sin from an infused state of grace or what God does in us.[14] While it might be objected that the Nominalists did make grace *de potentia ordinata* a necessary component of salvation, still it was not because the object of divine grace was somehow made worthy through an infused righteousness as in the Thomistic tradition. The infused state, whether in Catholicism's *gratia creata* or Melanchthon's *novitas*, is merely concomitant with our justification, but not an intrinsic cause of it. Justification remains fundamentally for both a voluntaristic act of God, separated from the demands of justice.

[11] W. Dettloff, Die Entwicklung der Akzeptations- und Verdienstlehre von Duns Scotus bis Luther, Münster 1963, 255, 274–75; L. Baudry, Lexique Philosophique de Guillaume D'Ockham, Paris 1957, 8–9; P. Vignaux, Justification et Prédestination au XIVe Siècle, Paris 1934, 132; Ockham, *Sent.* I.d.17.q.1.H.

[12] Biel, *Sent.* I.d.17.q.3.G; Dettloff, Die Entwicklung 267–68.

[13] Duns, *Ordinatio* (Ed Vat.) I.d.17.q.1.n.3,5,9,12. Ockham, *Sent.* I.d.17.q.1. J. Biel, *Sent.* I.d.17.q.1.C,E,G,L.

[14] E. Iserloh, Gnade und Eucharistie in der philosophischen Theologie des Wilhelm von Ockham, Wiesbaden 1956, 96; Ockham, *Sent.* III.5.E,F; *Quodl.* VI.q.4.c.1. While *acceptio* was the term most often employed, *imputatio* was used, especially in the negative sense. Ockham, *Sent.* IV, q.9.I. Some like Johannes de Ripa used *imputatio* more than *acceptatio*. *Sent.* (Vat.lat. 1082) I,d.16 et 17. *Conclusiones* (Paris 1957) d.16 et 17 (131–39). Cf. Dettloff, Die Entwicklung 209,232–33.

The connection with the Fransciscan/Nominalistic tradition is important because it helps to interpret the overall theological matrix out of which such a doctrine could be formulated, and to decipher some of its most basic themes, especially its voluntarism. This doctrine can then be seen as a product of Nominalism and interpreted in accordance with its belief that God *de potentia absoluta* is not so much indebted as in the Thomistic tradition to *a priori* standards of righteousness but can exact or accept pretty much whatever he pleases.[15] In Ockham, an extreme example, this means that God *de potentia absoluta* could damn the righteous and exonerate the guilty,[16] he could overturn his commandments, even his ten commandments, and demand the exact opposite of his laws;[17] he could accept our merits for whatever or reject them for whatever;[18] he could justify us or condemn us, with or without Christ, with or without atonement, and with or without grace, especially *gratia creata*.[19] And so, the belief in a God who could declare a sinner righteous – a sinner not touched by his grace is seen to arise, not so much from the seminal ideas of Protestantism, but from the accentuation upon the divine will in the Nominalists' doctrine of justification.

Luther and his theology cannot be considered its primary inspiration, even if the doctrine comes to be interpreted within his thought.[20] Luther, in fact, considered it most improper to so accentuate divine *imputatio* – a term which he also connects with Nominalism – as to turn God's work into "eyn lautter spiegelfechten und tauckelspiell".[21] If God could perform such tricks, Luther argues, he

[15] The only oft-repeated restriction upon his absolute power is that he does not violate Aristotle's law of contradiction. Some of the more conservative Scholastics would place more restrictions. Gregorius (de Armino) *Lectura super Primum et Secundum Sententiarum*, Berlin and New York 1982, 6.359–64, 382–87, 395,

[16] *Sent.* IV.q.3,F,Q.

[17] *Sent.* I.d.47.q.1.D; II.q.19.O,P. Even the hatred of God could be mandated. *Sent.* II.q.19.O; III.q.5.G. He later overturns this possibility, saying that it would involve a contradiction to command hatred, since it takes love to do God's will. *Quodl.* III.14; *Sent.* IV.d.14.D. See M. A. Schmidt, in Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte, hg. von C. Andresen. I, Göttingen 1982, 710.

[18] *Sent.* I.d.17.q.1.T; IV.q.8.et.9; *Quodl.* VI.q.1.a.2.c.1.

[19] *Quodl.* VI.q.1.a.2.c.1. *Sent.* I.d.17.q.1.E; III.q.5.E,F.

[20] Mc Grath believes that Luther laid the foundation for Melanchthon's doctrine and that this doctrine characterizes Protestant theology as a whole. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei* 3.24. One can, no doubt, take certain concepts of Luther and proceed into further directions. Inferences, however, only draw certain conclusions from ideas and do not always represent the tensions in which the original premise subsists. Any finite thought can become an aberration if it is taken too seriously and carried to an extreme.

[21] WA 10/1.1.486–70: "Es sind ettlich zuuor unter den newen hohen schullerern, die da sagen, Es lige die vorgebung der sund und rechtfertigung der gnaden gantz und gar ynn der gottlichen imputation das ist: an gottis tzurechnen, das es gnug sey, wilchem gott die sund

certainly would never have sent his Son to die. Why would God allow his Son to suffer the pangs of hell if he could in the end do without it? There certainly appears to be little profit for God in prescribing the most exacting standards in the satisfaction of his Son if he can merely dispense with justice through his "just as if" when it comes to applying that work in justification – the very reason for which Christ suffered.[22] For Ockham, of course, there really is no need for Christ to suffer, at least, *de potentia dei absoluta*, and even *de potentia ordinata* his death does not strictly satisfy the demands of justice. However, for Melanchthon who above all the Reformers renders testimony to the Anselmic theory of satisfaction – a theory which views the atonement as the necessary and only way – the answer is not so simple. Melanchthon is clearly caught in a dilemma between Anselm's theory of atonement and Ockham's doctrine of justification, between a God who has righteous and narrow and exact ways and a God who can do as he wills.

