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The Benefits of Christ: Double Justification in Protestant Theology before the Westminster Assembly

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Question 57 of the Westminster Larger Catechism asks, “What benefits hath Christ procured by his mediation?” The answer is that “Christ, by his mediation, hath procured redemption, with all other benefits of the covenant of grace.”¹ This essay pursues what the Westminster divines meant by the phrase “benefits of the covenant of grace.” What is the background for this phrase, and how should it be interpreted? Did it signal a turn away from the earlier Protestant doctrine of justification?

This essay interprets the language of the Larger Catechism by placing it in the broader context of the development of the Protestant doctrine of justification in the sixteenth century. It argues that when the divines spoke of the “benefits of the covenant of grace,” they were giving expression to the Protestant doctrine of double justification as it had been taught by the magisterial Protestant theologians (e.g., Martin Luther, Philipp Melancthon, Martin Bucer, and John Calvin) and the Reformed orthodox following them.

1. *The Humble Advice of the Assembly of Divines . . . concerning a Larger Catechisme* (London, 1648), 8.

Introduction

It is clear from the Book of Concord (1580) and the *Harmony of the Reformed Confessions* (1581) that by the late sixteenth century, there was virtual unanimity among confessional Protestants on the basics of the doctrine of justification.² Whereas, since the Second Council of Orange (A.D. 529) it had been a given that one is justified only to the extent that one is sanctified, the magisterial Protestants rejected the doctrine of progressive justification in favor of a punctiliar, definitive doctrine of justification on the grounds of the imputed righteousness of Christ received through trust in Christ alone. Some older scholarship at least, represented by R. Seeburg, B. B. Warfield, and the more recent scholarship of T. H. L. Parker, Berndt Hamm, François Wendel, W. Stanford Reid, David Steinmetz, and Brian Gerrish, held that this pan-Protestant doctrine of justification by imputation had its roots in Luther.³

According to some recent scholarship, however, the Protestant consensus on the forensic doctrine of justification should not be traced to Luther or Calvin. Further, some writers do not find a pan-Protestant doctrine of justification; and some who find agreement, for example,

2. E.g., Augsburg Confession art. 4, Apology art. 4, Epitome art. 3, and Solid Declaration art. 3, in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord*, trans. Charles Arand et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000); Jean François Salvard, ed., *Harmonia Confessionum Fidei* . . . (Geneva, 1581), sec. 9; Jean François Salvard, ed., *An Harmony of the Confessions of the Faith* . . . , trans. Peter Hall (Cambridge, 1586).

3. R. Seeburg, *Textbook of the History of Doctrines*, trans. Charles E. Hay, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society), 2:392–93, 402–5; B. B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, ed. S. G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1956), 489–90; T. H. L. Parker, “Calvin’s Doctrine of Justification,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 25 (1952): 101–7; Berndt Hamm, “What Was the Reformation Doctrine of Justification?” in C. Scott Dixon, ed., *The German Reformation: The Essential Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Collins, 1963), 255–63; W. Stanford Reid, “Justification by Faith According to John Calvin,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 42 (1980): 290–307; David Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 117–18; B. A. Gerrish, “John Calvin on Martin Luther,” in J. Pelikan, ed., *Interpreters of Luther: Essays in Honor of Wilhelm Pauck* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 69. See also Joseph Wawrykow, “John Calvin and Condign Merit,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 83 (1992): 74–75, who argues that Calvin and Luther fundamentally agreed on forensic justification. These views are in contrast to that of Adolph von Harnack, who argued that Melancthon and other “epigones” of Luther “abandoned the ‘sola fides’ doctrine” in favor of “synergism.” See Adolph von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, 7 vols. (New York: Dover Publications, 1961), 7:256.

between Luther and Calvin argue that they taught justification by union with Christ, not by imputation.

The revisionist account comes from several quarters. The new Finnish interpretation of Luther advocated by Tuomo Mannermaa and others claims that Luther did not teach a forensic soteriology, but rather *theosis* or divinization.⁴ Mannermaa argues that, for Luther, there was no real distinction between justification and sanctification.⁵ Stephen Strehle has argued that the concept of forensic justification came not from Luther but from Melanchthon's adaptation of nominalism beginning in his 1532 commentary on Romans. In this view, for Luther and Calvin, the ground of justification was not imputation of an alien righteousness, but union with Christ.⁶

Craig B. Carpenter argues that Calvin's reply to session 6 of Trent turned to union with Christ rather than to imputation. Carl Mosser claims that because of ignorance of Patristic theology and the undue influence of Adolph von Harnack, scholars have overlooked Calvin's doctrine of *theosis* through union with Christ. Following on, Julie Canlis writes that Calvin's reaction to Andreas Osiander has blinded interpreters to his own interest in deification through union with Christ.⁷

Certainly this chapter cannot address all the issues raised by the literature, but the revisionists raise two major questions: whether there

4. Tuomo Mannermaa, "Why Is Luther So Fascinating? Modern Finnish Luther Research," in Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 6.

5. Tuomo Mannermaa, "Justification and Theosis in Lutheran-Orthodox Perspective," in *Union with Christ*, 38. For a response to the Finnish School, see Carl R. Trueman, "Is the Finnish Line a New Beginning? A Critical Assessment of the Reading of Luther Offered by the Helsinki Circle," *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 231-44; R. Scott Clark, "Iustitia Imputata Christi: Alien or Proper to Luther's Doctrine of Justification?" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (forthcoming, 2007).

6. Stephen Strehle, "Imputatio iustitiae: Its Origin in Melanchthon, Its Opposition in Osiander," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 50 (1994): 201-19; see also Mark Seifrid, "Paul, Luther, and Justification in Galatians 2:15-21," *Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 215-30.

7. Craig B. Carpenter, "A Question of Union with Christ: Calvin and Trent on Justification," *Westminster Theological Journal* 64 (2002): 363-86; Carl Mosser, "The Greatest Possible Blessing: Calvin and Deification," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55 (2002): 36-57; Julie Canlis, "Calvin, Osiander and Participation in God," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6 (2004): 169-84. As a provisional response, one might ask whether Mosser and Canlis are reading Calvin's doctrine of union in isolation from his doctrines of God and man, which, for Calvin, were logically prior and which conditioned his soteriology.

was a pan-Protestant doctrine of justification, that is, whether it is correct to think of Luther, Melanchthon, Bucer, and Calvin as teaching essentially the same doctrine of justification; and, if so, whether that doctrine was justification by imputation or by sanctification (e.g., union with Christ) or both. This essay argues against the revisionist approach and in favor of that reading of the Reformation holding that Luther, Melanchthon, Bucer, Calvin, and the Reformed orthodox (including the Westminster Assembly) taught essentially the same doctrine of justification grounded on Christ's righteousness imputed and that each of them related their doctrine of justification closely to their doctrine of sanctification through the use of the doctrine of double justice (*duplex iustitia*).

This is a particularly interesting test case, since some (e.g., Jonathan Rainbow and Peter A. Lillback) have seen Calvin's doctrine of double justification as a point of departure from Luther, others have seen Bucer's doctrine of justification as a departure from Luther (David F. Wright and Wilhelm Pauck), some (von Harnack) have found Melanchthon abandoning Luther, and still others have found in Luther's doctrine of double justice evidence that he did not really teach justification *coram Deo* by imputation (the new Finnish school).⁸ If we find them teaching substantially the same doctrine of justification by imputation there, then we may conclude that the case is not yet made that there was no pan-Protestant consensus on justification or that the magisterial Protestants were more committed to justification by sanctification than by imputation.

Duplex Iustitia at Regensburg

Despite formal similarities with various Roman formulations of double justice and despite the agreement at Regensburg (April 27–May 22, 1541), Luther, Bucer, and Calvin all used the doctrine

8. Jonathan Rainbow, "Double Grace: John Calvin's View of the Relationship between Justification and Sanctification," *Ex Auditu* 5 (1989): 101–2; Peter A. Lillback, *The Binding of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 190–93; D. F. Wright, "Martin Bucer 1491–1551: Ecumenical Theologian," in D. F. Wright, ed., *Common Places of Martin Bucer* (Abingdon, Berkshire: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1971), 21, 43.

duplex iustitia, *duplex iustificatio*, or *duplex beneficium* to express the Protestant dogma concerning justification.⁹

By 1518, having rejected the medieval consensus of progressive justification, Luther still faced the question of how to relate justification and sanctification. Having denied progressive justification, the Protestants had to provide a coherent explanation for the positive role of sanctification in Christian theology and living. The theological function of *duplex iustitia* for Luther, *duplex iustificatio* for Bucer, and *duplex beneficium* for Calvin was to unite justification and sanctification without confusing them.

