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# Luther and Theosis

Kurt E. Marquart

Inured by decades of perfunctory chatter, few now nurture great expectations for the “dialogues” of bureaucratic ecumenism. Yet truly significant events do occur there from time to time. There is no more eminent example than the Lutheran–Orthodox conversations conducted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church from 1970 to 1986—and this despite, or perhaps precisely because of, the modest aims of these exchanges.<sup>1</sup> The most dramatic development here—often described as a “breakthrough”—occurred at the Kiev meeting in 1977. The conversation partners discovered “with mutual astonishment” their considerable common ground in the Trinitarian and christological mysteries, in salvation history, and in their sacramental and eschatological orientations. The centerpiece at Kiev was the parallel between justification and deification, both “based on the real presence of Christ in the word of God, in the sacraments, and in worship.”<sup>2</sup>

The chief Lutheran spokesman on the subject was Helsinki University Professor Tuomo Mannermaa, who titled his lecture “Salvation

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<sup>1</sup>Kamppuri says that “the lack of an ecclesio-political goal has made the discussions ‘joyful ecumenism.’ There has been no desire to burden the discussions with sharply-defined objectives determined in advance” (Hannu T. Kamppuri, editor, *Dialogue Between Neighbours: The Theological Conversations between the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church, 1970-1986*, Publications of Luther-Agricola Society, Band 17 [Helsinki: Vammalan, 1986], 17). He goes on to note that both the Finnish and the Russian churches agreed “that in principle the eucharist should not be made a means of achieving unity, but that eucharistic fellowship expresses the already existing unity of the Church” (18-19).

According to Bishop Georg Kretschmar of the German Lutheran Church in Russia, the fifth bilateral dialogue (1988) between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Romanian Orthodox Church reached conclusions similar to those of the earlier Finnish-Russian talks (“Die Rezeption der orthodoxen Vergöttlichungslehre in der protestantischen Theologie,” in *Luther und Theosis*, Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg, Band 16 [Erlangen: Martin-Luther Verlag, 1990], 80).

<sup>2</sup>Hannu T. Kamppuri, editor, *Mikkeli 1986. The Seventh Theological Conversations between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church, Mikkeli, June 3<sup>rd</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, 1986*, Publications of Luther-Agricola Society, Band 16 (Helsinki: Vammalan, 1986), 14, 19.

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Interpreted as Justification and Deification." He expanded this 1977 essay into "*In Ipsa Fide Christus Adest*," which appeared in German in 1989, together with three related Mannermaa essays.<sup>3</sup> The Latin phrase, translated "in faith itself Christ is present," is a direct citation from Luther's comments on Galatians 2:16, which this paper later examines in detail.

The theme has given rise to considerable scholarly literature. Of most immediate interest here is the rediscovery of neglected elements in Luther's theology, especially of his close ties to the ancient fathers, and to Saint Athanasius in particular. Indeed, the impetus of the Finnish-Russian conversations was so fruitful in this respect that Dr. Ulrich Asendorf, of the Lutherakademie Ratzeburg, speaks of the new departure in Luther studies (led largely by Mannermaa, his colleagues, and his students) as the threshold of a third Luther Renaissance—the first two having been those of Karl Holl and of Joseph Lortz, the Roman Catholic revisionist, respectively.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from Mannermaa and the splendid summaries in *Luther Digest*, the rich material on the subject is only beginning to become available in English.<sup>5</sup> This study, "Luther and Theosis," relies chiefly on Mannermaa's

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<sup>3</sup>Tuomo Mannermaa, *Der Im Glauben Gegenwärtige Christus: Rechtfertigung und Vergottung. Zum ökumenischen Dialog. Arbeiten zur Geschichte und Theologie des Luthertums, Neue Folge, Band 8* (Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1989). The articles and their respective page numbers are: "*In ipsa fide Christus adest. Der Schnittpunkt zwischen lutherischer und orthodoxer Theologie*," 11-93; "*Das Verhältnis von Glaube und Nächstenliebe in der Theologie Luthers*," 95-105; "*Zwei Arten der Liebe. Einführung in Luthers Glaubenswelt*," 107-181; "*Grundlagenforschung der Theologie Martin Luthers und die Ökumene*," 183-200. These articles will be referenced in the remainder of the article according to shortened titles.

<sup>4</sup>Ulrich Asendorf, "Die Einbettung der Theosis in die Theologie Martin Luthers," in *Luther und Theosis, Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg, Band 16* (Erlangen: Martin-Luther Verlag, 1990), 85-102.

<sup>5</sup>Tuomo Mannermaa, "Theosis als Thema der Finnischen Lutherforschung," in *Luther und Theosis, Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg, Band 16* (Erlangen: Martin-Luther Verlag, 1990), 11-26; a translation of this article is available as "Theosis as a Subject of Finnish Luther Research," translated by Norman W. Watt, *Pro Ecclesia 4* (Winter 1995): 37-48. Further references will be to the translation. *Luther Digest: An Annual Abridgment of Luther Studies*, edited by Kenneth Hagen (Sherwood, Minnesota: Luther Academy, 1995), 133-175. One may also see the recently published *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther*, edited by Carl E. Braaten

"*In ipsa*" and on several recent volumes of the annual proceedings of the Lutherakademie Ratzeburg. Since the subject matter is complex, selectivity must constrain the efforts. First, this paper will sketch the notion of deification (θέωσις, ἀποθέωσις, θεοποίησις) with a few illustrative texts; second, sample Mannermaa's deployment of Luther texts, especially from the great Galatians commentary; third, note the criticism that the Luther Renaissance in the wake of Karl Holl was flawed by neo-Kantian preconceptions; and finally, assess the new understanding of Luther on justification, in terms of Formula of Concord III and its rejection of Osiandrianism.