tzrechne odder nit tzurechne, derselb sey dadurch rechtfertigett odder nit rechtfertigt von seynen sunden, wie die 31. Psalm unnd Ro. 3. sie dunckt lautten, da er sagt: Selig ist der mensch, dem gott nit tzurechnet seyne sunde. Wo ditz war were, sso ist das gantz new testament schon nichts unnd vorgebens. Unnd Christus hatt nerrisch und unnutzlich geerbeytet, das er fur die sund geliden hatt. Auch gott selb hett damit eyn lautter spiegelfechten und tauckelspiell on alle nott getrieben. Syntemal on Christus leyden er wol hette mugen vorgeben unnd nitt tzurechnen die sund, und alsso mochte auch wol eyn ander glawbe, denn ynn Christum, rechtfertig und selig machen. Nemlich, der auff solch gnedige gottis barmhertzickeytt sich vorliesse, das yhm seyn sund nit wurden gerechnet. Widder dissen grewlichen, schrecklichenn vorstandt unnd yrthum hatt der heylig Apostell den brauch, das er ymer den glawben auff Jhesum Christum tzeucht und sso viel mal den Jhesum Christum nennet, das es gleych wunder ist, dem solch nottige ursach nitt bewust ist, ist doch ubir das ander wortt, (wie man sagt) und eyttell Jhesus Christus ynn Sanct Paulus Epistelln. Unnd diesse heydnische meyster haben yhn uns sso freulich vortilget und geschweygt mit yhren grewlichen, hellischen trewmen solcher vorfurung. Darum wissen auch unsser hochgelerten ynn den hohen schulen itzt nitt mehr, was Christus odder wotzu er nott und nutz sey, und was Euangelium und new testament heysse. Sie achten, Christus sey nur eyn Moses, das ist: eyn lerer, der da gesetz unnd gepott gebe, wie man frum seyn und wol leben solle. Darnach faren si daher mitt dem freyen willen und naturlichen wercken unnd wollen sich damit tzur gnade bereytten unnd geschickt machen, schlechts den hymell sturmenn. Dieweyl denn gott seyne gnade gibt solchen wirckern und durch yhren eygen vleyss bereyttern, sso muss Christus eyn hanffputzen bleyben." The reference to a preparation for grace emphasized in the text – a doctrine which is associated with the Franciscan and Nominalistic theology – connects these "new high scholastics" with that tradition.

[22] Faustus Socinus in the seventeenth century will provide the most brilliant and excoriating analysis of this concept of satisfaction and justification. He will argue that if satisfaction is said to be truly accomplished by the death of Christ, there can be nothing left required, such as faith, nor any subsequent talk of an imputation. If God has been paid the satisfaction he demanded, then he cannot turn around and remit a debt which has been already satisfied, since there is nothing left to forgive, *De Jesu Christo Servatore* IV. 2–5; *Praelectiones Theologicae* 18.

This can be readily seen in almost any of Melanchthon's discussions. Typically Melanchthon will speak of justification with the following words and phrases: "remission of sins", "acceptation before God", "imputation of righteousness", and, of course, "to repute or pronounce as just in a forensic manner".[23] All of these phrases speak of justification as a disposition which the divine will has assumed on our behalf. And yet, in order not to lapse into utter voluntarism, Melanchthon invariably inserts as an addendum to such phrases a reference to the work of Christ *(propter Christum)*.[24] It is the obedience or merit of Christ which is said to be somehow imputed to us and to reconcile the demands of divine justice, even if it is also said that this work does not materially touch us in any substantive way.[25]

The imputation or declaration of righteousness is then said to be separated from any quality or newness produced by divine grace within the soul of men.[26] Whatever "virtue" he might infuse within us can do no more than "accompany" our reconciliation; even the gift of his Spirit which lives in our hearts is only said to be joined together *(coniuncta)* with his act of justification, and is not considered a direct or efficient cause of its enactment. Justification looks solely to the free acceptation of God, who reckons what is not righteous as righteous or what we did not do (i.e., Christ's work) just as if we had done it.[27] This in brief is the position of Melanchthon – position caught between Anselm and Ockham; and it is this position, with all its tensions, that will eventually gain ascendancy and become the confession of all Protestant orthodoxy.[28]

Grotius attempted to answer these contentions, but I feel that Luther would have done better. For Luther, unlike Melanchthon and Grotius, the cross is not the instrument which brings salvation, but Christ himself. While divine wrath might have been poured out on Christ for our sin, the cross is not so much an exchange, transferring our guilt to Christ, but an instrument through which Christ, having paid the penalty for sin, might obtain the power in himself to forgive that sin. We shall this emphasis later in Luther.

[23] CR 21.304, 421, 423, 752; 23.449–50.

[24] CR 15.504, 810; 21.423; 23.178–79.

[25] CR 7.784; 15.811, 895; CR 23.450–53. CR 15.883: *Secundo, imputatione iusticiae propter mediatorem. Quia enim fide agnoscimus mediatorem, et credimus nobis propter eum dari remissionem peccatorum et reconciliationem, et nos reputari iustos propter ipsius obedientiam, sumus iusti et accepti Deo in hac vita propter obedientiam filii, fide.* Melanchthon speaks of Christ's obedience as both active and passive.

[26] CR 7.678, 783; 21.422–23, 734.

[27] CR 15.810. The life in the Spirit and the *novitas* of the believer are given concomitantly with justification, even if there is no causal link, CR 21.442, 742; 28.401.

[28] The Formula of Concord follows Melanchthon in speaking continually of the imputation of Christ's obedience, both active and passive, to us, and separating justification from the indwelling of God and the renewal of man, Bekenntnisschriften 782, 783, 919, 921, 925, 933.