In the sixteenth century, a number of Roman and Protestant theologians taught versions of double justice. Johannes Gropper (1503–59), Gasparo Contarini (1483–1542), and Albert Pighius (ca. 1490–1542) were among its leading Roman proponents.¹⁰ Indeed, the doctrine of double justice figured prominently in the Tridentine deliberations on the doctrine of justification (1546).¹¹ Among the Protestants, Luther

9. On the continuing relevance of *duplex iustitia*, see Walter von Loewenich, *Duplex Iustitia: Luthers Stellung zu einer Unionsformel des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1972); James McCue, "Double Justification at the Council of Trent: Piety and Theology in Sixteenth Century Roman Catholicism," in *Piety, Politics, and Ethics*, vol. 3 of Carter Lindberg, ed., *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Studies, 1984), 39; E. Yarnold, "Duplex Iustitia: The Sixteenth Century and the Twentieth," in G. R. Evans, ed., *Christian Authority: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 222–23; Mark Noll, "The History of an Encounter: Roman Catholics and Evangelicals," in Charles Colson and R. J. Neuhaus, eds., *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission* (Dallas: Word, 1995), 85, 101; *Union with Christ*.

10. In his *Enchiridion* (1538), Gropper had taught that one is justified by an infusion of divine justice (*iustitia inhaerens*), which would lead to the addition of further justice through sanctification (*iustitia acquisita*). Yet he was prepared to accept Melancthon's definition of imputation as an addition to his own doctrine of justification. Gropper's doctrine of *duplex iustitia* developed from circa 1538 to 1544 to include imputation and infusion of justice. See Yarnold, "Duplex Iustitia," 208–9. In his *Epistola de Iustificazione* (1541), Contarini propounded a scheme that attempted to synthesize Gropper's and Bucer's view. He defined "iustificari?" to mean "to be made just and therefore also to be considered just." See Yarnold, "Duplex Iustitia," 211; *G. Contarini Cardinalis Opera* (Paris, 1571), 588.

11. On the question of the development of the doctrine of double justice generally, see also Basil Hall, "The Colloquies between Catholics and Protestants, 1539–41," in G. J. Cuming and D. Baker, eds., *Councils and Assemblies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); A. E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 2:54–86; Carl E. Maxcey, "Double Justice, Diego Laynez, and the Council of Trent," *Church History* 48 (1979): 269–78; Peter Matheson, *Cardinal Contarini at Regensburg* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972); Anthony N. S. Lane, *Justification by Faith in Catholic-Protestant Dialogue: An Evangelical Assessment* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2002), 46–60. On the discussion of *duplex iustitia* at Trent, see Hubert

(1483–1546), Melanchthon (1497–1560), Bucer (1491–1551), and Calvin (1509–64) all made use of the language of double justice. The Roman and Protestant doctrines of double justice met most famously at Regensburg in 1541.

When Charles V convened the Imperial Reichstag and a theological conference at Regensburg, he was threatened by France to his west and Muslim armies to his east. He needed a unified empire, and to get that he needed at least a formal resolution of the chief issue of the Reformation, the question of justification.¹²

In attendance at Regensburg were some of the greatest and most interesting theologians of the sixteenth century. Among the Protestants were Melanchthon and Bucer, with Calvin watching from the side. Among the Roman delegates were Pighius (later one of Calvin's staunchest critics), Contarini the papal legate, and Johann Eck (1486–1543).¹³

The compromise reached at Regensburg was possible only after two earlier conferences at Hagenau (June 1540) and Worms (January 1541). At Worms, Melanchthon and Eck worked out a formal agreement on original sin. The question outstanding, however, was not whether we are sinners but rather concerning the effects of sin: are the effects of original sin such that humans are utterly passive in justification? The Protestants affirmed the strong Augustinian view, and the Roman theologians denied it. Worms had not resolved this difference. The fundamental reason for the failure of these conferences was that there was no way to merge the prevailing Roman doctrine of justification on the basis of cooperation with infused grace with the Protestant (*Confessio Augustana* art. 4) doctrine of justification on the basis of imputed justice received through faith alone.

Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, trans. E. Graf, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Herder Book Company, 1957), 2:166–96, 239–316.

12. This line of interpretation is suggested in Wilhelm Möller, *History of the Christian Church*, trans. J. H. Freese, 3 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1900), 3:139. See also Martin Greschat, *Martin Bucer: A Reformer and His Times*, trans. Stephen E. Buckwalter (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 176; Heinz Mackensen, "The Diplomatic Role of Gasparo Cardinal Contarini at the Colloquy of Ratisbon of 1541," *Church History* 27 (1958): 319–320.

13. Albert Pighius, *De Libero Arbitrio et Divina Gratia Libri Decem* (Cologne, 1542). Calvin responded in 1543 with *Defensio Sanae et Orthodoxae Doctrinae de Servitute de Liberatione Humani Arbitrii Adversus Calumnias Alberti Pighii Campensis* (Geneva, 1543).

To serve the interests of Charles V, the theologians needed to find language on which both sides could agree that would preserve their quite different doctrines of justification. The formula on which they settled was *duplex iustitia*. To this end, before Regensburg, Bucer and Gropper had developed an alternative document, which became known as the *Regensburg Book*.¹⁴ This book formed the basis for the discussions at Regensburg.¹⁵ With the groundwork laid, the participants quickly agreed on the first four articles regarding original sin and Pelagianism. After only five days, they reached agreement on Article 5, "*De iustificatione hominis*."¹⁶

From the outset it was clear that the Roman delegates wanted a clear statement that it is the morally transformed who are reconciled to God because they are morally transformed, so that they could continue to hold and teach that sanctification is logically and temporally prior to and causally and instrumentally necessary for reconciliation with God. They did not accept the Protestant position that sanctity is the logically and morally necessary result of justification but not causally or instrumentally necessary to justification. Thus, Article 5 says that no one can claim to be reconciled to God and remain a slave to sin. Moreover, it says that justifying faith is such that through it (*hic motus est per fidem*) "the mind of man is moved by the Holy Spirit toward God through Christ."¹⁷

For their part, the Protestant representatives insisted on language teaching imputation as the ground of justice, and faith as the instrument of justification. So Article 5 declared that faith (*fiducia*) includes assent to all that God has handed down to us and believing the divine promises "most certainly and without doubt" (*certissime et sine dubio*). From God's promises one obtains confidence that "for the sake of the promise of God" (*propter promissionem Dei*),

14. See Yarnold, "*Duplex Iustitia*"; McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 2:57.

15. On the authorship of the *Regensburg Book*, see Hastings Eells, *Martin Bucer* (1931; repr., New York: Russell and Russell, 1971), 288–301; Hastings Eells, "The Origin of the Regensburg Book," *Princeton Theological Review* 26 (1928): 355–72; Greschat, *Martin Bucer*, 178–80.

16. C. G. Bretschneider, ed., *Corpus Reformatorum*, 101 vols. (Halle, 1834–1959), 4:198–201 (hereafter *CR*). A portion of Article 5 is also published in B. J. Kidd, ed., *Documents Illustrative of the Continental Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), 343–44. The translations in this essay are mine unless otherwise noted.

17. *CR*, 4:198. "A Spiritu sancto movetur hominis mens in Deum per Christum, et hic motus est per fidem." *Ibid.*, 4:199.