## I.

The chief New Testament reference to theosis or deification is 2 Peter 1:4: "θείας, κοινωνοὶ, φύσεως" (AV: "partakers of the divine nature"; NEB: "come to share in the very being of God"). Certainly John 17:23 is to the point: "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given to them, that they may be one, as We are one; I in them and Thou in Me, may they be perfectly one" (NEB, upper case added). This at once suggests the divine nuptial mystery (Ephesians 5:25-32; one may compare 2:19-22 and Colossians 1:26-27), with its implied "wondrous exchange." That the final "transfiguration" of believers into "conformity" (σύμμορφον) with Christ's glorious body (Philippians 3:21; one may compare 1 Corinthians 15:49) has begun already in the spiritual-sacramental life of faith, is clear from "icon" texts like Romans 8:29, Colossians 3:10, and especially 2 Corinthians 3:18: "thus we are transfigured into His likeness, from splendor to splendor" (τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν). One may also wish to compare 2 Corinthians 4:16 and Ephesians 3:14-19.

The most celebrated patristic statement on the subject is no doubt that of Athanasius: "For He was made man that we might be made God (θεοποιηθῶμεν)."<sup>6</sup> To avoid any pantheistic misunderstandings, it is

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and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998).

<sup>6</sup>Athanasius, "On the Incarnation of the Word," paragraph 54.3, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, 14 volumes, edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 4:65. *St. Athanasius on the Incarnation*, with an introduction by C. S. Lewis (London: Mowbray, 1953), 93, renders it: "He, indeed, assumed humanity that we might become God."

necessary to see that "deification" applies first of all to the flesh of the incarnate Son of God Himself. It is simply a traditional way of putting what Lutherans now call the second genus, or the *genus maiestaticum*, of the communication of attributes. John of Damascus put it like this:

It is worthy of note that the flesh of the Lord is not said to have been deified and made equal to God and God in respect of any change or alteration, or transformation, or confusion of nature: as Gregory the Theologian says, "Whereof the one deified, and the other was deified, and, to speak boldly, made equal to God: and that which anointed became man, and that which was anointed became God." For these words do not mean any change in nature, but rather the oeconomical union. . . , and the permeation of the natures through one another, just as we saw that burning permeated the steel. For, just as we confess that God became man without change or alteration, so we consider that the flesh became God without change. For because the Word became flesh, He did not overstep the limits of His own divinity nor abandon the divine glories that belong to Him; nor, on the other hand, was the flesh, when deified, changed in its own nature or in its natural properties. For even after the union, both the natures abode unconfused and their properties unimpaired. But the flesh of the Lord received the riches of the divine energies through the purest union with the Word . . .<sup>7</sup>

In a 1526 sermon Luther said: "God pours out Christ His dear Son over us and pours Himself into us and draws us into Himself, so that He becomes completely humanified (*vermenschet*) and we become completely deified (*gantz und gar vergottet*, "Godded-through") and everything is altogether one thing, God, Christ, and you."<sup>8</sup> The following Luther

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<sup>7</sup>John of Damascus, "Exposition of the Orthodox Faith," *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, 14 volumes (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 9:65-66.

<sup>8</sup>Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 58 volumes (Weimar, 1883- ), 20:229,30 and following, cited in Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, volume 1 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962),175-176. The present author has altered the translation given there in order to make it more literal. All subsequent references to the Weimar edition of Luther's works will be abbreviated WA.

paragraphs, which appear in English in Mannermaa, are given here with some slight repairs of that translation:<sup>9</sup>

Sadly, this [life] is now unknown in the whole world, and is neither preached nor pursued; indeed, we are even quite ignorant of our own name, why we are Christians and are so-called. Surely we are so-called not from Christ absent, but from Christ dwelling [inhabitate] in us, that is, inasmuch as we believe in Him and are mutually one another's Christ, doing for neighbors just as Christ does for us.

We conclude therefore that the Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor, or he is no Christian; in Christ through faith, in the neighbor through love. Through faith he is rapt above himself into God, and by love he in turn flows beneath himself into the neighbor, remaining always in God and in His love.<sup>10</sup>

In an early (1515) Christmas sermon, Luther notes:

As the Word became flesh, so it is certainly necessary that the flesh should also become Word. For just for this reason does the Word become flesh, in order that the flesh might become Word. In other words: God becomes man, in order that man should become God. Thus strength becomes weak in order that weakness might become strong. The Logos puts on our form and figure and image and likeness, in order that He might clothe us with His image, form, likeness. Thus wisdom becomes foolish, in order that foolishness might become wisdom, and so in all other things which are in God and us, in all of which He assumes ours in order to confer upon us His [things].

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<sup>9</sup>"Theosis as a Subject," 48. Mannermaa himself recognizes that Luther's teaching of "a sort of theosis" may "not simply be equated with the patristic-Orthodox doctrine of deification" (7). For my own part I have no wish to advocate exotic theses of one sort or another. My chief purpose here is simply to let Luther himself speak to us in his own vivid way.

<sup>10</sup>*The Freedom of the Christian*, Latin: WA 7:66,69; German: WA 7:35-36,38; English: *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 volumes, edited by J. Pelikan and H. T. Lehmann (Saint Louis: Concordia and Philadelphia: Fortress, 1955-1986), 31:368, 371. In "Theosis as a Subject," the end of the first paragraph has been rendered "mutually in one another, another and different Christ. . ." Subsequent references to the American edition of Luther's works will be abbreviated LW.

We who are flesh are made Word not by being substantially changed into the Word, but by taking it on [*assumimus*] and uniting it to ourselves by faith, on account of which union we are said not only to have but even to be the Word.<sup>11</sup>

It may at first seem surprising that, so far as the actual use of the terms are concerned, there is in fact quite a bit more “deification” than “theology of the cross” language in Luther.<sup>12</sup> The reason should be obvious: “Deification” is part the church’s traditional vocabulary, while that profound opposition, “theology of the cross” versus “theology of glory,” is Luther’s own coinage.

## II.

What follows are some representative samples of Mannermaa’s use of Luther, citing the *Luther’s Works* version wherever possible.<sup>13</sup> Many of Mannermaa’s comments and the Luther citations may be found in full in the following translation. For the sake of clarity, Mannermaa’s thesis-like headings remain. The numbering and lettering will indicate omissions. Unless otherwise indicated, the Luther selections are from the 1535 Galatians Commentary.

