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EDITORS:

REV. PROFESSOR T. F. TORRANCE

REV. PROFESSOR J. K. S. REID

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THE JUSTIFICATION OF A SINNER BEFORE GOD

AS TAUGHT IN LATER LUTHERAN ORTHODOXY

by THE REV. PROFESSOR R. PREUS

DURING the history of the Lutheran Church the doctrine of justification has been spoken of commonly and rather loosely as the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*. This was certainly the conviction of Luther, as many of his statements testify. The purpose of this study is to examine the teaching of John Andrew Quenstedt, the most prominent and able representative of the later seventeenth-century Lutheran orthodoxy, on this doctrine and to learn how closely the dogmatics of his time approximates the emphasis and terminology of Luther. Quenstedt is the 'book-keeper'—one might say the Aquinas—of Lutheran scholasticism, and he quite accurately sums up the theology of the entire century. It might be said by way of introduction that modern Lutheranism owes much to the dogmaticians of the age of orthodoxy for the manner in which it deals with this doctrine; and for this reason I feel justified in presenting an article of this nature.¹ I propose merely to summarise Quenstedt's treatment of the doctrine of justification, and to offer comments when I deem them necessary.² I believe that the reader will find that Quenstedt's presentation is quite well balanced and that it gives the impression of being consistently drawn from Scripture. At least it is obvious that this is Quenstedt's persuasion as he develops the doctrine.

At the outset of his discussion Quenstedt wishes to show his dependence upon Luther by insisting that justification must be considered the central doctrine of theology. He says that the doctrine of the justification of a sinner before God 'is the citadel of the whole Christian religion; the nexus by which all members of the body of Christian doctrine are joined together; and should this doctrine be violated, all the remaining articles will be abandoned and overthrown'. Then in characteristic

¹ cf. Koeberle, *The Quest for Holiness*, N.Y., 1936; F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, St. Louis, 1951; Elert, *Der Christliche Glaube*, Hamburg, 1956, pp. 470ff; et al.

² All references and quotations from Quenstedt's *Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum*, de justificatione, sect. 1, unless otherwise stated.

fashion he listens to some of the fine statements of Luther and others on the importance of this article. Luther in his comments on Gen. 21 says (Erl. ed. Lat., 10.137): 'This is the highest article of our faith, and if one should abandon it as the Jews do or pervert it like the Papists, the Church cannot stand nor can God maintain His glory which consists in this, that He might be merciful and that He desires to pardon sins for His Son's sake and to save.'¹ Quenstedt also quotes the classic statement from Chemnitz (*Loci Theologici*, 1653 ed., II, 200): 'This article is in a sense a stronghold and the high fortress of all the doctrine and of the entire Christian religion; if it is obscured or adulterated or set aside, the purity of doctrine in other articles of faith cannot possibly be maintained. But if this article is kept pure, all idolatry, superstitions, and whatever corruptions there are in the other articles of faith tumble down from their own weight.' The final introductory quotation of Quenstedt's is from B. Meisner (*Ἀνθρωπολογία Sacrae . . .*, 3rd ed., Wittebergae, 1663, Decas. III, Disp. XXIV, p. 139): 'This article is the central point of theology according to which all other articles of faith are adjusted; it is the sacred ocean into which all other doctrines flow, it is the treasure chest of our faith which keeps safe and unharmed all the other doctrines.' Quenstedt probably takes these quotations from Gerhard and Meisner who both offer even more statements of Luther on the importance of this doctrine. Both Meisner and Gerhard quote, for instance, the well-known statement of Luther (op. cit., 21.3): 'In my heart one article alone rules supreme, that of faith in Christ, by whom, through whom and in whom all my theological thinking flows back and forth day and night. And still I find that I have grasped this so high and broad and deep a wisdom only in a weak and poor and fragmentary manner.' When K. Barth² points out that no one ever followed Luther's emphasis to the point of actually planning and organising an evangelical dogmatics around the article of justification he is correct, and his words also apply to Quenstedt. But this does not imply any lessening of emphasis on the centrality of this doctrine.³ The fact is that no doctrine was made a unifying

¹ Quenstedt also cites similar statements of Luther. Erl. ed. Lat., 21.12, 20.