“the forgiveness of sins, the imputation of justice and innumerable other goods” are freely offered.¹⁸ This was the heart of the Protestant doctrine of justification. The sinner’s liability to the divine justice is removed, Christ’s obedience is imputed, and the sinner is graciously accounted (*imputatio iustitiae*) as righteous. This benefit is conditioned not on moral renewal (or cooperation with grace) but on trust in Christ. In the Protestant view, these sorts of expressions gave justification a definitive rather than a progressive character and allowed that one could have assurance of justification in this life. That the Roman delegates agreed to the use of “*fiducia*” is significant, if only because just a few years later, the Council of Trent would use it as a synonym for “presumption” and reject it as a definition of “faith” and as an instrument of justification.¹⁹ Because of this language, Anthony Lane has concluded that Regensburg “does not teach double justification.”²⁰

Nevertheless, the definition of “faith” included other important qualifications. Only those have “*fiducia*” who have “repented of their former life and by this faith are lifted up to God by the Holy Spirit.”²¹ These gifts are received through a “living faith” (*fidem vivam*), which they further defined as that “which apprehends mercy in Christ, and believes that justice which is in Christ is imputed to him by grace and at the same time receives the promise of the Holy Spirit and love. Therefore, justifying faith is that faith which is efficacious through love.”²² On the basis of this language, Irwin Iserloh, Joseph Glazik, and Hubert Jedin have also concluded that at Regensburg, there “is no question of a ‘twofold righteousness,’ but of the one righteousness

18. Ibid.

19. Canon 12 of Trent, session 6, condemns anyone who says, “*Fidem justificantem nihil aliud esse quam fiduciam divinae misericordiae peccata remittentis propter Christum, vel eam fiduciam solam esse, qua iustificamur.*” H. Denzinger, ed., *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 32nd ed. (Barcinone: Herder, 1963), 1562.

20. Lane, *Justification by Faith*, 58.

21. *CR*, 4:199. “*Quos prioris vitae poenituerit, et hac fide erigitur in Deum a Spiritu sancto, ideoque accipit Spiritum sanctum, remissionem peccatorum, imputationem iustitiae, et innumera alia dona.*”

22. Ibid., 4:199–200. “*Fides ergo viva ea est, quae apprehendit misericordiam in Christo, ac credit iustitiam, quae est in Christo, sibi gratia imputari, et quae simul pollicitationem Spiritus sancti et charitatem accipit. Ita quod fides quidem iustificans est illa fides, quae est efficax per charitatem.*”

of Christ the Mediator, which produces full grace, favor, and reconciliation with the Father and renews and sanctifies man but has not yet come here fully into effect.”²³

In favor of the Protestants, however, “*fides*” was defined not as a theological virtue or intrinsic disposition created by grace, but as a trust or confidence, as an apprehensive instrument (*apprehendit misericordiam*) the object of which was Christ’s imputed justice (*credit iustitiam . . . imputari*).²⁴ This Protestant language notwithstanding, a living faith was also said to receive sanctification. The conferees carefully avoided the traditional medieval language “*fides formata caritate*,” but their phrase, “*efficax per charitatem*,” was close enough to satisfy the Roman delegates and at the same time different enough to suit the Protestants. The former could say that faith exists only to the degree that it is formed by love, and the latter could say that they were only following Galatians 5:6 (“*fides quae per caritatem operatur*”) in teaching that a justifying faith works through love.²⁵ Is faith efficacious because it apprehends Christ or because it transforms? Regensburg allowed theologians with quite different answers to this question to have it both ways simultaneously.

With this brilliantly and deliberately equivocal language, the Protestants were able to interpret sanctification as the fruit and evidence of justification and the Roman delegates were able to interpret sanctification as the primary basis for justification with imputation serving as a reserve.²⁶

23. Irwin Iserloh, Joseph Glazik, and Hubert Jedin, *Reformation and Counter-Reformation*, trans. Anselm Biggs and Peter W. Becker, vol. 5 of *History of the Church*, ed. Hubert Jedin and John Dolan (New York: Seabury, 1980–1982), 278.

24. Trent (6.7) would make it clear that being reputed just is not sufficient, but one must actually be just before God, “et non modo reputamur, sed vere iusti nominamur et sumus. . . .” *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 1529.

25. *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgata versionem*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983). Theodore Beza’s Latin New Testament, *Iesu Christi D. N. Novum Testamentum Sive Novum Foedus* (Geneva, 1565; repr., London, 1834), attempted to strengthen the Protestant reading of this clause by translating it “*fides per charitatem agens*.” This is clearer than “*efficax*” and avoids the implications of “*formata*,” but it does not seem very distinct from “*operatur*.”

26. Lane, borrowing from John Henry Newman, says that the article is “ambitious of a Protestant interpretation, though patient of a Catholic one.” *Justification by Faith*, 59. Iserloh, Glazik, and Jedin also understand Regensburg to have achieved substantive unity between the two positions, but interpret the article to teach justification on the grounds of inherent righteousness. See Iserloh, Glazik, and Jedin, *Reformation and Counter-Reformation*, 277–78.

With this background established, we are prepared to assess how three Protestants made use of or developed the doctrine of double justice to serve Protestant theological purposes.

Luther's Doctrine of *De Duplici Iustitia*

Despite the impression created by some accounts, double justice was a Protestant doctrine well before Regensburg.²⁷ In the years 1513 through 1521, Luther gradually rejected the medieval scheme of progressive justification by the infusion of grace and the creation of proper (intrinsic) justice in favor of the doctrine of definitive justification by the imputation of Christ's alien (extrinsic) justice.

As part of his development of the forensic doctrine of justification, Luther set the pattern for the way in which Bucer and Calvin would later relate justification to sanctification, in which definitive justification and progressive sanctification are considered as twin benefits or graces of Christ. Between them, however, justification is logically necessary for and prior to sanctification. This *ordo salutis* established a trajectory on which Bucer and later Calvin elaborated.²⁸

In his *Sermo de Duplici Iustitia*, probably given in late 1518 or early 1519, Luther preached that since the "sin of man is *duplex*" (i.e., since it is both original and actual), the "justice of Christians is twofold" (i.e., it is both forensic and progressive).²⁹ For Luther, however, there was a distinction between the first justice and the second. In contrast to the views of Gropper and Contarini, he assigned a definite priority to the extrinsic, definitive first justice over the progressive, distributive second justice. The first justice comes "without our works through

27. In his account of Luther's criticism of the Regensburg formula, James M. Kittleson, *Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 278, leaves the impression that Luther never taught double justification and that it was a creature of the Regensburg Colloquy.

28. I am grateful to David Bagchi for suggesting this useful phrase.

29. "Duplex est iusticia Christianorum, sicut et duplex peccatum est hominum." Martin Luther, *Sermo de Duplici Iustitia*, in Luther, *Luthers Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. J. K. F. Knaake et al. (Weimar, 1883), 2:145-52 (hereafter *WA*). The English translation is in Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, trans. and ed. J. Pelikan et al., 55 vols. (Philadelphia and St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 31:295-306 (hereafter *LW*).

grace alone." It is received "*per fidem*."³⁰ This "primary" justice is the "ground," the "cause," and the "origin" of all our "proper or actual justice."³¹

This is the sort of language one expects to find in Luther. This sermon was relatively early in the development of the forensic view. Thus, it is not completely surprising that he also said that the first justice is also that which is simultaneously "alien" and "infused."³² This sentence presents a minor challenge to the contention of this essay, that Luther, Bucer, and Calvin had fundamentally the same doctrine of justification despite verbal differences. How should one interpret this sentence? Luther's combination of the two categories "*aliena*" and "*infusa*" has caused some to conclude that in this sermon he was not teaching what would become the doctrine of the *Confessio Augustana* (art. 4). Because, in this passage in the sermon, Luther was still speaking of infusion as part of the first justice, Mannermaa has concluded that he was teaching *theosis* rather than imputation.³³

A less revolutionary explanation of this sentence is that Luther's theological vocabulary had not yet caught up to his developing theological categories, but that the substance of his later doctrine was already present. The same "already-not yet" phenomenon is also evident in his language about the Holy Supper. At this point, however, he was formally teaching transubstantiation, but his later view was not far below the surface.³⁴ In the same way, on justification, even though he made the first justice both "*aliena*" and "*infusa*," it appears that he was making a qualitative distinction between the first and second justice so that the latter was understood realistically whereas the former was understood forensically. This distinction explains why he concluded the first section of the sermon, describing the second

30. *WA* 2:145–46. "Arbitramur hominem iustificari per fidem."

31. *Ibid.*, 2:146. "Et haec iusticia est prima, fundamentum, causa, origo omnis iusticiae propriae seu actualis . . ." This interpretation substantially agrees with that offered by Robert Kolb, "Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness," in Timothy J. Wengert, ed., *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 47–54.