The most serious challenge to this orthodoxy came in the early 1550s through the polemical writings and political connections of Andreas Osiander, a professor at Koenigsberg. Even though Osiander claims to have taught his position a couple of decades earlier with the full knowledge of Luther and Melanchthon no less,[29] no particular notice was taken by anybody until the end of the 1540s. It was at that time that Friedrich Staphylus, his one time friend, took notice of his peculiar teachings upon justification, and felt obliged to voice his concerns in an audience before Herzog Albrecht and then in a personal letter to Melanchthon. Shortly thereafter, Osiander was summoned to appear before the faculty at Koenigsberg in the presence of Albrecht to defend his position publicly, for which he produced his first major disquisition over the subject – *Disputatio de justificatione* (dated Oct. 24, 1550).[30] Over the next two years, Osiander received almost universal condemnation from the entire Lutheran community and was only spared excommunication through the patronage of the Herzog, who was now numbered among his small band of disciples.[31] Joachim Moerlin, a former student of Melanchthon, was appointed by Albrecht to help moderate the dispute, but instead became the most unrelenting and scurrilous critic of Osiander's teaching, casting him as a "vorfluchte boses werchzeug des deufels", "grossmaeulige schwarze Teufel", "Antichrist", etc. Melanchthon, while rather cordial and irenic at first, considering the matter to be fundamentally a "bellum grammaticale", ended up joining the cries for condemnation and heaped his own share of virtiol against the "Orator Hyperboreus" and "Baltischer Gorgias". Osiander, of course, replied with his own repertoire of curses, slander and libel. He spoke with nothing but contempt for the *Hochmut* of the Wittenbergers in presenting themselves as the teachers of all the rest of Germany, and remained unrepentant in his convictions. The controversy only began to dissipate when Osiander unexpectantly died on Oct. 17, 1552.[32]

[29] Widerlegung der ungegrundten undienstlichen Antwort Philippi Melanchthonis, Königsberg 1552, Or-v; Beweisung, das ich nun veber die dreisig jar alweg einerley lehr von der gerechtigkeit des glaubens gehalten und gelehret hab, Königsberg 1552, C4r. He even claims to have convinced Melanchthon at one time that the righteousness of faith is the righteousness of God according to Jer. 23 and 33. Beweisung A4v, B3v–B4r, Cr.

[30] M. Stupperich, Osiander in Preussen, Berlin und London 1973, 80–82, 110.

[31] *Ibid.*, 290ff. Johannes Brenz and the Wurtembergers were the only segment among the Lutherans to display some sympathy for Osiander, as they thought the matter to be largely semantic. C. Lawrenz, On Justification, Osiander's Doctrine of the Indwelling Christ, in: No Other Gospel, ed. by A. Koelpin, Milwaukee 1980, 162.

[32] *Ibid.*, 103, 125–26, 135, 149, 150,157, 163ff., 178ff., 183, 214, 215, 325ff. Osiander was full of calumny, more than Melanchthon and most of his opponents. He would have nothing to do with the adiaphorists and the Interim, as wanting peace with the "Antichrist" of Rome. His

Osiander's actual position was not so antithetical to that of the orthodox as to warrant such vitriol. In fact, some of the most vociferous objections were exercised over what must be seen as downright distortions of Osiander's true intentions. This is particularly true in regard to his usage of the term *Gerechtmachung*.[33] Osiander had often asserted in regard to our justification that a simple *Gerechtsprechung* was not sufficient, because the decree of God could not be a "pur lauter nichts" and must prove to have some answer in the object of its decree – some *Gerechtmachung*.[34] We cannot be declared righteous unless we are made righteous, i.e., united to Christ's righteousness.[35] Such statements as these led many of his opponents to infer that Osiander based one's justification upon sanctification or some new creaturely righteousness within man – both of which would be offensive to Protestants in general. Melanchthon, for example, accused him of reversing the "cause", which is the work of Christ, with the "effect" of that work by making our justification depend upon works wrought by us and the consequent *novitas* created within us.[36] Calvin went even farther and accused him of mingling our nature with God's so as to deify that nature and transfuse divine qualities within us.[37] However, both of these accusations were patently false. Even Moerlin, who was no sympathizer with Osiander's plight, admitted the erroneous nature of these charges, being most intimately, even personally, acquainted with Osiander and his ideas at Koenigsberg.[38] Osiander himself vehemently objected to them as deliberate falsehoods[39] and denied that he had

writings are filled with the harshest of judgments for those who would disagree. In his rather speculative treatise on whether God would have become a man if Adam had not sinned, he treats those who disagree with his answer as liars, blasphemers and demons.

[33] CR 12.10; 23.17, 451.

[34] Von dem Einigen Mitler Jesu Christo und Rechtfertigung des Glaubens, Königsberg 1551, B3r, F3r, Hr, O3r, P3v. Ein Disputation von der Rechtfertigung des Glaubens/gehalten am 24. Oktober 1550, Königsberg 1551, 73–74: "Es lehren auch die jenigen kelter ding/dan das eyse/welche da lehren/ das wir allein vmb der vergebung der Suende willen/ fur gerecht geachtet werden/ vnd nicht auch von wegen der Gerechtigkeit Christi/ der durch den Glauben/ in uns wonet. Dan Gott ist nicht so vngerecht/ noch ein solcher liebhaber der vngerechtigkeit/das er den fur gerecht halt/in dem gantz vnd gar von der waren Gerechtigkeit nichts ist/ wie geschriben steht/ Du bist nicht ein Gott/ dem Gottloses wesen gefalle."

[35] Ein Disputation 31.

[36] CR 7.898; 15.880; 23.457. The accusation that Osiander teaches a justification based on works is more implicitly than explicitly stated.

[37] *Inst.* 3.11.5, 6, 10.

[38] *Historia*, Welcher gestalt sich die Osiandrische schwermerey im lande zu Preussen erhaben, Magdeburg 1554, Fv; *Epistolae quaedam Ioachimi Morlini Doctoris Theologiae, ad D. Andream Osiandrum, Et Responsiones* (1551), A2v, B4v.

[39] Widerlegung Er, G4v; Wider den Lichtflüchtigen Nachtraben A3v.

ever taught a righteousness based upon human works[40] or even believed in a creaturely righteousness *(novitas)*.[41] However misleading the term *Gerechtmachung* might be and whatever implications one might wish to draw from it he certainly never meant to imply such heterodox notions.

Accusations of this nature, it must be said, fail to grasp one of the most fundamental presuppositions to all of Osiander's thinking – the qualitative distinction between God and man. This is expressed throughout his works by the simple axiom "in Deum non cadit accidens".[42] Losely paraphrased, this is intended to convey that God alone is his essence and alone possesses the attributes of that essence. In regard to justification, this means that nothing in or of the creature, whether his works or a habitus, could possibly be deemed righteous before God, for God alone is righteous. There is only one kind of righteousness to God and that righteousness is identical to God himself.[43] He is absolutely unique, one of a kind and wholly other.