² *Church Dogmatics*, IV, 1, p. 522.

³ Chemnitz in his *Loci Theologici* devotes no less than 100 folio pages to the doctrine of justification and often calls this the central teaching of Christian

principle in the dogmatics of the orthodox Lutheran theologians; to attempt such a thing never occurred to them. It is unfortunate, as Barth points out, that the later orthodox Lutherans called the doctrine of justification by faith alone a secondary fundamental doctrine.¹ However, Hollaz meant only to stress the fact that one could be saved without knowing explicitly the doctrine of justification by faith alone in its proper formulation; and this would obtain in the case of many simple Christians who could not adequately express their faith in this manner. But that faith saves Hollaz calls a fundamental article (*articulus fidei constituens*). And the doctrine that Christ is Mediator, the doctrine of the atonement, the doctrine of the justifying grace of God—these also are called *articuli fidei constituentes*. But it can only lead to confusion when Hollaz makes justification a fundamental article and justification by faith alone a secondary fundamental article. These two ideas cannot be separated.

Barth says that the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* is not the doctrine of justification as such, but its basis and culmination. In saying this he is not going beyond Luther and the later dogmaticians. Luther often speaks merely of the article of Christ as the teaching upon which everything else hangs, and he means by this the teaching concerning the work of Christ.² The dogmaticians too when they speak of justification as the article upon which all theology depends are thinking of justification in the wider sense, for in every discussion of the doctrine they include a thorough treatment of its basis (Christ's work) and its aim and effects (*unio mystica*, sonship, peace of conscience, sanctification and eternal life).

Proceeding to the actual presentation of the doctrine Quenstedt begins with a simple word study of the pertinent verbs and their cognates. The words 'to justify' (*δικαιοῦν*, קִדְּוֹ) in Scripture never signify a justification through infusion of new qualities, but they are used to denote an action whereby God justifies the impious before His bar, in a forensic sense. In

theology. Gerhard too is very thorough in his treatment of the doctrine and in his discussion on justification (*Loci Theologici*, Tom. VII) he includes his presentation of the work of Christ.

¹ Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, prol. I, 33. Hollaz, *Examen Theologicum Aroamaticum*, prol. quaes. 19-24.

² cf. Erl. Aufl., 50.26-29, 48.18, 40.324ff.

Scripture the term often means (a) a recognition of divine righteousness (*justitiae divinae agnitio*), Ps. 51.4; Luke 7.29. Again it can mean (b) that a person is seen to be just by his works (Jas. 2.12). In this case there is no reference to the righteousness which is imputed to faith, but to the fact that a man's faith through which he becomes righteous is shown by his works. The term means (c) a devoting of oneself to the study of righteousness, Dan. 12.3. It denotes (d) a continuation in righteousness, Rev. 22.11: 'And he that is righteous, let him be righteous still.' This verse either implies an *actus continuatio* in which case we should try diligently to retain the righteousness of faith which we have, or it implies an *actus reiteratio* according to which he who falls into sin should through repentance return to God and be justified again. The word denotes (e) a sinfulness which is called by the name of righteousness when compared to worse sin, Ezek. 16-51, Jer. 3.11. The term points sometimes merely to (f) the attempt to arrogate to oneself the title of righteous, Luke 10.29, 16.15. It may denote (g) a censure or reprehending (*traductio et reprehensio*), Matt. 11.19. This at least represents the opinion of Luther, Brenz, Chemnitz, Hunnius, Osiander, Gerhard and others on this passage. The word may denote (h) a liberation from sin, Rom. 6.7, 18, 22. The term points (i) to the administrating of justice between contending parties, 2 Sam. 15.4. The word refers finally to (j) a forensic act of a judge and of justice (*actus judicialis*), by which a person is judicially declared righteous, Deut. 25.1, Prov. 17.5, Matt. 12.37. 'And in those passages where the justification of a sinner before God is spoken of the word "to justify" is always used in the forensic sense.' This becomes clear when we notice the contrast to this justification, viz. judgment which even Bellarmine grants must be considered a forensic act of God. Christ and the apostles employ the two terms as opposites consistently (John 3.18, 5.24; Rom. 5.19; Acts 10.43). 'We conclude then that the word "to justify" never means in Scripture to pour the quality of righteousness into somebody, but in this connexion it denotes nothing else than to establish righteousness forensically, or to make righteous by an act which is entirely outside man.'