32. *WA* 2:145. "Prima est aliena et ab extra infusa." On the next page he said, "Haec igitur iusticia aliena et sine actibus nostris per solam gratiam infusa nobis . . ." *Ibid.*, 2:146.

33. Mannermaa, *Union with Christ*, 38.

34. See *Ein Sermon von dem Hochwürdigem Sakrament des Heiligen Wahren Leichnams Christi und von den Brüderschaften*, in *WA* 2:742–758; *LW* 35:49–73.

justice by saying, "For all justice is not immediately infused, but begins, progresses and is finally perfected through death."³⁵ He treated the first justice as definitive and the second as progressive.³⁶

Whereas the first justice is "*aliena*," the second justice (sanctification) was said to be "ours" and "proper" "because we cooperate" with that first and alien justice.³⁷ Note that he did not say that we receive the first justice because we cooperate with grace, but rather, cooperation with grace is the result of justification. It is the second justice that requires cooperation with grace; but even sanctity, to the degree it exists, is a result of divine grace. That this is the correct interpretation is also confirmed by the language that appeared in Luther's much less well known sermon, *De triplici iustitia* (1518), which was not fundamentally different from the sermon on double justice—the chief difference between them being that *De triplici* included consideration of predestination in addition to imputation and sanctification.³⁸

Though Luther did not continue to use the language of double justice, in the *Sermon against Latomus* (1521) he did continue to distinguish in the *ordo salutis* between imputed extrinsic righteousness and imparted intrinsic righteousness.³⁹ To the elector Frederick (1519) his chief consolation was the imputation of "Christ's merits," in which the Christian may boast "as if he had won them all himself."⁴⁰ In 1521, he wrote to monks tempted to trust in condign or congruent merit, pointing them to Christ's "merits and works" received through

35. *WA* 2:146. "Non enim tota simul infunditur, sed incipit, proficit et perficitur tandem in fine per mortem." The translation of the *LW*, "For alien righteousness is not instilled all at once . . .," suggests that Luther has confused the forensic and the distributive, but this is not clearly the case in the Latin text. One might also question the judgment of Walter von Loewenich that Luther's doctrine of double justice "sounds strongly pre-Reformed" ("stark vorreformatisch klingt," *Duplex Iustitia*, 8).

36. In an unpublished response to this essay, David Bagchi notes that, regarding the first justice, in other writings from this time, Luther did not regard the language of infusion ("*infundere*") as connoting distribution as opposed to imputation. See his 1520 *Disputatio de Fide Infusa et Acquisita*, where he treated "[*fides*] *infusa*" as a synonym for "*divina*." Faith is a divine gift, not a human quality. *WA* 6:89. Thus, it is not surprising that he treated extrinsic righteousness in this way.

37. *Ibid.*, 2:146. "Secunda iusticia est nostra et propria, non quod nos soli operemur eam, sed quod cooperemur illi primae et alienae."

38. Luther, *De Triplici Iustitia*, *WA* 2:43–47.

39. See *WA* 8:43–128.

40. Martin Luther, "The Fourteen of Consolation," in *Works of Martin Luther: The Philadelphia Edition*, 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1915), 1:169.

trusting in Christ alone.⁴¹ This was his mature teaching as well. In his 1535 lectures on Galatians, he contrasted “*meritum de congruo et condigno*” with Christ’s meritorious obedience.⁴² Faith believes that Christ has performed “a superabundance of works merits of congruity and condignity” and that the same have been imputed to us.⁴³ In the 1536 *Disputation concerning Justification*, Luther’s reliance on Christ’s obedience for us was even more pronounced.⁴⁴ Christ’s righteousness is “outside us” and cannot be obtained “by our works.” Christ’s righteousness is like an umbrella protecting us from the heat of God’s wrath.⁴⁵

Melanchthon, Bucer, and Calvin followed Luther by distinguishing without separating justification and sanctification as two logically discrete but closely related benefits of Christ that believers receive *sola gratia, sola fide*.

Melanchthon’s Doctrine of Justification

The history of Melanchthon’s doctrine of justification quite rightly has been the focus of considerable attention. On the basis of his doctrine of double justification, von Harnack regarded him as a synergist,⁴⁶ and other scholars now argue that it was Melanchthon, not Luther, who gave us the doctrine of imputation.⁴⁷ The scope of this chapter requires us, however, to focus narrowly on how Melanchthon expressed himself on double justification. Given his central role at Regensburg, it is clear that Melanchthon supported the Protestant use of the language of double justification, but what did he mean by it? Did he make fatal concessions to the Roman doctrine of progressive justification? Despite

41. *LW* 44:286–87.

42. *Ibid.*, 26:122–33.

43. *Ibid.*, 2:132.

44. *WA* 39¹, 82–126.

45. *LW* 34:153.

46. Von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 7:256.

47. See Strehle, “*Imputatio iustitiae*,” 201–19; Seifrid, “Paul, Luther, and Justification in Galatians 2:15–21,” 215–30; Mark Seifrid, *Christ Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification* (Leicester and Downers Grove: Apollos and InterVarsity Press, 2000), 175; Mark Seifrid, “Luther, Melanchthon and Paul on the Question of Imputation: Recommendations on a Current Debate,” in Mark A. Husbands and Daniel J. Trier, eds., *Justification: What’s at Stake in the Current Debates* (Downers Grove and Leicester: InterVarsity, 2004), 137–76.

his pragmatic moves during the Leipzig Interim (1548) and his admittedly ambiguous language during the Majorist Controversy (1551 et seq.), his doctrine of justification as found in the *Loci Communes* did not fundamentally change from the 1521 to the 1543 editions.

By 1519 Melanchthon was expressing the rudiments of the doctrine of imputation. For his B.A. he proposed and defended this thesis: "All our righteousness is the gracious imputation of God."⁴⁸ Two years later, in the first *formal*, systematic summary of Protestant theology, the *Loci Communes*, Melanchthon wrote directly against the medieval doctrine of progressive justification by inherent righteousness. Christ's "*iustitia*" is ours, his "*satisfactio*" is ours, his "*expiatio*" and "*resurrectio*" are ours.⁴⁹ "Nothing of our good works, however good . . . are righteousness . . . but faith alone is righteousness" because it apprehends Christ's righteousness.⁵⁰ Faith is not mere assent; neither does it justify because it is "formed by love" (*fides formata caritate*).⁵¹ In the act of justification, faith is nothing less than "a hearty trust [*fiducia*] in the divine mercy promised in Christ."⁵² The *iustitia* that faith apprehends is not intrinsic to the sinner.⁵³ It is Christ's. "Furthermore, Christ, the intercessor for us, whom God gave as a victim and satisfaction, merited good will for us."⁵⁴ In his summary on justification, Melanchthon declared that since faith alone justifies, the basis for that declaration is the merits of Christ.⁵⁵

Even before he finished laying out the Protestant view, however, Melanchthon addressed the question of sanctification. Immediately

48. "Omnis iustitia nostra est gratuita dei imputatio." Philipp Melanchthon, *Melanchthons Werke in Auswahl [Studienausgabe]*, ed. Robert Stupperich, 7 vols. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1955-1983), 1:24. See also Lowell Green, "Faith, Righteousness, and Justification: New Light on Their Development under Luther and Melanchthon," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 4 (1973): 81.

49. Philipp Melanchthon, *Loci Communes von 1521*, in *Melanchthons Werke*, 2.88.12-14.

50. *Ibid.*, 2.88.16-19. "Nihil igitur operum nostrorum, quantumvis bona . . . iustitia sunt, sed sola fides . . . iustitia est."

51. *Ibid.*, 2.88.35-89.1-13.

52. *Ibid.*, 2.92.25-27. "Est itaque fides non aliud nisi fiducia misericordiae divinae promissae in Christo adeoque quocunque signo."

53. Melanchthon used the verb "*prehendo*" in accounting for the role of faith. The power of faith is in its object, not its own virtue. See *ibid.*, 2.107.25-26.

54. *Ibid.*, 2.106.12-14. "Porro bonam voluntatem meruit Christus, quem pro nobis intercessorem, quem pro nobis victimam et satisfactionem dedit."