Osiander's attention toward the God who is *solus deus* naturally helped to serve as a foundation for his most emphatic and controversial statement of all, that "God is our righteousness".[44] Not even Christ, as God *and* man, can be said to serve as that righteousness without some qualification if God and man are to remain qualitatively distinct. He can only become that righteousness in accordance with what makes him so essentially – i.e., in accordance with that righteousness which he shares in essence with the whole trinity, which he alone as God possesses, which subsists only in his deity, which becomes ours only through the indwelling of Christ in that nature.[45] This above all is the salient

[40] Moerlin and Osiander, *Epistolae* C6v. Beweisung A4v: "Die gutten Werk aber/die etlich auch zur Gerechtigkeit machen/sein nicht die Gerechtigkeit/ sonder die frücht der Gerechtigkeit/wie CHRISTUS spricht/Johan. 15."

[41] Wider B4v; Widerlegung Fv; G. Zimmermann, Die Thesen Osianders zur Disputation "de iustificatione", Ker Do 1987/3,227–8.

[42] Wider A3v. cf. J. Fligge, Zur Interpretation der osiandrischen Theologie Herzog Albrechts v. Preussen, ARG (64) 1973, 352; M. Stupperich, Osiander in Preussen 200.

[43] Widerlegung H4v, Kr–v, K3r; Zimmermann, Die These 231.

[44] Beweisung Ar, Ov; Widerlegung Fr, G2v, R3v–R4r. His favorite verses are found in Jer 23 and 33, along with I Cor 1.30. Melanchthon contended, not only against Osiander but also against Franciscus Stancarus, who had emphasized only the humanity of Christ, that it is the whole Christ, humanity and deity, which brings salvation, CR 7.1089–90; Melanchthons Briefwechsel, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1988, 6.379. Osiander had often accused Melanchthon of emphasizing only Christ's humanity. Moerling also defended both natures of Christ as our righteousness, *Historia* Cv; *Epistolae* C4r.

[45] Von dem Einigen Q2r–Q3v; Wider Cr; Moerlin, *Historia* R2r. He refers to this righteousness in us as "wesentlich" or *essentialis*, inasmuch as it is identical with the essence of God. Wider A4r–b; Disputation 53. Osiander did not intend the Catholic concept of infused grace.

point which Osiander wishes to promote against current orthodox notions that would ascribe the central role in the communication of righteousness to the humanity and/or the work of Christ.[46]

Osiander contends that the humanity of Christ cannot even be considered a part of our righteousness, because its fundamental purpose, the goal to which it was created and destined, is to relate itself and us to another.[47] Is this not the goal of all that Christ did for us, to relate us to the God who stands qualitatively distinct from man and separate from iniquity? Can the humanity of Christ, however necessary it might have been in accomplishing our redemption *(Erloesung)*, be anything more than the vehicle through which we receive reconciliation *(Versöhnung)*? Does not all that it means to be a man find its essence, its righteousness and its life in the existence *(ex-sistere)* which one has before God?

In order to establish this point further, Osiander draws upon an earlier treatise, *An filius dei fuerit incarnandus, si peccatum non introivisset in mundum* (1550), in which the most essential truth of man's being, the very image in which he was created, is seen in terms of his relationship to God. This image must therefore be identified, not so much with certain aspects of man (intellect, emotion or will) nor with his virtues (faith, hope or love),[48] but with none other than God himself, whose visible form became embodied in Christ.[49] Christ is the visible image of the invisible God and his image the pattern after which Adam was created, not vice versa.[50] And yet, since Adam was created, before the actual incarnation of the Son, the image cannot be ascribed essentially to the flesh even if it is only found to be manifested in the flesh, but to the eternal divine nature

[46] CR 12.10; Moerlin, *Epistolae* B5r–v; *Historia* Uv.

[47] Von dem Einigen Mitler, Q2v: "Dan wan der durch den Glauben jn vnsern hertzen wonet/ so bringt er dise seine Göttliche Weisheit/ mit sich in vns/ die wirt vns dan zugerechnet/ als wer sie vnser eigen/ ja sie wirt vns auch geschenckt/ vnd flüset dann aus seiner Menscheit/ als wer dem heubt/ auch jn vns/ als seiner glider/vnd eroffnet sich vns jn disem leben/ durch den Glauben/ soull wir jr beduerffen/ vnd fehig sein/ bis wir jn jenem leben Gott volkomenlich werden erkennen/ wie wir von jm erkennet sein/ I. Cor. 13. ..."

[48] *An Filius dei fuerit incarnandus*, Königsberg 1550, B3v–B4r.

[49] There was some semblance between Adam's body and soul and Christ's as the whole man is said to be in the image of God. *An Filius* B4r, E4v, F2v–F3r. The *similitudo*, which Osiander divides from the future incarnate *Imago*, was seen in the OT by the Jews. Ibid., E3v. The emphasis upon the corporeality of the *imago* appears to wane in his later discussions as the divine nature of Christ is emphasized in his polemics on justification.

[50] *An Filius,* C2r–C3r, Ev.

which the Son of God possesses as a member of the Godhead trinity.[51] All this leads Osiander to answer in accordance with the title of his book the age old question of the Schoolmen, would God have become a man if Adam had not sinned?[52] With an emphatic "yes" Osiander contends that union between God and man as seen in the creation account is the very essence of Christ's work on behalf of man. If Adam had not sinned, Christ still would have become a man, because the incarnation does not find its original or primary purpose in providing redemption from sin, as Melanchthon, Moerlin and his opponents contend, but in the reconciliation of God and man.[53] Otherwise, if Christ simply came to atone for our sins, then Adam could not have truly been in possession of the divine image or original righteousness, and his fall would have to be considered a good thing *(felix culpa)*; for without it Christ would not have come and Adam would not have been righteous.[54] Osiander in all this speculation and minutiae, however inappropriate it might be, is merely attempting to relate the image of God to the person of Christ and his work in creation to that in salvation, not unlike the early church and modern theologians.[55] The image in which we were