The subject (*subjectum*) of justification, considered as the *terminus a quo*, is sinful man (cf. Rom. 3.23). With these words

of the apostle the indisposition of man towards his own justification is graphically described, and that *intensively* by virtue of the extreme misery of man and the total corruption of his faculties, and also *extensively* since all men are subject to the curse of the Law. The apostle describes the *subjectum justificandum* (1) by his common state of corruption in that all have sinned, and (2) by his lacking of glory which he possessed in his original state of integrity and righteousness. However, it cannot be said that man is justified in so far as he is a sinner (*quatenus in statu peccati est*) and is deprived of the glory of God, but sinful man (*homo peccator*) is justified in so far as he is born again and believes. Therefore we say that the *subjectum justificandum*, when justification is considered as a present state (*ratione actus and status praesentis*), is the believer (*homo credens*), for only the believer in Christ is actually (*actu*) justified. Thus Paul says in Rom. 3.22: 'The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.' In this passage 'the righteousness of God' is not to be understood as the righteousness which is in God essentially, but it is the righteousness which is from God, which comes to believers, i.e. it is imputed to believers. It is the same righteousness which the apostle speaks of later in Rom. 4.3ff where the perfect obedience of Christ which comes about by His obeying the Law and His suffering comes 'unto all and upon all them that believe'. The pleonasm in this verse emphasises that the righteousness (or obedience of Christ) is always apprehended by those who believe and only by those who believe, cf. Rom. 4.5. In this latter verse Quenstedt points out that "the ungodly" are not to be taken as those ungodly who without repentance persist in their ungodliness, but as the ungodly who recognise their ungodliness, desire to be freed from it, and flee with true faith to Christ and His throne of grace'.

The efficient cause of justification is the entire Trinity; for justification is an *opus ad extra* of God. The work of justification is attributed to God the Father in John 3.16-17 and Rom. 8.33. In the last passages the Father is referred to, for it is He who delivered up His Son (v. 32). The work of justification is attributed to the Son in Isa. 53.11: 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many,' i.e. through faith. Keeping in mind this passage Quenstedt remarks that Christ may be con-

sidered the cause of our justification because of His active and passive obedience, for this work of Christ was performed in order to make satisfaction for our unrighteousness and bring righteousness to us again. Thus Christ is called 'the Lord our righteousness', Jer. 23.6. Justification is attributed to the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor. 6.11 where we are told that we 'are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God'. And so Quenstedt concludes, 'The work of justification pertains indivisibly to all three Persons, although you notice the mode of operation of each one in the carrying out of this mystery.'

That which moves God to justify us (*causa impulsiva interna*) is His own free grace. But before discussing this Quenstedt refers us to his consideration of the purpose of the vicarious atonement. On the part of God the purpose of the atonement is twofold: (1) to satisfy divine justice, for God will not remit sins without satisfaction; (2) to show His mercy which is manifested most clearly in this, that God gave His Son over to the most shameful death for our sake and accepted His satisfaction for us, and in this, that the Son willingly took our sins and made atonement for them by His death (II, III, II, thesis 41). This second fact is brought out most clearly in such passages as Rom. 5.8, John 3.16, John 15.13 and Eph. 5.25. Commenting on 1 John 3.16 Quenstedt says:

This is the love of God: rather than banish men eternally from heaven He removed Himself from heaven, clothed Himself with flesh, became the Creature of a creature, inclosed Himself in the womb of the virgin, was wrapped in rags, laid in hay and housed in a barn. Nor does His love stop here; but after a life spent in poverty and adversities this love drives Christ to the ground on Olivet, binds Him in chains, delivers Him to jailors, cuts Him with the lash, crowns Him with thorns, fastens Him with nails to the Cross, and gives Him to drink the cup of bitterness. And finally this love compels Him to die, to die for adversaries and enemies (Rom. 5.6). Continuously and in these sundry ways Christ, who thirsts so greatly for our salvation, declares His love and mercy towards the human race.