55. *Ibid.*, 2.123.1-3.

after he characterized faith as *fiducia*, which first “pacifies” (*pacificat*) our hearts, he continued: “next it enkindles us in order that we shall have given thanks to God for his mercy, so that we perform the law spontaneously and joyously.”⁵⁶ The “works which follow justification” come from the “Spirit of God, who has captured the heart of the justified. Nevertheless, because they are done in the flesh, those works are in themselves unclean. For justification has commenced, but has not been consummated.”⁵⁷

Melanchthon’s 1543 edition of the *Loci* is of interest to us not least because it was the first revision to appear after the discussions at Regensburg. If that colloquy marked a fundamental change in Melanchthon’s doctrine of justification, it should have appeared here, but the text contains no evidence of any fundamental change in his doctrine of justification. At every point where he might have revised his doctrine to make it more congenial to progressive justification, he resisted. Indeed, the 1543 edition was considerably more sophisticated in its handling of the central points of contention with Rome.

The word “justification” does not signify God’s recognition of our Spirit-infused, intrinsic righteousness. Rather, it signifies “the forgiveness of sins and *reconciliation* or acceptance of a person to eternal life.”⁵⁸ By definition it is a forensic act, a declaration by God. Nevertheless, at the same time (*simul*) God remits sins, he gives (*donat*) the Holy Spirit, “beginning new virtues” (*inchoantem novas virtutes*) in us.⁵⁹ We are justified “*propter filium Dei*,” not “*propter nostram dignitatem*.”⁶⁰ This “*beneficium*” is to be “apprehended by faith or trust and the merit of Christ is to be opposed to our sin and damnation.”⁶¹

The Roman critics misunderstood the Protestant definition of “faith.” The faith by which sinners receive justification is not mere

56. Ibid., 2.92.28–30. “Deinde et accendit velut gratiam acturos deo pro misericordia, ut legem sponte et hilariter faciamus.”

57. Ibid., 2.108.18–22. “Quae vero opera iustificationem consequuntur, ea tametsi a spiritu dei, qui occupavit corda iustificatorum, proficiscuntur, tamen quia fiunt in carne adhuc impura, sunt et ipsa immunda. Coepta enim iustificatio est, non consummata.”

58. CR 21:742. “JUSTIFICATIO significat remissionem peccatorum et reconciliationem seu acceptationem personae ad vitam aeternam.”

59. Ibid., 21:742.

60. Ibid., 21:750.

61. Ibid. “Et quod hoc credendum sit, seu quod hac fide vel fiducia apprehendendum sit beneficium et opponendum meritum Christi peccato nostro et damnationi nostrae. . . .”

“*notitia*.” Faith includes knowledge, but it also includes *fiducia* in Christ the Mediator and his merits.⁶² As in 1521, Melanchthon categorically rejected the medieval doctrine of *fides formata caritate*. Faith is not a work, but an “instrument . . . by which we apprehend the Mediator interceding for us.”⁶³ “Grace” is not the infusion of medicine, but the “remission of sins, or mercy promised for the sake of Christ or gracious acceptance.”⁶⁴

In the *Locus de bonis operibus*, Melanchthon included a subsection responding to eighteen syllogisms proposed by his Roman opponents (*de argumentis adversarium*). The “monks” do not understand the Protestant doctrine of justification because they do not “distinguish” law and gospel.⁶⁵ They think of faith as an infused virtue and not the instrument of justification because they think more like Plato and Aristotle than Paul. They “command us to doubt.”⁶⁶ Melanchthon appealed to the distinction between law and gospel as the fundamental source of the disagreement between Protestants and Rome. They are right to say that we are justified by works—yet not by *our* works, but rather by those of the Mediator, Christ.⁶⁷ “Faith is imputed to us for righteousness” only because it apprehends Christ.

Two things stand out about Melanchthon’s discussions of justification in 1521 and 1543. First, in neither edition of the *Loci Communes* did he explicitly speak of a *duplex iustitia*.⁶⁸ The substance of the doctrine is evident in the architecture of his treatment. Justification is always definitive, grounded in Christ’s merits imputed to the sinner and apprehended *sola fide*. This forensic, definitive justification, however, always produces sanctity. Second, it is evident throughout

62. *Ibid.*, 21:785.

63. *Ibid.*, 21:786. “Instrumentum . . . quo apprehendimus Mediatorem pro nobis interpellantem. . . .”

64. *Ibid.*, 21:752. “Gratia est remissio peccatorum, seu misericordia propter Christum promissa, seu acceptatio gratuita. . . .”

65. *Ibid.*, 21:783. “Sed quod aliter Monachii scripserunt, et fit, quia non discernbant Legem et Evangelium. . . .”

66. *Ibid.*, 21:784.

67. *Ibid.*

68. He did use the expression in his 1536 *Disputatio* with Luther. See Philipp Melanchthon, *Epistolae, Iudicia, Consilia, Testimonia Aliorumque ad Eum Epistolae Quae in Corpore Reformatorum Desiderantur*, ed. H. E. Bindseil and R. Stupperich (1874; repr., Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1975), 345.

this section of the *Loci* that Melancthon was concerned to correlate justification and sanctification without confusing them. The sentence quoted above, that justification has been “commenced” but not “consummated,” is especially striking. Taken in abstraction, one could put this sentence in the mouth of any medieval or Roman theologian, who all denied a present definitive justification and who anticipated a future justification. It seems clear, however, that Melancthon did not intend to contradict his entire doctrine of justification. Rather, he was giving expression to the fact that though believers are already legally righteous, they are not yet experientially righteous or fully sanctified. Though justification produces good works, those works are never perfect in this life.⁶⁹ From 1521, Melancthon attempted to correlate justification and sanctification without confusing them. This move was nothing other than the Protestant doctrine of *duplex iustitia*.

Bucer’s Doctrine of *Duplex Iustificatio*

According to Martin Greschat, though personally conflicted and not wanting to betray the Protestant cause, Bucer substantially agreed with Gropper on justification in the discussions leading up to Regensburg.⁷⁰ It has seemed to others that because of Bucer’s doctrine of double justice and his politics and rhetoric, his doctrine of justification should be considered dissimilar to Luther’s and Calvin’s or even sub-Protestant.⁷¹ One might see Bucer’s view differently, however, if one interprets his soteriology in the light of Luther’s doctrine of double justice before him and Calvin’s doctrine of double grace after him. Bucer’s doctrine of justification was substantially the same as Luther’s, and as for Luther, Bucer’s doctrine of double justification united justification and sanctification without confusing them.⁷²

69. See *Melancthon’s Werke*, 2.112–14 and 2.114–25.

70. Greschat, *Martin Bucer*, 175–81.

71. E.g., Peter Stephens mentions Eduard von Ellwein, *Vom neuen Leben. De novitate vitae* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1932). See W. P. Stephens, *The Holy Spirit in the Theology of Martin Bucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 48 n. 2. See also Wilhelm Pauck, *The Heritage of the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 75; Joel Edward Kok, “The Influence of Martin Bucer on John Calvin’s Interpretation of Romans: A Comparative Case Study” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1993).

72. See Stephens, *Holy Spirit*, 52–54.

This was partly because Luther's influence on Bucer was direct, strong, and lasting.⁷³ It is significant that Bucer heard Luther at the Heidelberg Disputation (1518) because the seed of Luther's doctrine of double justice was already present in the theses Luther propounded there.⁷⁴ Double justice was a well-established feature of Bucer's soteriology well before Regensburg. In his 1523 tract *Basic Instruction in Christian Love*, Bucer was working with categories very much like those established by Luther in 1518–19.⁷⁵ There, faith was "trust" that "Christ by his blood has placed" believers again in the sonship and grace of the Father.⁷⁶ As Luther had preached in the 1522 *Invocavit* sermons, Bucer taught that faith "brings self-denial, dedication of self to the service of other men, forgetfulness of self and living wholly for others to the glory of God."⁷⁷ Even in this popular tract, it is evident that Bucer's chief interests were to stimulate assurance and confidence that those who trust Christ really are just before God and thence to stimulate them to good works in gratitude.

The same basic structure is also evident in his more mature work, for example, his *Brief Summary of the Christian Faith* (1548) and his massive (507-page) 1536 commentary on Romans.⁷⁸ About this commentary, T. H. L. Parker says that it "crushed into insignificance all but two or three of our others and its influence for a few years was immense."⁷⁹

In his most direct expositions of justification, Bucer did not always appeal to *duplex iustitia* explicitly, but it was implicit throughout. In his exposition of Romans 3, Bucer wrote that it was Paul's chief concern

73. Martin Brecht, "Bucer und Luther," in C. Krieger, ed., *Martin Bucer and Sixteenth Century Europe* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1993).