### I. THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION AND CHRISTOLOGY

#### A. The Foundation of Justifying Faith in the Ancient Church’s Christology

##### 1. Christ as “the greatest sinner” (*maximus peccator*)

And all the prophets saw this, that Christ was to become the greatest thief, murderer, adulterer, robber, desecrator, blasphemer, etc., there has ever been anywhere in the world. He is not acting in His own person now. Now He is not the Son of God, born of the Virgin. But He is a sinner, who has and bears the sin of Paul, the former blasphemer, persecutor, and assaulter; of Peter, who denied Christ; of David, who was an adulterer and a murderer, and who caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord (Romans

<sup>11</sup>WA 1 28:25-32, 39-41. Cited in “Grundlagenforschung,” 192; “Zwei Arten,” 163.

<sup>12</sup>“Theosis as a Subject,” 37.

<sup>13</sup>“*In ipsa*,” 11-93.



2:24). In short, He has and bears all the sins of all men in His body—not in the sense that He has committed them but in the sense that He took these sins, committed by us, upon His own body, in order to make satisfaction for them with His own blood.<sup>14</sup>

“But it is highly absurd and insulting to call the Son of God a sinner and a curse!”

If you want to deny that He is a sinner and a curse, then deny also that He suffered, was crucified, and died. For it is no less absurd to say, as our Creed confesses and prays, that the Son of God was crucified and underwent the torments of sin and death than it is to say that He is a sinner or a curse. But if it is not absurd to confess and believe that Christ was crucified among thieves, then it is not absurd to say as well that He was a curse and a sinner of sinners [Mannermaa’s German: “arch-sinner”]. . . . Isaiah 53:6 speaks the same way about Christ. It says: “God has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” These words must not be diluted. . . .<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Christ as “the Greatest Person” (*maxima persona*) and “the only sinner” (*solus peccator*)

This is the most joyous of all doctrines and the one that contains the most comfort. It teaches that we have the indescribable and inestimable mercy and love of God. When the merciful Father saw that we were being oppressed through the law, that we were being held under a curse, and that we could not be liberated from it by anything, He sent His Son into the world, heaped all the sins of all men upon Him, and said to Him: “Be Peter the denier; Paul the persecutor, blasphemer, and assaulter; David the adulterer; the sinner who ate the apple in Paradise; the thief on the cross. In short, be the person of all men, the one who has committed the sins of all men. And see to it that You pay and make satisfaction for them.”<sup>16</sup>

## 3. Faith as Participation [*Teilhabe*] in Christ’s Person

Now that Christ reigns, there is in fact no more sin, death, or curse—this we confess every day in the Apostles’ Creed when we

<sup>14</sup>WA 40 1:433-434; LW 26:277.

<sup>15</sup>WA 40 1:434-436; LW 26:278.

<sup>16</sup>WA 40 1:437; LW 26:280.

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say: "I believe in the holy church." This is plainly nothing else than if we were to say: "I believe that there is no sin and no death in the church. For believers in Christ are not sinners and are not sentenced to death but are altogether holy and righteous, lords over sin and death who live eternally." But it is faith alone that discerns this, because we say: "I believe in the holy church." If you consult your reason and your eyes, you will judge differently. For in devout people you will see many things that offend you; you will see them fall now and again, see them sin, or be weak in faith, or be troubled by a bad temper, envy, or other evil emotions. "Therefore the church is not holy." I deny the conclusion that you draw. If I look at my own person or at that of my neighbor, the church will never be holy. But if I look at Christ, who is the Propitiator and Cleanser of the church, then it is completely holy; for He bore the sins of the entire world.

Therefore where sins are noticed and felt, there they really are not present. For, according to the theology of Paul, there is no more sin, no more death, and no more curse in the world, but only in Christ, who is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, and who became a curse in order to set us free from the curse. On the other hand, according to philosophy and reason, sin, death, etc., are not present anywhere except in the world, in the flesh, and in sinners. For the theology of the sophists is unable to consider sin any other way except metaphysically, that is: "A quality clings to a substance or a subject. Therefore just as color clings to a wall, so sin clings to the world, to the flesh, or to the conscience. Therefore it must be washed away by some opposing motivation, namely, by love." But the true theology teaches that there is no more sin in the world, because Christ, on whom, according to Isaiah 53:6, the Father has laid the sins of the entire world, has conquered, destroyed, and killed it in His own body. Having died to sin once, He has truly been raised from the dead and will not die any more (Romans 6:9). Therefore wherever there is faith in Christ, there sin has in fact been abolished, put to death, and buried. But where there is no faith in Christ, there sin remains.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>WA 40 1:444; LW 26:285-286. In the Creed we say that we believe "the holy

Omitting the rest, we go at once to the central point:

- B. 2. "*Fides Christo Formata*"<sup>18</sup> [Faith Formed by Christ]—(that is, in radical opposition to the scholastic "*fides charitate formata*" [faith formed by love])

But where they speak of love, we speak of faith. And while they say that faith is the mere outline [μυνόγραμμα] but love is its living colors and completion, we say in opposition that faith takes hold of Christ and that He is the form that adorns and informs faith as color does the wall. Therefore Christian faith is not an idle quality or an empty husk in the heart, which may exist in a state of mortal sin until love comes along to make it alive. But if it is true faith, it is a sure trust and firm acceptance in the heart. It takes hold of Christ in such a way that Christ is the object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak, the One who is present in the faith itself [*in ipsa fide Christus adest*]. Thus faith is a sort of knowledge or darkness that nothing can see. Yet the Christ of whom faith takes hold is sitting in this darkness as God sat in the midst of darkness on Sinai and in the temple. Therefore our "formal righteousness" is not a love that informs faith; but it is faith itself, a cloud in our hearts, that is, trust in a thing we do not see, in Christ, who is present especially when He cannot be seen.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore faith justifies because it takes hold of and possesses this treasure, the present Christ. But how He is present—this is beyond our thought; for there is darkness, as I have said. Where the confidence of the heart is present, therefore, there Christ is present, in that very cloud and faith. This is the formal righteousness on account of which a man is justified; it is not on account of love, as the sophists say. In short, just as the sophists say that love forms and trains faith, so we say that it is Christ who forms and trains

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church," not "in the holy church." The "in" is added by the *Lutheran Worship* translation. It is not in Luther's original.