That grace as the cause within God which moves Him to justify us by noting that this gracious disposition of God is expressed in two ways in Scripture. (1) *κατ' ἄρσιν* by removing any false impression that in us there is some cause of justification. This truth is brought out in all those passages which speak of God justifying us freely (*δωρεάν, gratis*), Rom. 3.24. This passage indicates that no power and ability to be justified

resides in us, nor do we contribute any work or merit toward this end. That the term conveys this meaning (Luther: *Ohne Verdienst*) is shown also from John 15.25, 'They hated me with a cause' (Luther: *Ohne Ursach*, cf. 1 Sam. 19.5; Ps. 35.19, 69.4 where the Heb. בְּדָן , *gratis*, is used). (2) Scripture expresses God's loving disposition towards us *κατὰ θέωω*, by explicitly using the word 'grace' to denote not some gift dwelling in us, or some quality infused into us, but the gracious favour of God which is received by believers. In the preceding verses the word 'grace' not only excludes all righteousness of the Law and shows that the righteousness spoken of comes without the Law, but the context implies the idea conveyed by the *δωρεάν*, viz. that this grace is simply gratuitous.

Our justification is gratuitous therefore in this sense, that God judges us by His mercy and not by His justice. It is gratuitous because God bestows this benefit on us although we are unworthy and far from meriting it and because He bestows it without any intervention of works on our part; and this is in keeping with the clear opposition between grace and works which always obtains, according to the apostle, Rom. 11.6: 'If by grace, then it is no more of works,' Eph. 2.8, 9: 'It is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.' Hence this grace is also called *χρηστότης, φιλανθρωπία*, kindness and love, Tit. 3.4-6: kindness by reason of the advantage which it offers us; *φιλανθρωπία* in reference to object of this grace, namely, men; mercy by reason of our misery by which our Lord allowed Himself to be moved, Gen. 8.21.

The external meritorious cause of our justification is the all-sufficient merit of the obedience of our Mediator. For we are justified 'through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.' The *διά* here is to be taken in the sense of *propter* (*διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως*) as it is interpreted in other passages. In this verse the meritorious cause of our justification is the *ἀπολύτρωσις*, the redemption which is the very basis of our justification before God, for this redemption is mediated through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. This same redemption God sets forth as a propitiation for us, and that not merely in the sense of freeing us, but of making satisfaction for us.

Propitiation may also be called the meriting cause (*causa promerens*) of our justification, for the apostle says that God has set forth Christ as a propitiation to be accepted through faith in His blood. The term *ἱλαστήριον* which Luther translates

'*Gnadenstuhl*' means an expiation, a compensation for the guilt of sin, an idea which is expressed in Heb. 11.17. The verb *λάσκειν* may also mean to placate or pacify, and this is the meaning the *ἰλασμός* takes on in 1 John 2.2, 4.10.

Thus God justifies us freely and without any merit on our part and regards only the merit of Christ which is an *ἀπολύτρωσις ἰλαστική, ἰλασμός*, a bloody and appeasing sacrifice, a redemption and atonement. And so Christ is called in the above passages a *ἰλαστήριον* because He performed a *ἰλασμός*, a redemptive expiation and atonement through His blood for us, and by means of this placated God who was angry with sinners.

The *causa media* of justification is from God's side the Word and Sacraments through which the righteousness of Christ is offered to faith. The Word and Sacraments offer and bring the righteousness of Christ and the forgiveness of sins, Luke 24.47. The Word and Sacraments also bring sinners to faith in Christ and His righteousness and keep them and strengthen them in that faith. The *causa media* on the part of man is the so-called *organon ληπτικόν*, the faith which receives these benefits. Again we must listen to Rom. 3.22 which tells us that this righteousness of God is 'by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe'. Compare also v. 25 where we are told that the benefits are received 'through faith in his blood'. The object of faith here is the blood which must be understood synecdochically for the entire cruel suffering of Christ through His whole life. The *διά* points out the *causa organica* through which the atoning and propitiatory blood of Christ becomes ours. Thus it is the same thing to say that we are justified, that we receive grace, that we live in Christ, for it is all through faith (*πίστει*, Acts 26.18; *ἐκ πίστεως*, Gal. 3.7, 8, 9, 11, 12; *διά τῆς πίστεως*, Rom. 3.30, 31; *μετὰ πίστεως*, 1 Tim. 1.14; *ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει*, Phil. 3.9; *ἐν πίστει*, 1 Tim. 3.13; *κατὰ πίστιν*, Heb. 11.13).