[51] *Ibid.* E3r. Widerlegung, H2r: "Dann wonet der Son Gottis im Adam/vnd gibt von sich flammen Tugendt/wie die Sonn/ so muss er ja Adams Gerechtigkeit sein/wie er dann Malach. 4 ein Sonn der Gerechtigkeit genennet wirdt/Ist er aber Adams Gerechtigkeit/so ist ers ja nach seiner Gottheit/ dann die menschheit des Sohns Gottis war noch nicht/vnd wann Adam nicht gesundig hett/so were der Sohn Gottis/wie sie wider mich schreien vnd toben/sonderlich Michael Roeting/nimmer mehr mensch worden/Ist aber der Sohn Gottis nach seiner goettlichen Natur/des Adams Gerechtigkeit gewesen vor dem fahl/so muss er warlich vnser gerechtigkeit auch sein/Es hette sonst Christus was durch Adams fahl verderbt/ vnd verloren war/ nicht herwider pracht." Moerlin, *Historia* B4r. Osiander emphasizes the indwelling of the whole Trinity in us. He accuses Melanchthon of teaching that only the Spirit indwells us – an accusation which he denies. Beweisung C2r. Widerlegung F2v. Das achtbar wirdigen wolgelerten ehrn Joh. Brentii lehr von der rechtfertigung des Glaubens, Koenigsberg 1552, A3v. CR 7.779, 984–95, cf. CR 7.781.

[52] *Ibid.* B3r: *An filius Dei fuerit incarnandus, etiamsi humana natura non fuisset lapsa, multo maxima ex parte dependet a vera cognitione Imaginis Dei, ad quam facti sumus. Quare ut veritatem apprehendamus, necesse est prius inquirere, quid sit Imago Dei.* While Melanchthon does mention the restoration of righteousness and eternal life among the purposes of Christ's coming, the most fundamental reason is to placate divine wrath. CR 11.1036–37. *Historia* B2r.

[53] *Ibid.* F4v, Gr.

[54] *Ibid.* G4v, Kv, I3r–v.

[55] Friedrich Staphylus, an opponent of Osiander, saw his concept of the image of God as consequential for his doctrine of justification. M. Stupperich, Osiander in Preussen 116ff.; Zur Vorgeschichte des Rechtfertigungsartikels in der Konkordienformel, in: Bekenntnis und Einheit in der Kirche, hg. von M. Brecht und R. Schwarz, Stuttgart 1980, 176.

created in the Garden and lost (totally) in the fall is related to what has been restored to us in salvation.[56]

The work of Christ, however, in his death, burial and resurrection, has become decidedly subordinate to the efficacy of his work within us. Unlike his opponents who often identified our righteousness with the work of Christ,[57] the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sin are considered by Osiander to function only as a "preparation" *(Vorbereitung)* to the divine act of justification, and are not to be included in the act itself.[58] While Osiander strongly attests to what Christ did upon the cross in orthodox terms,[59] the righteousness of faith is not to be identified so much with the negation of what we have done, but the positive righteousness of the divine life working within.[60] He argues that if the work of redemption and justification was simply to be regarded as one and the same, then we certainly could never have existed as sinners or been under the wrath of God.[61] Righteousness cannot therefore come outside of us from an event which

[56] *An Filius* Ev, F4r, G2r, G3r–v.

[57] Moerlin, *Historia* Fv, F3r, Rv; *Epistolae* A4v. *Ibid.* Bv: *Itaque Deus est iusticia nostra in forma serus, ut diuus Paulus uocat, Ibi enim fit iusticia nostra, cum Deus fit maledictum, Deus ponit animam pro ouibus suis, Deus moritur sub lege, Deus fundit sanguinem. Haec mors, hic sanguis, non cuiusuis, sed Dei, inquam, operatur nobis quoque uitam in morte sua, confert benedictionem per maledictionem suam tollit peccatum factus peccatum. Ita, inquam, Deus est formalis iusticia nostra, non quando est iustus in sese ab aeterno, quia hoc semper est, sed quando fit peccatum pro nobis.* 2. Cor 5. Cf. Osiander, Wider B4r, Cv–C2v. Melanchthon is more tolerant than Moerlin and says that he is willing to allow one to speak of *gratia* (forgiveness) and *donum* (the gift of the Spirit) as our righteousness, as long as the former is spoken of first and not neglected, CR 7.893–94, 896–99.

[58] Widerlegung H2v–H3v, O3v. cf. Fligge, Zur Interpretation 272; Moerlin, *Historia* T3v. Melanchthon joins the chorus of those who accuse Osiander of obscuring the merits of Christ, CR 7.780–81, 897, 967.

[59] Beweisung Azv, C4v, Hr–v. Wider, Cr. Beweisung A2v: "Nemlich/Das er warer Gott vnd mensch/ das Gesetz fur vns erfüllet, vnser Sund auff sich genommen/ darfur gelitten/gestorben/sein Blut vergossen/vnd vns also vergebung der sund erworben hat/Welchs vns im heyligen Evangelio/darum gepredigt wirt/auff das wirs glauben/vnd Christus sambt dem Vater vnd heiligen Gaist/ durch den Glauben in vns wonen/vnser Leben Weissheit/Gerechtigkeit/vnd heiligkeit seien." Osiander and Moerlin concentrate more than Melanchthon upon the suffering of Christ on the cross, even though the active and passive obedience of Christ is not totally neglected. For Osiander, however, the scripture (or Luther), when it speaks of the death of Christ as our life is merely using a "tropus" or "verbluemte Redeweise". Wider B2r.

[60] Fligge, Zur Interpretation s.a. (n. 42) 263.

[61] Widerlegung Mr: "Also macht vns auch der gehorsam Christi/da er im Werck gehorsam ist/noch nicht gerecht/wir weren sonst/die wir jetzo leben/funftzehen hundert jar zuuor gerecht gewest/ehe dann wir sein geporn/das were aber spoetlich zuhoeren/dieweil wir alle in sunden geporn/von natur des zorns sein/sonder dieweil/er durch sein goettliche/wesentliche Gerechtigkeit/die Gott selbs ist/auch sein menschliche natur/vollkommenlich gerecht/vnd gehorsam

transpired 1500 years ago, but from the essence of the present and living Christ.[62] Sometimes he can even go so far as to speak of the divine presence, although inconsistently, as effecting a daily cleansing and destruction of sin in the life of the believer,[63] which would appear to contravene the need for Christ's atoning work in the first place. Forgiveness would then become a dynamic work of the divine nature which is not complete until the day of judgement,[64] instead of an imputation of a past event to the present life of the believer.