<sup>18</sup>Mannermaa ("*In ipsa*," 36) credits the expression "for example" to Heiko A. Oberman ("*Luther und die scholastischen Lehren von der Rechtfertigung*," in *Der Durchbruch der reformatorischen Erkenntnis bei Luther*, edited by Bernhard Lohse [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968], 423).

<sup>19</sup>Literally: "Who, though utterly unseen, is nonetheless present" (author's translation).

faith or who is the form of faith. Therefore the Christ who is grasped by faith and who lives in the heart is the true Christian righteousness, on account of which God counts us righteous and grants us eternal life. Here there is no work of the law, no love; but there is an entirely different kind of righteousness, a new world above and beyond the law. For Christ or faith is neither the law nor the work of the law.<sup>20</sup>

This is why "faith makes a man God" (2 Peter 1:4) and again: "The one who has faith is a completely divine man [*plane est divinus homo*], a son of God, the inheritor of the universe. . . . Therefore the Abraham who has faith fills heaven and earth; thus every Christian fills heaven and earth by his faith. . . ." <sup>21</sup>

Obviously there are many implications here as well for love, good works, and other important topics, as Mannermaa indeed goes on to show from Luther. It is enough to note here that for Mannermaa justification and deification coincide in that climactic sentence of Luther's from his comments to Galatians 2:16: "*In ipsa fide Christus adest*. In faith itself Christ is present."<sup>22</sup>

### III.

Why was this whole dimension of Luther's thought lacking or downplayed in the so-called Luther Renaissance? Mannermaa and his circle answer that certain philosophical predilections held sway that tended to screen out Luther's strong ontological realism.<sup>23</sup> By "ontology" or the "ontic" the Finns mean to stress not some particular philosophy, but simply the importance of being, of what is, or is the case. They point out

<sup>20</sup>WA 40 I:228-229; LW 26:129-130.

<sup>21</sup>WA 40 I:182, 390; LW 26:100, 247, 248.

<sup>22</sup>"*In ipsa*," 92: "The content of Luther's conception of deification can be expressed briefly in his well-known sentence, *in ipsa fide Christus adest*."

<sup>23</sup>"Theosis as a Subject"; "*In ipsa*," 12,13; "Grundlagenforschung," 189-192; Risto Saarinen, "Gottes Sein – Gottes Wirken. Die Grunddifferenz von Substanzdenken und Wirkungsdenken in der evangelischen Lutherdeutung," in *Luther und Theosis*, Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg, Band 16 (Erlangen: Martin-Luther Verlag, 1990), 103-119; Risto Saarinen, "Die Teilhabe an Gott bei Luther und in der finnischen Lutherforschung," in *Luther und Ontologie*, Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg, Band 21 (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft; Erlangen: Martin-Luther Verlag, 1993), 167-182.

that the neo-Kantian German idealist, Hermann Lotze (1817-1881) held that things-in-themselves, even if they exist, are unknowable. Instead of "static" substances there are "dynamic" relations, that is, an ever churning process of mutually impinging "effects" (*Wirkungen*). Such effects can be perceived and understood only in the forms provided by our own nature. Religious effects or influences, according to Lotze, belong not to the realm of nature, but to the domain of the "personal," that is, ethics and aesthetics.

Lotze's philosophy, they argue further, shaped the theologies of the enormously influential scholars Albrecht Ritschl and Wilhelm Herrmann, as well as those of Karl Holl and Reinhold and Erich Seeberg. "For Holl," says Mannermaa, "the real presence of Christ in faith means ultimately the will of man himself, inspired and inflamed by the will of God."<sup>24</sup> Luther was understood as a foe of "metaphysics," that is, of the ontological "rigidities" of traditional dogma. For all their vocal opposition to liberalism, Karl Barth and neo-orthodoxy shared liberalism's hostility to "static" substance thinking, and promoted a "dynamic" stress on action and becoming.

The Finnish criticism draws attention to the more general plight of modern Western thought. C. E. M. Joad spoke of the "stigmata of decadence," prominent among them being "a preoccupation with the self and its experiences, promoted by and promoting the subjectivist analysis of moral, aesthetic, metaphysical and theological judgments."<sup>25</sup> C. S. Lewis, in his article "The Empty Universe," employs the brilliant image of two ledgers, Subject and Object. First, all the particulars we thought existed in the universe are item by item transferred from the objective to the subjective side of the account: "The Subject becomes gorged, inflated, at the expense of the Object." Then, when everything has been drained out of the Object into the Subject, the Subject self-destructs as well.<sup>26</sup> The witty Reverend Sydney Smith (1771-1845) could see the trend already in his day: "Bishop Berkeley destroyed this world in one

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<sup>24</sup>"Grundlagenforschung," 190.

<sup>25</sup>C. E. M. Joad, *Decadence: A Philosophical Inquiry* (London: Faber and Faber, n.d.), 117.

<sup>26</sup>C. S. Lewis, "The Empty Universe," in *Present Concerns: Essays by C.S. Lewis*, edited by Walter Hooper (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 81-85.

volume octavo; and nothing remained, after his time, but mind; which experienced a similar fate from the hand of Mr. Hume in 1739."<sup>27</sup>

To see what happens when theology catches the anti-ontological fever, one need only consult the *Christian Dogmatics* by Braaten and Jenson, where the pre-existence of the Son ("Jesus' metaphysical double"!) and the Spirit is ridiculed as a gratuitous invention of "timelessly antecedent extra entities." When the "extra" metaphysics are stripped away, here is what is left: "Truly, the Trinity is simply the Father and the man Jesus and their Spirit as the Spirit of the believing community."<sup>28</sup>

None of this quivering, anorexic ontology for Luther! He knows a God who is not gingerly beaming thoughts and effects at us from afar while taking care to keep His real being (if He has any!) well away from us. With Luther biblical realism is in full cry:

The fanatical spirits today speak about faith in Christ in the manner of the sophists. They imagine that faith is a quality that clings to the heart apart from Christ [*excluso Christo*]. This is a dangerous error. Christ should be set forth in such a way that apart from Him you see nothing at all and that you believe that nothing is nearer and closer to you than He. For He is not sitting idle in heaven but is completely present [*praesentissimus*] with us, active and living in us as chapter two says (2:20): "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me," and here: "You have put on Christ. . . ."