On our part it is this faith alone which justifies us and effects (*instituit*) our justification. Whatever merely embraces and apprehends to itself the promises of grace, the forgiveness of sins and the merit of Christ does so without any admixture of works. And only that on the part of man which enters into the picture when we consider God justifying him can be said to justify. Thus we are said to be justified by faith exclusively without the deeds of the Law, Rom. 3.28. Eph. 2.8, 9. True, faith is never alone, never all by itself and isolated from good works, and yet faith alone apprehends the merit of Christ, and we are justified by means of faith alone.

Faith is to be considered an organic cause of justification not in so far as it is our act or our acceptance of God's grace (*in se et in sua natura*), but by virtue of the object which it apprehends. Here Quenstedt troubles himself to distinguish between the *causalitas* of faith in the matter of justification and the *ratio causandi* in this matter. The causality of faith in justification consists in this, that faith receives and accepts the grace of God (*λαμβάνειν*, John 1.12, Rom. 5.17, Gal. 3.14; *καταλαμβάνειν*, John 1.5; *παραλαμβάνειν*, John 1.11; *δέχεσθαι*, Luke 8.13, Acts 8.14; *ἀποδέχεσθαι*, Acts 2.41, 1 Tim. 1.15). The reason for this causality of faith in justification does not consist in this, that faith is an acceptance and reception (*quatenus est apprehensio*), for a person can apprehend to himself imaginary things or human righteousness; rather it consists in this, the object which faith apprehends, viz. the merit of Christ. And of this St. Paul speaks in Rom. 3.25 where he says that 'the whole justifying power of faith depends on the thing apprehended, on the bloody merit of Christ which is the proper object of justifying faith'. Quenstedt goes on to illustrate with the following interesting analogy:

When the hand of a starving man seizes bread which is offered to it, it is not this taking of the bread which satisfies the man, for he could seize a piece of mud or a stone or something else which could not satisfy him, but his being satisfied depends on the object which he takes to himself and depends on his eating it, i.e. it depends on the bread. When the lips of a thirsty man drink water which has been drawn with a bucket from some well, it is not the drinking as such that quenches his thirst, for you can also draw sand or blood with a bucket. No, if his thirst is to be satisfied, the drink which he consumes must have the power to quench thirst. Thus he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness receives it through faith, as the begging hand which receives the bread coming down from heaven (John 6.50-51) and as the vessel of the thirsting soul draws the water springing up into everlasting life (John 4.14); but it is not this receiving and drinking as such which drives away the spiritual hunger and quenches the thirst. Man does not possess anything of such a nature as can accomplish this, e.g. his own merits, his own pretended autonomy, satisfactions which are the inventions of the Synagogue of Rome. No, the whole strength of man's receiving depends on the thing received through faith, the redemption and the blood of Jesus Christ.¹

The form of justification consists in the fact of certain changes which take place in man. This is not to be understood

¹ cf. *Formula of Concord*, Thor. decl. III, 13ff.

as though sin were driven out of man completely and righteousness infused or as though one is changed from being inherently unrighteous to being inherently righteous. For want of a better term Quenstedt calls this change a moral change which means that man becomes righteous by a forensic and external action, and this action is not performed in man but in respect to man and outside man (*circa et extra hominem*), and so it is extrinsic and at the same time real and true.