74. *WA* 1:364. "XXV. Non ille iustus est, qui multum operatur, sed qui sine opere multum credit in Christum." By way of explanation he said, "Sine enim opere nostro gratia et fides infunditur, qua infusa iam sequuntur opera."

75. *Das ym Selbs Niemand Sonder Anderen Leben . . .* (Strasbourg, 1523); Martin Bucer, *Basic Instruction in Christian Love*, trans. P. T. Fuhrmann (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1952).

76. Bucer, *Basic Instruction*, 42.

77. *Ibid.*, 48.

78. Martin Bucer, *Common Places of the Christian Religion*, trans. and ed. D. F. Wright (Appleford, Berkshire: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1971), 76–94; Bucer, *Metaphrases et Enarrationes Perpetuae . . . in Epistolam ad Romanos* (Strasbourg, 1536).

79. T. H. L. Parker, *Commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 35. See also Bernard Roussel, "Martin Bucer: Lecteur de l'Épître Aux Romains" (Ph. D. thesis, University of Strasbourg, 1970); Kok, "The Influence of Martin Bucer."

to show that the only justification with God that actually exists and should be expected is that which is “by Christ alone through faith.”⁸⁰ Considering what Luther called the “first justice,” Bucer says that law and gospel are “antithetical.”⁸¹ To Bucer, it was manifestly clear that no one is justified with God “by the works of the law.” At the same time it was also clear that justification *sola gratia, sola fide* was not to become a license for immorality, since “God does not justify, i.e., give eternal life to either the unjust or the wicked.” According to Bucer, it is not that God justifies sinners because they become good, but rather that those who are justified will not continue to live impenitently. The foundational justice before God is forensic. The secondary justice is progressive such that those whom God justifies do not remain in their former state.⁸²

In his exposition of Romans 4, Bucer was even more explicit about the forensic basis of our justice before God. Abraham was not justified “*ex operibus*,” that is, by sanctification, since that is an impossibility in this world.⁸³ Scripture testifies to this impossibility because faith was imputed to Abraham for justice (*fidem imputatam ad iustitiam*). Therefore, justice and salvation are given freely without merit.⁸⁴

It was well for Bucer to follow Luther in teaching imputed justice as the ground of justification, but he might have smuggled sanctification into justification in his definition of “faith.” That he did this in his Romans commentary, however, is not obvious. In his preface to the commentary, in which he gave a summary of Paul’s argument, he

80. Bucer, *Metaphrases in Romanos*, 170–71. “Iam dictum aliquoties est, Paulum hoc ubique praecipue aut in hac epistola, et prima ista epistolae huius parti agere, ut ostendat a solo Christo per fidem omnem salutem, hoc est iustificationem apud Deum expectandam, eoque nulla re alia, quaecunque illa sit.”

81. *Ibid.*, 180. “Antitheton est Evangelii et legis namque dixit sine lege manifestatam iustitiam Dei.”

82. *Ibid.*, 176. “Hinc iam manifesto id sequebatur, ex operibus legis iustificari neminem. Obtinente enim tanta apud omnes impietate et iniustitia, idque apud ipsos quoque Iudaeos operibus legis nitentes, quis non videat, ex hisce operibus iustificari apud Deum neminem posset neque enim iustificat Deus, hoc est, vita aeterna donat, tam iniustos et sceleratos.”

83. *Ibid.*, 214. “Probatio est huius, Abraham non est iustificatum ex operibus, idque ratione ducente ad impossibile in hunc mundum.”

84. *Ibid.* “Huius vero impossibilitatem ex eo probat cumque Scriptura testat illi fidem imputatam ad iustitiam. Quod ut dictum, idem est, atque gratis, absque ullo merito, iustitiam et salutem ei divinitus donatam esse.” See also his comments to the same effect, on Rom. 4:3, “et imputatum est ei ad iustitiam.” *Ibid.*, 415.

defined “faith” as “the same persuasion through the Holy Spirit of God’s love and fatherly kindness, in reliance upon our Lord Jesus Christ, who by his death has expiated our sins, and by his life now reigns, makes us partakers of his righteousness.”⁸⁵ He taught the same thing in his Cambridge lectures on Ephesians 2 (1550–51), during which he defined “true faith” as “a gift of God and a certain persuasion” that God has willed to save men and make them participants of eternal life and blessedness.⁸⁶ True, justifying faith necessarily produces good works. Indeed, says Bucer, “we glorify God and this benefit,” that is, the gift of justifying faith, with “most holy works” that are commanded by God’s Word and wrought within us by the Holy Spirit, but he did not identify faith with works.⁸⁷ He argued that James 2 neither contradicts Paul nor teaches justification by works, but rather teaches “double justification.” The word “justification,” he said, can be used to describe not only justification by faith, but also “justification of works,” which depends on “justification of faith.” In this scheme, good works “flow” (*manant*) from a “true and living faith.”⁸⁸ It is not that works perfect faith or make faith justifying, but rather that the existence of justifying faith is declared (*declaraverit*), is made clear (*perspicuam*), and is “shown” (*ostensum*) by works.⁸⁹ Good works are not faith, but they are evidence and fruit of justifying faith. Clearly, this is substantially Luther’s doctrine of faith and works.

Some who have suggested that Bucer had a different doctrine of justification from Luther and Calvin seem to rely on circumstantial evidence more than on Bucer’s words. For example, Wilhelm Pauck concluded that Luther and Bucer had different doctrines of justification not on the basis of Bucer’s definition of “justification” or “faith,”

85. *Ibid.*, 6. See also Bucer, *Common Places*, 172.

86. Martin Bucer, *Praelectiones doctiss. in Epistolam d. P. ad Ephesios* (Basel: Petrus Perna, 1562), 60. “Est enim vera fides donum Dei et certa persuasio, quòd Deus velit hominem servatum et participem vitae, et aeternae felicitatis, cohaeredemque Christi propter meram bonitatem suam in Christo.”

87. *Ibid.*, 60–61. “Deum, et hoc beneficium Christi celebremus sanctissimis operibus, quae illo verbo nobis à Deo mandantur, quatenus vis illius spiritus nos regit, et coerchet in nobis rebellem carnem.”

88. *Ibid.*, 63–64. “Duplex est iustificatio, non una, fidei et operum. Sed haec, id est, iustificatio operum à iustificatione fidei pendet, & constat illis bonis operibus, quae ex vera & viva fide manant.”

89. *Ibid.*, 63.

but on the basis of Bucer's *De Regno Christi* (1550). He seems to have reasoned that since Bucer proposed a different vision of the civil order from Luther, he must have held a different doctrine of justification. It does not follow, however, that because Bucer related the two kingdoms differently from Luther, he therefore had a different doctrine of justification.⁹⁰ More recently, Joel Kok has suggested that Bucer disagreed with Calvin's doctrine of justification, noting that Bucer used a different rhetorical strategy in dealing with Jacopo Sadoletto and that he interpreted Romans 2:6 and 2:13 somewhat differently from Calvin.⁹¹ Neither of these facts, however, means that Calvin and Bucer disagreed on justification, and Kok concedes that despite these minor differences, Bucer "denies that believers can be justified by moral law or by anything else except for faith."⁹²

Thus, we should agree with Peter Stephens, who says that Bucer was attempting to account for the variety of biblical expressions regarding justice and that "his way is not to choose between them, but to reconcile them."⁹³ Bucer was teaching imputation as the *justification* of the impious and the second justice as the *vindication* of the pious because, for Bucer, as for Calvin and much of the tradition following him, "justification is not an end in itself."⁹⁴

Calvin's Doctrine of *Duplex Beneficium*

Before it ever began, Luther expected Regensburg to fail, and when he read the agreement reached there, he repudiated it as a patchwork of irreconcilable views.⁹⁵ In contrast, Calvin, in the midst of the colloquy, recorded a rather different reaction. In his letters of

90. See the chapter "Bucer and Luther," in *The Heritage of the Reformation*; Wilhelm Pauck, ed., *Melanchthon and Bucer* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 156.