Much of the sheer passion which this debate provoked was vented, not so much over passages of scripture or in detailed theological argumentation, but over the question of Luther's own "would-be" posture to the issue at hand and the audacity of one's opponent in claiming his authority. Melanchthon claims that he personally discussed this very matter with Luther, and published a disputation from those conversations (1536) in which Luther is reputed to have endorsed his position.[65] Osiander, not to be outwitted, also claims to have personally set forth his position to Luther even earlier than Melanchthon (Augsburg, 1530), and ex-

gemacht hat/so müssen wir eben in Christo Newgeporn/vnd der selben seiner Gerechtigkeit thailhafftig werden/wie wir zuvor von Adam geporn/seiner Sund sein thailhafftig worden." Cf. M. Stupperich, Osiander in Preussen 240.

[62] Von dem Einigen Mitler 24–25: "Es ist aber offenbar, das alles das jenig/ das Christus als der getrewe Mitler/ von vnsern wegen durch erfullung des gesetzes/ vnd durch sein leiden vnd sterben/ mit Gott seinem himlischen Vater gehandelt hat/ das ist fur funftzehen hundert Jahren/ vnd lenger geschehen/ da wir noch nicht geporen gewest sein/ Darumb kan es eigentlich zu reden/ nicht vnser Rechtfertigung gewest sein/noch genennet werden/ sonder nu vnser erlösung vnd gnugthuung fur vns/ vnd vnser Sünde/ Dann wer gerechtfertigt sol werden/der mus glauben/ Sol er aber glauben/ so mus er schon geporen sein/ vnd leben. Darumb hat Christus vns die wir itzo leben/ vnd andere vor vns/durch erfullung des gesetzes/ vnd sein leiden vund sterben/ nicht gerechtfertig."

[63] Widerlegung D4v, J2r; Von dem Einigen Mitler, V2r. cf. Fligge, Zur Interpretation 266–67; Zimmermann, Die Thesen 232. He compares sin to an impure drop and Christ's righteousness to a whole sea. Von dem Einigen Mitler, Vr: "Dargegen/wan wir durch den Glauben in im sein/vnd er in vns/so werden wir in im auch Gottes Gerechtigkeit/wie er Suend worden ist/das ist/er vberschuettet und erfullet vns mit seiner Göttlichen Gerechtigkeit/wie wir in mit vnserm Sünden vberschüttet haben/das Gott selbs/vnd alle Engel/dieweil Christus vnser vnd in vns ist/eitel Gerechtigkeit in vns sehen/von wegen der allerhöchsten/ewigen/vnd vnentlichen Gerechtigkeit Christi/die seine Gottheit selbst ist/vnd in vns wonet. Vnd ob schon noch Sünd in vnserm fleisch wonet/vnd anklebt/So ists doch eben/als ein unreines tröpfflein/gegen einem gantzen reinen meer."

[64] *Ibid.* J2v.

[65] CR 7.894, cf. CR7.775, 893. Melanchthon at the beginning of the discourse asks Luther which of two views would he prefer, *gratia gratum faciens* or *imputatio dei.* Luther says that he would prefer the latter but adds no further elaboration. H. Bindseil, *Philippi Melanchthonis epistolia,* Halle 1874, 344. Osiander says of this discourse that Melanchthon could not turn Luther from speaking of the new birth. Widerlegung P3r.

coriates Wittenberg for having fallen so far from their master.[66] Both, of course, produced numerous citations from Luther's extant writings, and displayed their own considerable theological bias in assessing those passages – a bias which unfortunately remains today within a community torn between these two men and their ideas.[67] However, we for our own part will not pretend to be above the fray, but will venture our own interpretation of Luther and this debate – an interpretation which is admittedly prone towards Osiander, but hopefully more theologically sound and historically objective than most.

Luther appears to us, whether in his early or later works,[68] to prefer like Osiander a more substantial work of Christ in justifying the believer than Melanchthon's doctrine could and did warrant. Justification is not depicted as merely a forensic fiction, pronounced in heaven and separated from the work of Christ in us, but a present and ontic reality, related to the Christ who now lives as the source of life in the believer.[69] It is not a quiescent state of the divine intellect which delivers us from sin, but the dynamic power and activity of God which

[66] *Excerpta quaedam dilucide et perpicue dictorum, de iustificatione fidei in commentario super epistolam Pauli ad Galatas reverendi patris Domini Martini Lutheri,* Königsberg 1551, *passim*; Wider Azv, B4r; Von dem Einigen 76–77, 81ff., 154–55. Johannes Matthesius records Luther in the Table Talks as explicitly denouncing Osiander and his doctrine when it was layed before him at Smalcald (which would contradict Osiander's own version of this meeting). The testimony, however, appears to be fraudulent. Luther is alleged in this passage to have prophesied concerning a sect arising from Osiander a decade in advance. Specific mention is made of the negative reaction at Smalcald of Johannes Brenz, Osiander's most important ally, and praise is heaped upon Joachim Moerlin, Osiander's severest critic. This is all too much, WA, TR 4.634–35.

[67] E. Hirsch, F.C. Baur, A. Ritschl, R. Seeberg, and K. Holl may be listed among others who find Osiander in accordance with Luther and their theology. E. Hirsch, Die Theologie des Andreas Osiander und ihre geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen, Göttingen 1919, 211, 230; R. Seeberg, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, Basel 1953–54, IV/2, 500ff.; F.C. Baur, Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung, Tübingen 1838, 105ff.; 316ff.; A. Ritschl, Die Rechtfertigungslehre des Andreas Osiander, JDTh (1857/2) 795ff.; K. Holl, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte, Darmstadt 1965, 1:111ff.; 3:525ff. Others display a passion for Lutheran Orthodoxy and would find Moerlin and Melanchthon closer to Luther. E. Roth, Ein Braunschweiger Theologe des 16. Jahrhunderts, JGNK 59 (1952) 59ff.; M. Stupperich, Osiander aus Preussen; C. Lawrenz, On Justification, Osiander's Doctrine of Indwelling.