Hence the speculation of the sectarians is vain when they imagine that Christ is present in us "spiritually," that is, speculatively, but is present really in heaven. Christ and faith must be completely joined. We must simply take our place in heaven; and Christ must be, live, and work in us. But He lives and works in us, not speculatively but really, with presence and with power [*realiter, praesentissime et efficacissim*].<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Sydney Smith, *Sketches of Moral Philosophy*, cited in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 511.

<sup>28</sup>Carl Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, editors, *Christian Dogmatics*, 2 volumes (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 1:155. This of course is my example, not Mannermaa's.

<sup>29</sup>WA 40 1:545-546; LW 26:356-357; "In ipsa," 39-40.

By faith, finally,

you are so cemented [*conglutineris*] to Christ that He and you are as one person, which cannot be separated but remains attached [*perpetuo adhaerescat*] to Him forever and declares: "I am as Christ." And Christ, in turn, says: "I am as that sinner who is attached to Me, and I to him. For by faith we are joined together into one flesh and one bone." Thus Ephesians 5:30 says: "We are members of the body of Christ, of His flesh and of His bones," in such a way that this faith couples Christ and me more intimately than a husband is coupled to his wife.<sup>30</sup>

But does not the very idea of deification suggest a theology of glory more than the theology of the cross? That all depends on how deification is understood. Luther's understanding, as we have it before us at some length, is through and through the purest theology of the cross. Mannermaa treats this also in terms of the contrast between the upward reach of human love towards all that is great and worthy and impressive in itself (scholasticism!), and the downward reach of God's love, which does not find, but creates, its own object.<sup>31</sup>

The point of the theology of the cross is not that Christ or God is not glorious and powerful, or should not be treated and worshiped as such, but that we can know this glory and power only by faith which grasps God under the very opposite appearances.<sup>32</sup> It is ironic that the American translation of Heidelberg Thesis 19, which is pivotal for the whole theology of the cross, is marred by a serious error probably inspired by

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<sup>30</sup>WA 40 1:285-286; LW 26:168; "In ipsa," 51.

<sup>31</sup>"Zwei Arten," 130-145.

<sup>32</sup>See Luther on Romans 12:2 (1515), LW 25:538-439. Also, from his *Bondage of the Will* (LW 33:62): "[Heb. 11:1] Hence in order that there may be room for faith, it is necessary that everything which is believed should be hidden. It cannot, however, be more deeply hidden than under an object, perception, or experience which is contrary to it. Thus when God makes alive he does it by killing, when he justifies he does it by making men guilty. . . . Thus God hides his eternal goodness and mercy under eternal wrath, his righteousness under iniquity. This is the highest degree of faith, to believe him merciful when he saves so few and damns so many. . . ." For the best explanation of the theology of the cross one may see Hermann Sasse, "The Theology of the Cross," in *We Confess Jesus Christ*, translated by Norman Nagel (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 36-54.

the very philosophical prejudices mentioned above.<sup>33</sup> Instead of saying "That person does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God as though they were clearly perceptible in those things which have been made [Romans 1:20]," Harold J. Grimm renders the final words, incredibly: "which have actually happened"!<sup>34</sup> Here the essence of the theology of the cross, firm reliance on the life, death, and resurrection of Our Lord, "which have actually happened," is written off as theology of glory!

All right talk about deification must pass at least a twofold test, to be genuine theology of the cross. The first is whether God and His life are accessible directly, or only in the crucified and risen Savior, and in His gospel means of salvation alone. For Luther, clearly, deification does not mean that God and His uncreated light are directly and experientially accessible by means of devotional exercises.<sup>35</sup> On the contrary,

God conceals and covers [the church] with weaknesses, sins, errors, and various offenses and forms of the cross in such a way that it is not evident to the senses anywhere. Those who are ignorant of this are immediately offended when they see the weaknesses and sins of those who have been baptized, have the Word, and believe; and they conclude that such people do not belong to the church. Meanwhile they imagine that the church consists of the hermits, monks, etc., who honor God only with their lips and who worship Him in vain, because they do not teach the Word of God but the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:8-9). Because these men perform superstitious and unnatural works, which reason praises and admires, they are regarded as saints and as the church.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>See Reinhard Slenczka's profound observations on faith, Enlightenment, and history ("Die Gemeinschaft mit Gott als Grund und Gegenstand der Theologie. Vergöttlichung als ontologisches Problem," in *Luther und Theosis*, Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg, Band 16 [Erlangen: Martin-Luther Verlag, 1990], 27-48).

<sup>34</sup>LW 31:40

<sup>35</sup>Such is the case, apparently, with Gregory Palamas. One may see Georgios Mantzaridis, *The Deification of Man* (Crestwood, New York: Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 96-104.

<sup>36</sup>LW 27:84-85.



In fact, "God dwells only in the man who perceives himself to be *farther from God and nearer the devil*. Precisely such a man is a *glorious dwelling, palace, hall and paradise, in which God dwells on earth*."<sup>37</sup> Elert also notes the abiding importance of "self-accusation" in Luther, in contrast to mysticism.<sup>38</sup> Although God the Blessed Trinity dwells in us, faith must seek and grasp Him not there or in fancied ecstasies, but solely and alone in His outward channels of salvation: "In the state of glory the Word will be without voice and letter, but in the state of wayfaring the Word is wrapped 'in sound, voice, and letters, just as honey is in the honeycomb, the kernel in the nut, marrow in the bones or the life in the flesh or the Word in the Flesh.'"<sup>39</sup>

The second test is whether deification is driven by the downward movement of God or by the upward movement of man. Luther's answer is clear:

And that we are so filled with "all the fulness of God," that is said in the Hebrew manner, meaning that we are filled in every way in which He fills, and become full of God, showered with all gifts and grace and filled with His Spirit, Who is to make us bold, and enlighten us with His light, and live His life in us, that His bliss make us blest, His love awaken love in us. In short, that everything that He is and can do, be fully in us and mightily work, that we be completely deified [*vergottet*], not that we have a particle or only some pieces of God, but all fulness. Much has been written about how man should be deified; there they made ladders, on which one should climb into heaven, and much of that sort of thing. Yet it is sheer piecemeal effort; but here [in faith] the right and closest way to get there is indicated, that you become full of God, that you lack in no thing, but have everything in one heap, that everything that

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<sup>37</sup>"Zwei Arten," 160 (on the basis of Cruciger's summer postil [1544], WA 21:457).