91. Kok, "The Influence of Martin Bucer," 63–74.

92. *Ibid.*, 63.

93. Stephens, *Holy Spirit*, 52.

94. *Ibid.*, 53.

95. *WAB* 9:459, no. 3627; F. Lau and E. Bizer, *A History of the Reformation in Germany to 1555*, trans. B. A. Hardy (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1969), 169. See also Möller, *History of the Christian Church*, 3:139–43; M. Brecht, *Martin Luther: The Preservation of the Church 1532–1546*, trans. J. L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 215–28; McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 2:61. Simo Peura, "Christ as Favor and Gift: The Challenge of Luther's Understanding of Justification," in *Union with Christ*, 64–66, argues that Luther did not reject Article 5 because it

R. SCOTT CLARK

May 11 and 12, 1541, Calvin wrote to William Farel, describing the proceedings of the Regensburg Colloquy.⁹⁶

The debate in controversy was more bitter [*acriores*] over the doctrine of justification. At length a formula was drawn up, which on receiving certain corrections, was accepted on both sides. You will be astonished [*miraberis*], I am sure, that our opponents have conceded [*concessisse*] so much, when you read the extracted copy, as it stood when the last correction was made upon it, which you will find enclosed in the letter. Our side [*nostris*] have thus retained also the substance [*summam*] of the true doctrine, so that nothing can be comprehended within it which is not to be found in our writings. You will desire, I know, a more distinct explication and statement of the doctrine, and in that respect, you will find me in complete agreement with yourself. If, however, you consider with what kind of men we have to agree upon this doctrine, you will acknowledge that much has been accomplished [*multum esse effectum*].⁹⁷

Calvin's more positive appraisal of Regensburg Article 5 has been seen by some as evidence that he held a different doctrine of justification from Luther.⁹⁸ This conclusion, however, does not follow from the evidence available from Regensburg.

In its own time, the Regensburg settlement was interpreted in a variety of ways and rejected for a variety of reasons. For example, Luther was not alone in rejecting Regensburg. The Roman consistory (May 27, 1541) also rejected Article 5 for the same reasons the "*duplex iustitia*" formula was later rejected at Trent: because it was

represented a threat to his forensic doctrine of justification, but because he did not understand that it was really advocating *theosis*.

96. Calvin's relations to Bucer have received a fair amount of attention in the secondary literature. Pauck called Bucer the "father of Calvinism." *The Heritage of the Reformation*, 99. See also W. van't Spijker, "Bucer's Influence on Calvin: Church and Community," in D. F. Wright, ed., *Martin Bucer: Reforming Church and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Kok, "The Influence of Martin Bucer," 1–19.

97. CR, 38:215. Translation revised from John Calvin, *Selected Works of John Calvin*, trans. Henry Beveridge, 7 vols. (1844–1858; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 4:260.

98. See Lillback, *The Binding of God*, 190–93; Armand J. Boehme, "Justification by Grace through Faith: Do Wittenberg and Geneva See Eye to Eye?" *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 11 (2002): 17–27.

seen as an unstable arrangement that might tend to give a foothold to the Protestant doctrine of justification by imputed righteousness.

It is clear from his letters to Farel that, on the one hand, Calvin considered Article 5 to be a victory for the Protestant side because Roman delegates had conceded the definition of “faith” as “*fiducia*” and the doctrine of imputation, not because he had managed to wedge sanctification as a ground or instrument of justification into the Protestant doctrine. Nevertheless, his support of Article 5 was not unqualified. He was not naive about the game afoot at the conference, that both sides were constructing a statement that could and would later be interpreted by both sides in a way that allowed them to retain their distinctive views. Therefore, he knew that Article 5 was not an unambiguous victory for the Protestant side. The “sum” of true doctrine is present, that is, Christ’s righteousness graciously imputed to sinners and received by a passive faith alone; but the article could have been clearer.

Like Bucer and Melancthon, Calvin was willing and able to interpret it in a way that agreed with what he had published in the *Institutes* and in his 1539 commentary on Romans 2:13.⁹⁹ If Regensburg signaled a shift in Calvin’s doctrine of justification away from Luther’s, it was not evident in Calvin’s 1548 commentary on Galatians 5:6, where he said, “Therefore when you move to the subject of justification, be careful about making any mention of charity or works, but hold on tenaciously to the exclusive particle.”¹⁰⁰ Calvin did want, as Lane has argued, to hold justification and sanctification “in balance,” but in so doing, he was quite unprepared to concede the central Roman contention regarding justification.¹⁰¹

The most likely interpretation of the difference between Calvin’s reaction to Regensburg and Luther’s is that Calvin and Luther did not differ regarding justification as much as they did in their politics. In the heat of battle, Calvin believed that the Protestant side had won

99. Ioannis Calvini, *Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos*, ed. T. H. L. Parker, in *Opera Omnia*, series 2, *Opera Exegetica* (Geneva: Droz, 1999), 44–46.

100. “Ergo quum versaris in causa iustificationis, cave ullam charitatis vel operum mentionem admittas, sed mordicus retine particulam exclusivam.” Ioannis Calvini, *Commentarii in Pauli Epistolas*, ed. H. Feld, in *Opera Omnia*, series 2, vol. 16, *Opera Exegetica* (Geneva: Droz, 1992), 120.

101. Lane, *Justification by Faith*, 57.

concessions on which they could capitalize toward the advancement of the Protestant cause.

Calvin's interest in relating justification and sanctification as twin graces or benefits of Christ did not begin or end at Regensburg. He had taught "*duplex beneficium*" in the 1536 edition of the *Institutio*, and it was a major theme in the final Latin edition of 1559.¹⁰² The earlier doctrine of *duplex iustitia* evolved to the doctrine of *duplex beneficium* or *duplex gratia*. The difference between 1536 and 1559 was not in the substance of his doctrine of justification. On that, he agreed with Luther and Bucer: We are definitively justified by the imputation of Christ's alien justice. From justification flows the Christian life of progressive sanctification.¹⁰³ Like Luther and Bucer, Calvin rejected the medieval *duplex* scheme, and because of his concern for a genuinely Protestant doctrine of *duplex beneficium*, he singled out for criticism Peter Lombard's "*duplex spei fundamentum*," that is, "*Dei gratiam et operum meritum* (3.2.43)."¹⁰⁴

Thus, Jonathan Rainbow is quite right to say that, on this point, Calvin was as "Lutheran, as emphatic, and as polemical as Luther." Rainbow provides no evidence, however, for his claim that for Calvin, "sanctification does not come, as it were, from justification" but comes directly from the cross in strict parallel to justification.¹⁰⁵ In fact, Calvin learned his doctrine of justification from Luther and ordered the relations between justification and sanctification as Luther did.

After Regensburg, the change Calvin made to the "*duplex iustitia*" scheme was accidental, not substantial. In place of *duplex iustitia* and *duplex iustificatio*, he taught a *duplex beneficium* or sometimes *duplex gratia*. Thus, in book 2 of the *Institutes*, he taught that Christ's death and burial propounds a "*duplex beneficium*," first that we have

102. Calvin used a quite different version of the double-justice idea in his commentary on Job. See Susan E. Schreiner, *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found? Calvin's Exegesis of Job from Medieval and Modern Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 105–20.

103. For an excellent account of Calvin's doctrine of *duplex gratia*, see Cornelis P. Venema, "The Twofold Nature of the Gospel in Calvin's Theology: The *Duplex Gratia Dei* and the Interpretation of Calvin's Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1985).

104. P. Barth and W. Niesel, eds., *Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1926–1954), 4.54.15–17 (hereafter OS). Calvin was referring to *Sententiae* III, dist. 26.1. See Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1971).