[68] The Vorlesung über den Roemerbrief (1515–16) and *In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas Commentarios* (1535) represent these two different eras, and both give strong and continuous testimony to the righteousness of Christ in us.

[69] WA 40/1, 283–84. WA 2.146: *Igitur per fidem in Christum fit iusticia Christi nostra iusticia et omnia quae sunt ipsius, immo ipsemet noster fit. … qui credit in Christo, haeret in Christo, estque unum cum Christo, habens eandem iusticam cum ipso. Ideo impossibile est, quod in eo maneat peccatum. Et haec iusticia est prima, fundamentum, causa, origo omnis iusticiae propriae seu actualis.* This has important ecumenical repercussions, as Luther can-

cleanses the believer from sin, daily vanquishing all demonic foes and "cementing" *(conglutino)* his own righteousness and life to us.[70] If it is to be regarded as "alien", it is only because it is instilled from without and we in ourselves are yet sinners.[71] *He* alone remains our righteousness. If it is to be described as an "imputation", it is only because we in ourselves are sinners and have a promise that one day in truth we will be delivered from all our sins.[72] Luther, in fact, explicitly complains at one point about those "new scholastics" who reduce justification to mere "imputation", as we saw earlier.[73] He refuses with Osiander to make justification a "pur lauter nichts".

However, regardless of the fundamental accord on some basic themes, there are also to be noted some clear and substantive differences between Luther and Osiander in their more specific teaching. For example, Osiander, along with

not be interpreted, as is too often the case, in absolute antithesis to the Catholic position. cf. M. Bogdahn, Die Rechtfertigungslehre Luthers im Urteil der neuen katholischen Theologie, Göttingen 1971, 125ff.

[70] WA 56.264; 2.495; 39/1. 113; 40/1.283ff. WA 39/1, 94–95, 98: *Remissio peccatorum non est praetereuntis operis aut actionis, sed perpetuo durantis. Incipit enim remissio peccatorum in baptismo, et durat nobiscum usque ad mortem, donec resurgamus a mortuis et inducat nos in vitam aeternam. Ita perpetuo vivimus sub remissione peccatorum et Christus vere et constanter est liberans a peccatis nostris, et dicitur salvator noster et salvat nos in auferendis nostris peccatis. Si autem salvat nos semper et perpetuo, igitur perpetuo sumus peccatores. Cum autem quodidie sumus peccatores, necesse est, etiam ut nunc sit in mortali nostro corpore peccatum. … Misericordia enim Dei ignoscens est charitas remittens interim, et accipit Deus peccatum realiter sic, ut non maneat peccatum, quia materialiter incipit purgari et totaliter remitti. Alias peccatum non est reatus transiens, sed quotidie iustificamur immerita remissione peccatorum et iustificatione misericordia Dei. Igitur perpetuo in hac vita manet peccatum, donec venerit hora extremi iudicii, et tunc demum perfecte iustificabimur.* L. Haikola, A Comparison of Melanchthon's and Luther's Doctrine of Justification, Dialog (1963) 38, 39.

[71] WA 56,279. WA 2.145,146: *Prima est aliena et ab extra infusa. Haec est qua Christus iustus est et iustificans per fidem, sicut i. ad Corin: i. Qui factus est nobis a deo sapientia et iusticia et sanctificatio et redemptio. … Haec igitur iusticia aliena et sine actibus nostris per solam gratiam infusa nobis, trahente intus scilicet patre nos ad Christum, opponitur peccato originali, quod alienum similiter est sine nostris actibus per solam generationem nobis cognatum et contractum. Et ita Christus expellit Adam de die in diem magis et magis, secundum quod crescit illa fides et cognitio Christi. Non enim total simul infunditur, sed incipit, proficit et perficitur tandem in fine per mortem.*

[72] WA 56.258, 269f.; 39/1.97–98, 111–12. WA 56.347: *Vide nunc, quod supra dixi, Quod simul Sancti, dum sunt Iusti, sunt peccatores; Iusti, quia credunt in Christum, cuius Iustitia eos tegit et eis imputatur, peccatores autem, quia non implent legem, non sunt sine concupiscentia, Sed sicut egrotantes sub cura medici, qui sunt re vera egroti, Sed inchoatiue et in spe sani seu potius sanificati i.e. sani fientes.*

[73] See above n. 21.

Melanchthon and most of his contemporaries, tends to connect the forgiveness of sin with what Christ did upon the cross and the imputation of that event to the present circumstance. In Luther, who admittedly lacks explicit, systematic clarity, the focus appears to be drawn more toward the power of the present Christ to effect the forgiveness and extirpation of sin than the cross itself. While Luther strongly attests to what Christ did through his passion and death, the cross itself does not so much effect salvation as produce a Savior who now possesses this power. This interpretation is particularly borne testimony in his persistent and stridulant cleaving to the real presence of Christ in his polemical struggles over the eucharist. Luther in the name of the present, living Savior stands opposed to Zwingli, Karlstadt and any who would circumscribe their only hope of salvation in heaven and "run to the cross" for the "forgiveness of sin".[74] Osiander, it is true, does recognize the connection in Luther's theology between his doctrine of justification and the eucharist, and does reprimand his opponents at several points for their Zwinglian emphasis upon the cross and disavowal of Christ as our righteousness.[75] Nonetheless, he still in most of his discussions reverts back to identifying the forgiveness of sin with the cross, and even when the power and presence of Christ are occasionally evoked, the reference is more to the eternal divine essence, as we have already seen, than to the Christ who has conquered sin and rose from the dead.