<sup>38</sup>Elert, *Structure*, 80-90, 140 and following; 166-176. I am indebted to Don Matzat for a timely reminder of these valuable references, "Assessing the Promise Keepers," *Christian News* (December 25, 1995): 1, 7-8.

<sup>39</sup>"Grundlagenforschun," 193, citing the 1515 Christmas sermon, WA 1:29. One may also refer to *Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments* (1525), LW 40:79-223.

you speak, think, walk, in sum, your whole life be completely divine [Gottisch].<sup>40</sup>

When one ponders the lively, full-blooded realism of Luther's theology, one can only wonder how such a legacy could have been so tragically squandered in world "Lutheranism" over the centuries. Chesterton complained about the Church of England's tendency to tolerate "underbelievers" but to persecute "overbelievers." Why this preference for ever less, for the minimal? Reductionist philosophy alone is hardly the whole story. Sin has a way of defending itself against God's saving incursions on a broad front. Two quite arbitrary examples, both of them to do with hymns, illustrate the thinning-out process.

Consider the sixth stanza of Nikolaus Herman's great Christmas hymn, "Praise God the Lord, Ye Sons of Men":

A wondrous change which He does make!  
He takes our flesh and blood,  
And He conceals for sinners' sake  
His majesty of God.<sup>41</sup>

These are worthy thoughts, but they fail to convey the original sense:

Er wechselt mit uns wunderbarlich:  
Fleisch und Blut nimmt Er an  
Und gibt uns in seins Vaters Reich  
Die klare Gottheit dran.

The original "exchange" has become a mere one-way "change" in English. And instead of *imparting* to us His "glorious Divinity" or "Godhead," the translation has Him merely *concealing* His "majesty of God"! *Lutheran Worship* Hymn 44, while getting rid of "sons" and "men," does improve what now becomes the fourth stanza, by restoring a genuine "exchange." But "His glory and his name" is still rather pale beside "His glorious Divinity."

The second example comes from the new Russian-German hymn-book "for divine services and official acts in Evangelical Lutheran

<sup>40</sup>Sermon of 1525, WA 17 1:438; "In ipsa," 54.

<sup>41</sup>*The Lutheran Hymnal*, Hymn 105.

congregations and in the family circle."<sup>42</sup> Of the 106 hymns, only one [46] is for holy baptism, but does not mention baptism (though the one confirmation hymn [75] does). There is only one hymn [77] for the Holy Supper, and it does not mention the Lord's body and blood. The four hymns [78-81] for confession and repentance mention neither absolution nor keys. The frightful decades of Communist persecution do not explain such sacramental impoverishment.

If there is such a thing as a characteristic "structure of Lutheranism,"<sup>43</sup> which distinguishes it from other confessions, then it must lie surely in a relentless realism of faith that will not let any of God's life-bearing gifts be spirited away into significances and abstractions. In theology *ἀλλοίωσις* has meant two quite opposite things. Zwingli used it as a device to shift the mysterious "exchange" between human and divine from the person of Christ to mere words. That is an unhappy exchange! John of Damascus apparently used the same term to express the genuine reciprocity of the Incarnation (first genus)—a happier exchange.<sup>44</sup> But the happiest exchange of all is that by which the Prince of Righteousness trades places with us paupers of sin—as Luther never tired of proclaiming in ever new and fresh imagery. Ulrich Asendorf has well said that Luther not only appropriated the full christological substance of the ancient church, but, "unlike the Eastern Tradition, gave it a Pauline interpretation and deepened it."<sup>45</sup> The East unfortunately missed out

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<sup>42</sup>*Russko-nemetskii sbornik dukhovnykh pesen. Russisch-Deutsches Gesangbuch* (Erlangen: Martin-Luther Verlag, 1995).

<sup>43</sup>Werner Elert meant by this "structure" or "morphology" something broader than the configuration of confessional constituents I am tracing. He saw that theology does and must have consequences for the concrete embodiment of the church's life. His wide-ranging discussion supplies solid antidotes to the vapid isolation of "style" from "substance" now in vogue.

<sup>44</sup>Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 volumes (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951-1953), 2:11,144; Martin Chemnitz (*The Two Natures in Christ*, translated by J. A. O. Preus [Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971], 167) says that, in Book 3, Chapter 4 of his *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, John of Damascus has "*ἀλλοίωσις καὶ ἀντίδοσις*." In fact only "*ἀντίδοσις*" is found there (MPG 94:1000). Paul Jackson, Robert Smith, and D. Richard Stuckwisch have located all thirteen occurrences of *ἀλλοίωσις* in John of Damascus. The term has a respectable history in classical Greek.

<sup>45</sup>Ulrich Asendorf, "Rechtfertigung und Vergottung als Thema in Luthers Theologie und als Brücke zur Orthodoxie," *Ökumenische Rundschau* 41 (1992): 177.

twice on the great debates about soteriology, once in Saint Augustine's time and the second time a thousand years later in Luther's.

Very God of very God, a real incarnation, genuine, full, and free forgiveness, life, salvation and communion with the Holy Trinity, imparted in the divinely powerful gospel and sacraments—including the evagelic doctrine as revealed, heavenly truth, not academic guesswork,<sup>46</sup> and the true body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar—all these mysteries to be cherished and handled for the common good by responsible householders in the God-given office, rightly dividing law and gospel (*sola fide!*): do not these constitute the "structure of Lutheranism"?

#### IV.

It remains only to test certain conclusions by the Formula of Concord. It should be clear from the outset, as Mannermaa also points out,<sup>47</sup> that FC III cannot possibly intend to reject the doctrine of Luther's Galatians commentary, because Article III concludes with an express approval of that commentary: "If anybody regards anything more as necessary by way of a detailed explanation of this high and important article of justification before God, on which the salvation of our souls depends, we direct him for the sake of brevity to Dr. Luther's beautiful and splendid exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians."<sup>48</sup>

What then of the customary opposition between Christ for and outside of us (*pro nobis, extra nos*) and Christ in us (*in nobis*)? Is it not Osiandrian to place the righteousness of faith in us rather than strictly *outside* of us? Is not Luther's "*in* faith itself Christ is present" therefore Osiandrian?