The nature of justification (*forma in specie*) is twofold: (A) It is the forgiveness of sins and the non-imputation of our own righteousness; (B) It is the imputation of the obedience of Christ.¹

(A) Quenstedt discusses three passages at great length in showing that justification is the remission of sins, or the same thing, the non-imputation of guilt. His first exegesis revolves around Ps. 32.1-2 and Rom. 4.7-8. Here it is his interest to demonstrate that the whole gamut of man's sin and rebellion against God is summed up in the three nouns פֶּשַׁע (*Praevincatio, quae est gravior a Domino supremo defectio, eaque malitiosa, pertinax, horrenda*), הַטָּאָה which is from תָּטָא which means to wander or err, and עָוֹן (*peruersitas, iniquitas*), even as the entire story of God's work of redemption and justification are summed up in the three verbs נָשָׂא (*elevavit, condonavit, vel reatum aut poenam ab altero delinquente abstulit, removit, Num. 14.19*), כָּסַף (*tegit, operitur*), and חָשַׁב (*cogitavit, cogitando reputavit, quandoque cum ל constructum, significat, aliquid alteri imputavit, aut cogitando annumeravit [Germanice zurechnen]*). Commenting on 2 Cor. 5.19 Quenstedt says that the non-imputation of sins means that God chooses not to punish sins. The basis for this non-imputation is not in the subject, man, for if God had regard only to sinful man He must punish sin. 'The basis is in Christ who made atonement for this sin which is in man and which is not imputed.'

(B) Positively the nature of justification consists in the imputation of Christ's obedience. The first Bible verse for consideration is Rom. 4.5. Three questions may be asked in reference to this passage: (1) What does it mean to impute? (2) To whom is the imputation made? (3) What is imputed?

¹ This agrees with the *Formula of Concordia*, Art. III.

In answer to the first query Quenstedt replies that the word 'to impute' can often be taken in a physical sense as meaning to infuse as when a branch is grafted on to a plant. However, the word is also used as an acceptance, e.g. victory is imputed to Caesar although he is absent. According to the first meaning to impute sin to someone would mean to instil or infuse iniquity into him, which is an unorthodox way to speak. According to the second meaning there may be an imputation of either evil or good. For instance, Scripture says that sin is imputed to the workers of iniquity, Lev. 17.16. Sometimes sin is imputed to a person undeservedly as when adultery was imputed to Susanna. And again sin is imputed *ex gratia* as when our sins were imputed to Christ in His atoning for our sins. Righteousness may also be imputed as well as sin, and that (a) *jure et secundum debitum* when the basis of the imputation is in the subject (Rom. 4.4), or (b) *injuria* as when a stupid person is reputed to be wise just because he is silent (Prov. 17.27), or (c) *ex gratia* when the guilty is absolved because of the merit of another. This last usage is that of Scripture when speaking of our justification. In answer to the second question we need merely repeat the words of the apostle, 'To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly.' The person who does not work is simply the one who does not depend on his works for justification, not one who lacks good works, for works always proceed from faith. The believer, then, is the one to whom this imputation is made, the believer who does not trust in himself. But what does he trust in? In Him 'that justifieth the ungodly', viz. God, 'who promises in the Word of the Gospel that He wishes to be gracious for the sake of Christ's merit and justify the ungodly out of grace, that is, forgive him all his sins and pronounce him righteous, that he may believe and not spurn the grace offered in the promised Word, but seize it and hold on to it with faith'. The *ἐπι τὸν* expresses a trust in the mercy of God, a trust which rests firmly in God. The 'ungodly' is not one who was formerly ungodly, but one who is ungodly even now and merits eternal judgment but for this, that God by grace for Christ's sake forgives all his sins, since Christ bore his ungodliness and the sins of the whole world. In answer to the third question, it is righteousness which is imputed, the righteousness of Christ. And this agrees perfectly well with what Paul says here, viz.

that 'his faith is counted for righteousness'. Quenstedt says, 'The imputation of the righteousness of Christ and the imputation of faith for righteousness is one and the same. For faith does not justify because of its own character, but because of the value of its object.'

Speaking on Rom. 5.19 Quenstedt notes three things. (1) As to the cause of the condemnation and the salvation spoken of here, the cause of the former is the disobedience of Adam, the cause of the latter is the obedience of Christ. (2) As to the effects of Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience, the effect of the former is that all men were made sinners, the effect of the latter is that all men are made (*constituuntur*) righteous. (3) As to the dominion which the actions of both these men exert (*utriusque subjecta*), the disobedience of Adam passed upon (*transiit*) all men, the obedience of Christ was performed (*praestita est*) on behalf of all men. Quenstedt warns that we must not press the parallel beyond this point, for then it might be inferred that the righteousness of Christ was passed on to all men without any consideration of their faith or unbelief, just as the sin of Adam is propagated through natural generation. Gerhard¹ uses slightly different language here. He says that just as the offence of Adam brought sin upon all so that all are justly condemned by God unless reconciliation is made, so by the merit of Christ righteousness and salvation were brought to (*propagatur*) all in order that all might be justified by faith. Both the condemnation and the justification were forensic. Later in a footnote, however, Gerhard states exactly what Quenstedt said above.