This continual emphasis upon the deity of Christ, along with its counterpart, the qualitative distinction between God and man, constitutes in the end the most fundamental difference, not only between himself and Luther, but also in regard to most of his contemporaries. Unlike Luther, he cannot unequivocally extol Christ as our righteousness, because righteousness is said to be an attribute of deity and cannot be accorded to his humanity. Unlike Melanchthon, he refuses to speak of Christ as infusing grace or a creaturely righteousness in us, for man is said to possess no righteousness in himself.[76] While this might not deter him from employing a term like "Gerechtmachung" in his analysis of the righteousness of God in us, he completely emasculates its more literal force, using it

[74] WA 18.203–04.

[75] Ein Disputation 70–71: "Vnd wer dise weiss vnserer Rechtfertigung nicht helt/er bekenne gleich mit dem mund was er wolle/so ist doch gewis/das er Zwinglisch is im hertzen. Dan es ist unmüglich/ das der solt glauben/das er were leib Christi im brot/ vnd sein wahres blut im Kelch sey/der nicht glaubet/das Ihesus Christus/warhafftiglich in dem Christlichen menschen wone."

[76] Osiander not only rejects that the *novitas* is our righteousness, as Melanchthon accuses him, but he turns around and rejects any place for a *novitas*, especially Melanchthon's in the believer as mixing God and man together. Widerlegung D3v–D4r, E3r, Fv, G3v, N4r. Wilson-Kastner believes that Osiander is indebted to Augustine's theology in this and other regards.

metaphorically to refer to our substantial union with the righteousness of Christ. Even the term "Gerechtsprechung" could never be taken by him as a literal declaration of God, pronouncing man to be righteous and so attribute to man what belongs solely to God. In all this, Osiander must be seen, above and beyond all his contemporaries, as attempting to wrestle with the relationship between divine righteousness and that righteousness we have in Christ in light of the qualitative distinction between God and man. For Osiander, God alone is righteous, not Christ's humanity, not Christ's death, not man's works and not man's essence.

No matter how one might feel about this matter or other details of Osiander's system we must at least recognize that the church has become greatly impoverished in adopting Melanchthon's one-dimensional concepts to the exclusion of other tensions in Luther's thought – tensions which Osiander had hoped to bring forth. Certainly, it cannot be denied that Melanchthon and his imputation of Christ's past work to our present circumstance does tend to diminish the paramountcy of the present work of Christ and his relationship to us as an integral aspect of our salvation. In his system, the *Christus Victor* of Paul who conquered sin and death,[77] the Priest-King of Hebrews who offers salvation in his ministry at the right hand of God,[78] and the Savior of John who lives as the source of eternal life within the hearts of Christians[79] do appear to have no essential role to fulfill. If all that is required subsists in the external imputation of the past work of Christ to the believer's account, then the life of Christ, i.e., his resurrection from the dead, his present mediatorial office and his immanence within the believer become unnecessary appendages which can be excised or excluded from the more vital parts of salvation. At best, the resurrection can only declare what was accomplished in death, and his priesthood only plead for the acceptance of a sacrifice which should have been sufficient and accepted in itself. At best, the Christ of heaven is merely a glorified prayer warrior, interceding in an office which should have already been fulfilled at the cross. At best, the Christ who indwells the believer is simply a tacked on blessing which has nothing whatsoever to do with the forgiveness of sin or the essence of salvation. At best, justifi-

Certainly there is found a similar emphasis upon *gratia increata* in contradistinction to the later Scholastic doctrine of *gratia creata.* Andreas Osiander's Theology of Grace in the Perspective of the Influence of Augustine of Hippo, SCJ 10/2 (1979) 75–76, 89, cf. Fligge, Zur Interpretation 276–77.

[77] Rom 5:21; 6:9; 14:8,9; 1 Cor 15:24ff.; Eph 1:10, 20–22; 4:8; Col 2:10, 15, cf. 2 Tim 1:10; Heb 2:14. John also considers the work of Christ a great exorcism of the devil and his forces. Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11, 33; I Jn 3:8; Rev 1:18; 12:10, 11; 20:14.

[78] Heb 4:16ff.; 5:9, 10; 6:20; 8:1, 2, 6; 9:15.

[79] Jn 6:33, 56, 57; 11:25; 14:19; I Jn 5:11, 12.

cation is only negative here, the absence (forgiveness) of sin, and not the positive presence of God in the believer. After all, there is a gap created by Melanchthon's system between salvation earned (the cross) and its application in justification which cannot be traversed except through a fictious predication of the past work of Christ to the present state of the believers – a predication which subsist only in the mind of God, and has no substantial in the object of its intendment.

In accordance with the spirit of Luther and Osiander, we would suggest that the only way to bridge the gap is through the one who did not leave his work in and to the past, who stands presently at the right hand of God, equipped with all power in heaven and earth, and is ready to save all those who draw near to God through him. The blessing of salvation are not, according to Scripture, procured by an appropriation of the cross through the fiction of an imputed righteousness, but reside in those who partake of the present life of Christ (Rom 5:10). Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God as a Savior, to forgive the sin of his people (Acts 5:31), to bestow eternal life on whomever the Father wills (Jn 17:2), and to dispense the gift of the Holy Spirit unto his elect, having received the promise from the Father (Acts 2:33, Jn 7:39, 16:7). He is now to be invoked as the new and living way to God (Heb 10:19, 20), ever living to make intercession for his people and complete the process of their salvation (Heb 7:25). One day, he will descend from heaven on the clouds and transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of his glory (Phil 3:21). Paul says that "in Christ"[80] are to be found salvation (II Tim 2:10), redemption (Col 1:14, Eph 1:7), forgiveness (Col 1:14, Eph 4:32), reconciliation (Col 1:22), justification (Rom 3:24), sanctification (I Cor 1:2), righteousness (II Cor 5:21), grace (II Tim 2:1), eternal life (Rom 6:23), and every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3, Col 1:28; 2:10). John says that he who has the Son has life and he who has not the Son has not life (I Jn 5:11, 12). It is simple as that. Jesus Christ, the one who lives to work for our redemption, whose efficacious power and presence has been united to us, is our life and is our salvation (Col 3:1–4). This was the essence of Osiander's position, a most important biblical teaching which the church chose to overlook after she condemned it with him and exalted Melanchthon as her Preceptor.

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[80] If Paul had meant this phrase as a mere metaphor, he certainly would not have returned to it so often. It obviously contains his most fundamental comprehension.