Actually the opposition between "*in*" us and "*outside*" of us is a rule of thumb rather than a precise doctrinal definition. Its intent is certainly

<sup>46</sup>One may see Eeva Martikainen, "Die Lehre und die Anwesenheit Gottes in der Theologie Luthers," in *Luther und Theosis*, Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg, Band 16 (Erlangen: Martin-Luther Verlag, 1990), 215-232; and Eeva Martikainen, *Doctrina: Studien zu Luthers Begriff der Lehre*, Schriften der Luther Agricola-Gesellschaft, Band 26 (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1992).

<sup>47</sup>"*In ipsa*," 16.

<sup>48</sup>FC SD III:67, in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, edited by Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 551. References to this source will be abbreviated "Tappert."

correct, but as a form of words it is neither taught by the Formula, nor does it belong to the *status controversiae*, the point at issue, in the Osiandrian dispute.

In FC III one looks in vain for a dogmatic contrast between “inside” and “outside.” That is not the issue. Rather, it is whether Christ is our righteousness only according to His divine nature (Osiander), or only according to the human (Stancarus), or according to both. The Formula of course settles the matter in the third sense:

Against both parties the other teachers of the Augsburg Confession held unanimously that Christ is our righteousness, not according to the divine nature alone or according to the human nature alone but according to both natures; as God and man he has by his perfect obedience redeemed us from our sins, justified and saved us. Therefore they maintained that the righteousness of faith is forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and the fact that we are adopted as God’s children solely on account of the obedience of Christ, which, through faith alone, is reckoned by pure grace to all true believers as righteousness, and that they are absolved from all their unrighteousness because of this obedience.<sup>49</sup>

At first sight it does indeed appear as though the Formula excluded Christ’s indwelling from justification.<sup>50</sup> A careful reading of the two relevant formulations, however, shows that only the Osiandrian justification-by-indwelling-essential-righteousness is rejected. The question is whether Christ is present or absent in justifying faith—and where would He be? Perhaps locally confined in “heaven”?—is not at issue at all:

We must also explain correctly the discussion concerning the indwelling of God’s essential righteousness in us. On the one hand, it is true indeed that God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is the

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<sup>49</sup>FC SD III:4, Tappert, 539-540.

<sup>50</sup>Mannermaa does not assert this outright, but cautiously formulates the “problem, that the relation of ‘justification’ and ‘indwelling of God in man’ is defined [by the Formula] at least conceptually differently from the way it is defined in Luther’s theology” (“*In ipsa*,” 14). It is true of course that crisp and precise doctrinal definitions, of the sort useful in settling disputes, lack the imaginative exuberance of Luther’s preaching and teaching. But this does not mean a difference in doctrine.

eternal and essential righteousness, dwells by faith in the elect who have been justified through Christ and reconciled with God, since all Christians are temples of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who impels them to do rightly. But, on the other hand, this indwelling of God is not the righteousness of faith of which Saint Paul speaks and which he calls the righteousness of God, on account of which we are declared just before God. This indwelling follows from the preceding righteousness of faith, which is precisely the forgiveness of sins and the gracious acceptance of poor sinners on account of the obedience and merit of Christ.<sup>51</sup>

The following error is rejected and condemned: "That faith does not look solely to the obedience of Christ, but also to his divine nature in so far as it dwells and works within us, and that by such indwelling our sins are covered up in the sight of God."<sup>52</sup>

What is rejected is not that in "faith itself Christ is present," but that faith looks "also to his divine nature in so far as it dwells and works in us" for justification. In other words, in so far as faith produces inner renewal or sanctification. It is a question of "this indwelling" or "such indwelling," that is, Osiander's sort of "indwelling of God's essential righteousness" that is rejected. Luther's *in ipsa fide Christus adest* "in faith itself Christ is present" is quite untouched by the rejection of Osiander's fancies.

The whole point of the contrast between the "in us" [*in uns, in nobis*] of FC SD III:32 and the "outside" [*ausserhalb, extra nos*] of FC SD III:55 is to safeguard the difference between the "inchoate righteousness" of renewal, love, and good works, and the "imputed [*zugerechnet, imputatam*] righteousness," by which latter alone we are justified and saved. "In us" and "for us" have become shorthand for the inchoate and the imputed righteousness respectively. The first is renewal or sanctification, but the second defines, constitutes, and alone is justification. Insistence on "faith alone" is necessary to keep these two quite different things from being mixed and muddled together:

That faith's sole office and property is to serve as the only and exclusive means and instrument with and through which we receive,

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<sup>51</sup>FC SD III:54, Tappert, 548-549.

<sup>52</sup>FC SD III:63, Tappert, 550.

grasp, accept, apply to ourselves, and appropriate the grace and the merit of Christ in the promise of the gospel. From this office and property of application and appropriation we must exclude love and every other virtue or work.<sup>53</sup>

But is it possible to “receive, grasp, accept, apply to ourselves, and appropriate” Christ’s merit apart from His person? Mannermaa is quite right about Luther not separating “the person (*persona*) and the work (*officium*) of Christ from one another.”<sup>54</sup> He is mistaken, however, if he suggests thereby that the Formula does so. In fact Article III states: “Our righteousness rests neither upon his divine nature nor upon his human nature but upon the entire person of Christ, who as God and man in his sole, total, and perfect obedience is our righteousness.”<sup>55</sup> And “Faith thus looks at the person of Christ, how this person was placed under the law for us, bore our sin, and in his path to the Father rendered to his Father entire, perfect obedience from his holy birth to his death in the stead of us poor sinners.”<sup>56</sup>

The antithesis is always Osiander, with his fatal confusions, not Luther’s wonderful realism about Christ and faith. And of course, even though Christ is “in” justifying faith, and that faith is obviously “in” us, yet it takes us “beyond”<sup>57</sup> and hence outside ourselves (*extra nos*), so that our “life is hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3).