Quenstedt next offers a very long exegesis of 2 Cor. 5.21 to which I offer only a few brief allusions. He says that this verse leads us to speak either in reference to the person to whom imputation is made or to the thing which is imputed. Here is what he says:

When we say that our sin is imputed to Christ and Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, then we mean that our sin which is in us and not in Christ is transferred to Christ according to God's decree and determination, that is, it is reckoned as though it were in Christ; on the other hand, the righteousness of Christ which is in Christ and not in us is transferred to us according to God's decree and determination, that is, it is reckoned as though it were in us.

¹ *Loci Theologici*, Cotta ed., Tuebingen, 1762, VII, 11.

The non-imputation of sin—and this is precisely the forgiveness of sin—is inseparably joined with the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

From the above delineation of Quenstedt's doctrine of justification it seems quite clear that Lutheran orthodoxy made the concerted effort to remain faithful to the teachings of Scripture on the one hand and of Luther and the Lutheran Confessions on the other hand. The question may be asked: just how close were the theologians of Quenstedt's day to the doctrine of Luther? There is no doubt that their terminology differs from Luther's to a marked degree, especially after the *Formula of Concord*. Luther, in speaking of the foreign righteousness which becomes ours through faith, does not shrink from calling it a *justitia extra infusa*,¹ even though he insists that it is a *justitia aliena*. *Gratia infusa* is a term commonly employed by Luther, even in his later writings. He says that when God justifies 'He drives sin out of the heart and drives in grace'.² He speaks of the righteousness of God according to the usage of Scripture meaning 'the grace and mercy of Christ poured into us through Christ'.³ He has of course purged such concepts of their mechanical, Romish meaning, as may be seen from the context of such statements; but the fact remains that after the *Formula of Concord* Lutheran theologians could and did not speak in such a free manner. They repudiate the term 'infused righteousness', and insist that the word 'justify' in Scripture never denotes a justification by the infusion of new qualities into a person (*per infusionem novarum qualitatum*).⁴ This does not imply that they are abandoning anything that was taught by Luther; but after Trent and the appearance of Osiander in their own ranks they have concluded that it is simply not possible to baptise some of the questionable Roman terminology still employed by Luther. In their day the *gratia infusa* was irrevocably associated with the synergism of the Roman doctrine of justification.⁵ The later dogmaticians do not even like to speak of justification as being an act whereby God makes an unrighteous man righteous, although Luther and the Lutheran

¹ *Sermo de duplici iustitia*, 1519. WA 2.245-6.

² Erl. Aufl., 14.204. 1 Advent, 1522.

³ Erl. Aufl., 10.18ff. Sermon on Matt. 9.1-9.

⁴ cf. *supra*. Also Gerhard, op. cit., VII.8.13.

⁵ Council of Trent, Sess. 6, Ch. 7 and can. 11.

confessions freely speak that way. For this was the terminology of Rome and implied that justification was a process like sanctification. Bellarmine, for instance, had said,¹

Ordinarily a person is said to be warmed not only when from being cold he is made warm, but when from being warm he is made warmer. Thus too one is said to be justified not only when from being unrighteous he is made righteous, but when from being righteous he is made more righteous.

The Lutheran theologians were even hesitant about speaking of justification as a change (*mutatio*), for Roman theology used this terminology often to mean a change which was like a sick person being made well. The Lutherans were wont to abandon any terminology which would imply that justification was a process.

The question in all this is simply whether the later dogmatists departed in any way from Luther's teaching on justification, or whether they are only defining and refining terms. The accusation has often been made that Lutheran orthodoxy taught an unreal justification with its doctrine of imputed righteousness. Perrone says,²

According to the doctrine of the Protestants it does not happen in justification that sins are really remitted at all, but are merely concealed according to an extrinsic imputation of the righteousness of God or Christ, and thus by the power of this justification there begins to take place in us a certain inner renewal by which man becomes inwardly and formally righteous from sin.