105. Rainbow, "Double Grace," 101–2.

been liberated from death, and second that because of that liberation we are able to pursue the mortification of the flesh (2.16.7).¹⁰⁶ Of course, the “*duplex*” theme is most pronounced in book 3, the very title of which suggests this idea: “On the Means of Learning the Grace of Christ and Thence What Fruit Comes to Us and What Effect Follows.”¹⁰⁷

But perhaps the clearest discussion of the *duplex beneficium* was in *Institutes* 3.11.1, where Calvin argued that Christ has been given to us “by the kindness of God” and is “apprehended and possessed by faith,” whereby we obtain a “*duplex gratia*,” the first of which is reconciliation to God by Christ’s justice and the second of which, having been sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, “we may consider innocence and purity of life.”¹⁰⁸

It is in this light that one should read Calvin’s argument against Osiander’s doctrine of double justice.¹⁰⁹ His argument with Osiander was not against all “*duplex*” schemes per se, but against Osiander’s version, because under it he hid the “monster” of “essential righteousness” (3.11.5).¹¹⁰ For Osiander, the verb “to justify” not only meant “to be reconciled to God” by which Christ’s justice is graciously imputed to sinners, but also included “sanctity and integrity” inspired by the essence of God dwelling in us (3.11.6).¹¹¹ In his version of double

106. OS 3.491.38–492.2. “Proinde duplex in morte sepulturaque Christi beneficium nobis fruendum proponitur, liberatio a morte cui mancipati eramus, et carnis nostrae mortificatio.” This was Luther’s message in *Tractatus de libertate Christiana* (1520). See WA 7:49–73 and the *Disputatio de iustificatione* thesis 31, “Sed sic dicendum: Ego credo in Christum; Et post facio opera bona in Christo vere.” WA 39:83.

107. OS 4.1. “De modo percipiendae Christi gratiae et qui inde fructus nobis proveniant, et qui effectus consequantur.”

108. Ibid., 4.182.3–10. “Summa autem haec fuit, Christum nobis Dei benignitate datum, fide a nobis apprehendi ac possideri, cuius participatione duplicem potissimum gratiam recipimus: nempe ut eius innocentia Deo reconciliati, pro iudice iam propitium habeamus in caelis Patrem: Deinde ut eius Spiritus sanctificati, innocentiam puritameque, vitae meditemur.”

109. See W. Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 133–39; James Weis, “Calvin Versus Osiander on Justification,” *The Springfielder* 30 (1965): 31–47.

110. OS 4.185.19–22. “Verum quia Osiander monstrum nescio quod essentialis iustitiae invexit, quo etsi noluit abolere gratuitam iustitiam, ea tamen caligine involvit quae pias mentes obtenebratas serio gratiae Christi sensu privet.”

111. Ibid., 4.187.9–14. “Nam in hac tota disputatione nomen iustitiae et verbum iustificandi ad duas partes extendit, ut iustificari sit non solum reconciliari Deo gratuita venia, sed etiam iustos effici: ut iustitia sit non gratuita imputatio, sed sanctitas et integritas quam Dei essentia in nobis residens inspirat.”

justice, Osiander “confounds” the distinction between justification and moral renewal.¹¹²

Thus, in *Institutes* 3.11.11, Calvin rejected what he regarded as a perversion of the “*duplex*” scheme, not the scheme itself.¹¹³ It was the “intolerable impiety” of teaching justification by sanctification under the “pretext” of double justice to which Calvin objected, not the “*duplex*” scheme he had inherited from Luther.¹¹⁴

Conclusions

The Protestant doctrine of double justice was not, as has sometimes been suggested, a deviation from or substantial modification of the Protestant doctrine of justification. It was rather a development of that doctrine in the service of a pan-Protestant doctrine. Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, and Calvin used *duplex iustitia* or its offspring, *duplex beneficium* and *duplex gratia*, to advance their agenda of uniting, without confusing, definitive justification and progressive sanctification, and it was this doctrine that came to expression in the Protestant confessions and orthodox Reformed theology.

Thus, the life of the doctrine of *duplex iustitia* or *duplex beneficium* did not end with Calvin. The German Calvinist theologian Caspar Olevianus (1536–87) appropriated it and used it as one of the organizing principles of his federal theology. For Olevianus, “Christ has been made not only our righteousness, but also our sanctification.” Christ died not only to justify, but also to inwardly renew his people.¹¹⁵ Under his exposition of the article *credo sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam*, Olevianus asked, “Why is the Church called ‘holy?’” He answered,

112. *Ibid.*, 4.194.11–13. “Hoc discrimen iustificandi et regenerandi (quae duo confundens Osiander, duplicem iustitiam nominat)”

113. *Ibid.*, 4.192.33–193.2. “Verum haec minime tolerabilis est impietas, praetextu duplicis iustitiae labefactare salutis fiduciam, et nos raptare supra nubes, ne gratiam expiationis fide amplexi, Deum quietis animis invocemus.”

114. See also Calvin’s comments on Rom. 3:21, in which he considered and rejected a double basis for justification. Calvin, *Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos*, 68–69.

115. “Christus non solum factus est nobis iustitia, sed etiam sanctification.” Caspar Olevianus, *In Epistolam d. Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos Notae*, ed. Theodore Beza (Geneva, 1579), 207. See also R. Scott Clark, *The Substance of the Covenant: Caspar Olevian on the Double Benefit of Christ* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2005).

“The Church is holy on two accounts, by renewal and imputation (John 13). That same holiness is only begun in renewal itself (Romans 7) . . . but by imputation her holiness is most perfect in Christ.”¹¹⁶

One also finds the *duplex beneficium* in William Perkins (1558–1608), certainly the greatest of the sixteenth-century English Calvinists. In 1590 he asked, “What benefits doth a man receive by faith in Christ? Hereby he is justified by faith in God and sanctified.”¹¹⁷

Speaking for Dort-era Reformed theology, Johannes Wollebius (1586–1629) wrote repeatedly of Christ’s *beneficia*. Preaching is “partly the offer of the benefit of redemption.”¹¹⁸ The substance of the covenant of grace or the “*interna materia*” (as distinct from the external and accidental) is “heavenly.” The “*res significata*” of the sacraments “is certainly Christ with all his benefits.”¹¹⁹ Under “Justification,” Wollebius defended the imputation of the active obedience of Christ as a benefit of Christ.¹²⁰ According to Reformed theology, definitive justification produces sanctification. As a transition to sanctification, the last article under “Justification” says, “Justification before God is distinct from justification before men; the former is by faith, the latter is by works.”¹²¹ Under “The Sacraments,” he argued that “the effects of the sacraments are not justification and sanctification,” as if they occurred “*ex opere operato*, but the confirmation and sealing of both benefits.”¹²² So early seventeenth-century Reformed orthodoxy continued to express substantially the same *duplex iustitia* doctrine as Luther and *duplex beneficium* doctrine as Calvin.

116. “Dupliciter autem Ecclesia sancta est: Renovatione & imputatione, Iohan. 13. Renovatione in semet ipsa sanctitas illa tantum est inchoata, ad Rom. 7 . . . Imputatione vero sanctitas eius est perfectissima in Christo.” Caspar Olevian, *Expositio symboli apostolici, sive articulorum fidei, desumpta ex concionibus catecheticis G. Oleviani* (Frankfurt, 1576), 178.

117. See William Perkins, *The Foundation of the Christian Religion Gathered into Six Principles* (1558), repr., Perkins, *The Works of William Perkins* (Appleford, Berkshire: Sutton Courtenay Press, 1970), 159.

118. Johannes Wollebius, *Compendium christianae theologiae*, ed. Ernst Bizer (Munich: Kreis Moers, 1935), 1.20.4.

119. *Ibid.*, 1.22.12. “Materia interna et coelestis est res significata, Christus nimirum cum omnibus beneficiis.”

120. *Ibid.*, 1.30.14, 17.

121. *Ibid.*, 1.30.23. “Justificatio coram Deo alia est quam justificatio coram hominibus; illa ex fide est, haec ex operibus.”

122. *Ibid.*, 1.22.21. “Effecta sacramentorum non sunt iustificatio aut sanctificatio tanquam ex opere operato, sed utriusque beneficii confirmatio et obsignatio.”

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When the Westminster divines articulated their doctrine of justification, they were the heirs of over a century of Protestant theological reflection on the doctrine. In that time the same doctrine had sustained a variety of formulations that, despite that variety, were essentially identical. When the divines spoke of Christ's "benefits" in the Westminster Confession of Faith (7.6; 19.3; 27.1, 3; 29.1, 7) and in the Westminster Larger Catechism (57, 58, 65, 153, 154, 162, 167, 170, 175, 176), they were using established Protestant shorthand. In the Westminster Standards, as in Reformed orthodoxy and in sixteenth-century Protestantism, "benefits" was merely a synecdoche for the two distinct but closely related doctrines of definitive justification and progressive sanctification.