The central issue is whether justification is the forgiveness of sins – with everything else coming after (logically, not temporally) – or whether it is also the internal renewal. Imputation or transformation – that is and remains the watershed question. The received wisdom is that Luther cheerfully brewed and stewed the two together, and that the insistence on a clear demarcation between them came later, for example with the “purely forensic” view of the Formula of Concord. It is simply not true, as Alister McGrath claims in his impressively comprehensive and valuable opus, *Iustitia Dei*, that “Luther and Augustine concur in understanding justification as an all-embracing process, subsuming the beginning, development and subsequent perfection of the Christian

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<sup>53</sup>FC SD III:38, Tappert, 546.

<sup>54</sup>“*In ipsa*,” 15.

<sup>55</sup>FC SD III:55, Tappert, 549.

<sup>56</sup>FC SD III:58, Tappert, 550.

<sup>57</sup>“*supra*,” LW 31:371.

life."<sup>58</sup> Small wonder then that he can conclude that "Luther's concept of justification, his concept of the presence of Christ within the believer, his doctrine of double predestination, his doctrine of *servum arbitrium*—all were rejected or radically modified by those who followed him."<sup>59</sup>

Given this climate of scholarly opinion, it is disappointing to find Mannermaa saying: "The subdivision into justification and sanctification, which established itself within later Lutheranism, is as such no central distinction in the theology of Luther."<sup>60</sup> As an illustration of Luther's "not purely forensic" understanding, Mannermaa cites the sentence: "To take hold of the Son and to believe in Him with the heart as the gift of God causes [*hoc facit*] God to reckon that faith, however imperfect it may be, as perfect righteousness."<sup>61</sup> The sentence has been over-interpreted. Clearly all Luther means is that faith is, by God's own arrangement, the instrumental or receiving cause of justification. When by faith we embrace the promise, "this brings it about" (*hoc facit*) that faith is given what it believes.

More plausible is Mannermaa's citation of Luther's sentence: "Hence faith begins righteousness, but imputation perfects it [*fides . . . incipit, reputatio perficit*] until the day of Christ."<sup>62</sup> Taken on its own it appears quite strange. The context, however, leaves no doubt about Luther's real intent. As in his explanation of the First Commandment, Luther stresses the glorious nature of faith as "the supreme allegiance, the supreme obedience, and the supreme sacrifice," because it attributes "to Him His glory and His divinity."<sup>63</sup> Luther is singing the praises of faith, in deliberate opposition to the scholastic notion of faith as a dead, cerebral specter, which needs something else, namely love, to make it come alive and amount to something before God. Then, of course, he has to conclude that even this precious, glorious faith is only weak and embattled in us, hence needing the gift of the total imputation of Christ's merit. This whole discussion must be understood therefore within the brackets of the

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<sup>58</sup> Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 2 volumes (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 2:18.

<sup>59</sup> McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 2:32.

<sup>60</sup> "In ipsa," 56.

<sup>61</sup> LW 26:234; WA 40 1:371.

<sup>62</sup> LW 26:230; WA 40 1:364.

<sup>63</sup> LW 26:226-227.



dignity of real faith versus the scholastic trivialization. But this does not mean that the inherent renewal of faith and all its fruits is in principle prior, and imputation secondary.

The absolute priority of imputation and its exclusive sway in justification is clear, for instance, from Luther's comment on Galatians 5:16, which Mannermaa also cites: "Shaded and protected by this covering, this heaven of the forgiveness of sins and this mercy seat, we begin to love and to keep the Law. As long as we live, we are not justified or accepted by God on account of this keeping of the Law."<sup>64</sup>

The difference in terminology between Luther and the Formula should not seduce us into the optical illusion of a difference in doctrine. Luther insists just as rigidly, as does the Formula, on a radical differentiation between imputed and inchoate righteousness, only his terms for this are "passive" and "active" righteousness. Luther devotes a whole introductory section to this topic, under the title, "The Argument of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians."<sup>65</sup> The distinctively "Christian righteousness," by which alone we are justified and saved, "is heavenly and passive," that is, Christ's.<sup>66</sup> All the various forms of earthly, active righteousness are excluded from this.

The Formula of Concord teaches and intends nothing else. In a sense even the Formula goes beyond the purely forensic, when it includes faith itself as one of the "only essential and necessary elements of justification," together with the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and the promise of the gospel.<sup>67</sup> This is why the Formula must allow "regeneration" and "vivification," in the strictly limited sense of the creation of justifying faith, as synonyms of justification.<sup>68</sup>

Luther's sublime comment on Psalm 5:2-3 provides a suitable conclusion:

By the reign of His humanity or (as the Apostle says) His flesh, which takes place in faith, He conforms us to Himself and crucibles us, making genuine men, that is wretches and sinners, out of

<sup>64</sup>LW 27:64; WA 40 11:80. Cited in "In ipsa," 74.

<sup>65</sup>LW 26:4-12.

<sup>66</sup>LW 26:8.

<sup>67</sup>FC SD III:25, Tappert, 543; one may compare Apology IV:53, Tappert, 114.

<sup>68</sup>FC SD III:19-20, Tappert, 542.

unhappy and haughty gods. For because we rose in Adam towards the likeness of God, He came down into our likeness, in order to lead us back to a knowledge of ourselves. And this takes place in the mystery [*sacramentum*] of the Incarnation. This is the reign of faith, in which the Cross of Christ holds sway, throwing down a divinity perversely sought and calling back a humanity [with its] despised weakness of the flesh, which had been perversely abandoned. But by the reign of [His] divinity and glory He will conform [*configurabit*] us to the body of His glory, that we might be like Him, now neither sinners nor weak, neither led nor ruled, but ourselves kings and sons of God like the angels. Then will be said in fact "my God," which is now said in hope. For it is not unfitting that he says first "my King" and then "my God," just as Thomas the Apostle, in the last chapter of Saint John, says, "My Lord and my God." For Christ must be grasped first as Man and then as God, and the Cross of His humanity must be sought before the glory of His divinity. Once we have got Christ the Man, He will bring along Christ the God of His Own accord.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>*Operationes in Psalmos* (1519-1521), WA 5:128-129. I am indebted for this reference to Walter Mostert, "Martin Luther – Wirkung und Deutung," in *Luther im Widerstreit der Geschichte*, Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg, Band 20 (Erlangen: Martin-Luther Verlag, 1993), 78.