This is a caricature, not only of the doctrine of Luther, but of the later orthodox Lutherans as well. Quenstedt, following Chemnitz, insists that the imputation has an absolutely firm foundation which is not in man who is justified, but in Christ and His work. It is very important for our present discussion that Quenstedt's point of view be made clear on this matter. When we know precisely what he understood by the imputation in justification, we quickly learn that he has not departed from Luther's doctrine of justification on any important point, and we learn that any accusation that the old orthodox teaching made justification merely a legal fiction is unfounded. Therefore I quote Quenstedt at length.

¹ *Disputationes*, Tom. 4, de justificatione, I, III.

² *Praelectiones Theologicae*, ed. 27, Ratisbonae, 1856, II, 229.

The imputation consists in a real reckoning. According to the judgment of God the sinful man who believes in Christ is absolved of sins and the righteousness of Christ is truly reckoned to him. Now granted that the reckoning does not work the result that the righteousness of Christ inheres inherently in the believer; the imputation, nevertheless, is not thereby fictitious and imaginary, a mere opinion of a just person, without any actual effect, as the papists maliciously report us as teaching. No, this λογισμός or imputation is earnest and real. It has its gracious foundation in Christ and its termination in us (*ad nos*). It consists in a gracious determination of God and in a real conferring and transferring of Christ's righteousness to the believer. And so when one believes, he is by this reckoning made and accounted righteous in the judgment of God's mind. And this is a most real judgment of God which from the throne of His grace extends over the sinner who from the Gospel believes in Christ. . . . Those to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed are truly righteous, although not inherently or by inherence, but imputatively and through an extrinsic designation that they are such, for also from that which is extrinsic a true designation can take place. Therefore it is a vain question, whether we are really righteous by that imputation, or whether we are only regarded as righteous. For God's judgment is according to truth. Wherefore he who is regarded by God as righteous is truly righteous.

This statement of Quenstedt's which is quite typical of all the later dogmaticians¹ places him squarely in the camp of Luther with his emphasis upon the greatness and the reality of God's imputation. It is reminiscent of Luther's words,²

This imputation is not a thing of no consequence, but is greater than the whole world, yea, than all the holy angels. Reason cannot see all this, for reason disregards the Word of God; but we (I say) thank God that we have such a Saviour who is able to pass us by and reckon our sin as nothing.

Hence the concern of many modern theologians³ that the forensic justification be not a fiction is fully met not only by Luther but also by the later dogmaticians. Adolf Hoenecke has summarised their position well,⁴

The position of the dogmaticians is clear. They wish to show that according to Scripture there is a middle ground between the physical infusion of indwelling righteousness and an empty, ineffective, declarative reckoning (as the papists groundlessly charge against the Lutheran teaching). The middle ground is a formal reckoning (*appropriata imputatio*). This

¹ cf. Baier, *Compendium*, de justificatione, par. 3. Dannhauer, *Hodosophia*, ed. 1713, p. 461.

² *Die Disputation de iustificatione* (1536). WA 39.97-98.

³ cf. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV, 1.95; Berkouwer, *Faith and Justification*, 87; Bultmann, *Theology of the NT*, I, 276.

⁴ *Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik*, Milwaukee, 1912, III, 345.

reckoning would be empty if it took place only up in heaven in the tribunal of God and were manipulated, as it were, behind the back of the sinner. But the sinner is himself active in this matter of reckoning through the Holy Spirit working in him through the Word; he receives God's imputed verdict concerning him, a verdict in which the Holy Spirit attributes the whole transaction as applying to him. And so the sinner emerges from this transaction as one who has righteousness, not a righteousness achieved by his works, not a righteousness infused into him, but a righteousness spoken over him according to God's unfailing verdict.

Thus with the forensic justification, with the *justitia aliena*, with the strong emphasis on the validity and reality of the imputation we have the basic elements of Lutheran orthodoxy's doctrine of justification. And if the terminology has changed the main strands and emphasis of the Reformation teaching remains intact.