

CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

JOHANNES PISCATOR (1546-1625) AND THE CONSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMPUTATION OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

HEBER CARLOS DE CAMPOS JÚNIOR

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

MAY 2009



CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

3233 Burton SE • Grand Rapids, Michigan • 49546-4301

800 388-6034 fax: 616 957-8621 info@calvinseminary.edu

www.calvinseminary.edu

---

This dissertation entitled

**JOHANNES PISCATOR (1546-1625) AND THE CONSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMPUTATION OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE**

written by

**HEBER CARLOS DE CAMPOS JÚNIOR**

and submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

has been accepted by the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary

upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:

  
Richard A. Muller, Ph.D.

  
Lyle D. Bierma, Ph.D.

  
Ronald J. Feenstra, Ph.D.

  
Cornelis P. Venema, Ph.D.

  
Henry De Moor, Th.D. OLIM  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

October 19, 2011  
Date

Copyright © 2009 by Heber Carlos de Campos Júnior  
All rights reserved

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My gratitude should be extended to many in the process of writing this dissertation, but the ones mentioned below have been specifically helpful.

To the librarians of Hekman Library, Paul Fields and Lugene Schemper, for their assistance both in the search for sources as well as revising technical details. On this last matter I also owe much to my cousin João Artur dos Santos.

To Todd Rester, Kat Stahl and Simon Loucks for assisting me when I encountered translation barriers.

To those who read and commented on my dissertation (Lyle Bierma, Ronald Feenstra, Cornelis Venema), especially my advisor, Richard Muller, for guidelines, admonishment – when needed – and a collegial spirit.

To faculty and staff of Calvin Theological Seminary as well as John Stott Ministries for financial and personal support that made possible my coming from abroad.

To my wife and daughter, Natalie and Bianca, for their love and patience as we waited for our return to our homeland, Brazil.

And, last of all, a word of praise to the Lord and Savior for allowing me to dive deeper into the knowledge of “such a great salvation” (Heb 2:3).

## ABSTRACT

Though the forensic understanding of imputation of Christ's righteousness was consistently asserted by the Reformers, the discussion around what constituted this imputed righteousness was a Post-Reformation debate. However, secondary literature is often unaware of the development of such doctrine when they assert that early Reformed figures such as John Calvin, Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus were either in favor or opposed to the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's active obedience. These labels are preferable if attributed to those who responded to Johannes Piscator's disagreement with Theodore Beza's theology of imputation of righteousness, this being the debate which sparked the controversy in Reformed circles.

Piscator understood that justification consisted in its entirety of the remission of sins imputed to the believer. Justification, then, was a *simplex actio Dei*, the imputation of a one-part righteousness. He found basis for this understanding in the several passages of Scripture which tied justification to the blood or the cross. For him, Scripture never indicated Christ's life of obedience to the law being imputed to the believer. Moreover, he believed that the imputation of Christ's active obedience raised contradictions within theology: if Christ's life makes one righteous then there is no need for the cross; if Christ's obedience makes us right with the law, then God's punishment upon Christ to satisfy the law is an unjust requirement of a double payment; if Christ obeyed in our behalf then we are freed from the obligation to obey God's moral law.

As the majority of the Reformed contingent in the seventeenth century responded to Piscator and his followers, they gathered a defense which was founded on three

theological areas: the law and the covenants, the meritorious cause of justification, and the person of Christ as mediator. The enhanced comprehension of these three interconnected areas consistently addressed in the seventeenth century demonstrates a significant maturity in the understanding of the imputation of Christ's active obedience.

## *CONTENTS*

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1. Presentation of the Thesis Statement</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2. Brief Biography of Johannes Piscator and the Controversy Surrounding the Meritorious Cause of Justification</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.2.a. Piscator's Life and Legacy</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.2.b. Controversy over the Meritorious Cause of Justification</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.3. Survey of History of Scholarship</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>1.4. Explanation of the Methodology and Structure</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART I</b>	
<b>THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE BEFORE PISCATOR</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
<b>EARLY AND MODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF THE REFORMERS' VIEWS</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>2.1. The Interpretation of Protestant Orthodoxy</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>2.2. The Interpretation of Scholarship from the Nineteenth Century to the Present</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	
<b>ACTIVE OBEDIENCE IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND SIXTEENTH CENTURY</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>3.1. The Concept of Active Obedience in the Medieval Scholastics</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>3.2. Luther, Melanchthon, and Lutheran Orthodoxy against Georg Karg</b>	<b>73</b>

3.3. Representatives of the Reformed Tradition in Connection with Piscator	83
3.3.a. John Calvin	84
3.3.b. Theodore Beza	89
3.3.c. Zacharias Ursinus	98
3.3.d. Caspar Olevianus	109
3.4. Reassessment of the Doctrine of Christ's Active Obedience and the Reformation	116
<b>PART II</b>	
<b>THE THEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCT OF PISCATOR'S DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	
<b>THE EXEGETICAL BASIS FOR PISCATOR'S DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE</b>	<b>125</b>
4.1. Defining Justification as Remission of Sins	128
4.2. The "Silence" of Scripture in Regards to Active Obedience as Imputed	135
4.3. Analysis of "Proof-Texts" for Imputation of Active Obedience	147
4.3.a. Romans 5:12-21	147
4.3.b. Romans 8:1-4	150
4.3.c. Philippians 2:8-9	155
4.3.d. "Do This and You Will Live"	157
4.3.e. Other Passages	160
<b>CHAPTER 5</b>	
<b>THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING PISCATOR'S DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE</b>	<b>165</b>
5.1. Theology of the Legal Covenant	166
5.2. The Human Being's Relationship to the Law	172

5.3. Theological Contradictions	179
5.3.a. Challenging the Validity of the Cross	180
5.3.b. Challenging the Justice of God	184
5.3.c. Challenging the Christian's Duty of Obedience	188
<b>PART III</b>	
<b>THE CONSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMPUTATION OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6</b>	
<b>SOME CONTROVERSIES OVER ACTIVE OBEDIENCE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY</b>	<b>195</b>
6.1. Debates within the Reformed Churches of France	195
6.2. Responses to the School of Saumur	205
6.3. Debates on English Soil	215
6.3.a. Debates prior to the Westminster Assembly of Divines	216
6.3.b. The Westminster Assembly of Divines	229
6.3.c. Reformed Consensus and the New Proposal by Richard Baxter	238
<b>CHAPTER 7</b>	
<b>SYSTEMATIZING THE DEVELOPED DOCTRINE</b>	<b>250</b>
7.1. The Stability of Divine Law and Covenant of Works	251
7.1.a. Continuity between Law and Gospel	251
7.1.b. Federal Framework for Law and Gospel	258
7.2. Twofold Righteousness in Justification	266
7.3. The Person of Christ in Relationship to the Law	275
<b>CHAPTER 8</b>	
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>286</b>

<b>APPENDIX</b>	
<b>PROPOSITIONS FOR ORAL DEFENSE</b>	<b>294</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>297</b>

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Presentation of the Thesis Statement

This thesis intends to prove that Johannes Piscator's (1546-1625) objections to the imputation of Christ's positive righteousness functioned as a turning point in the Reformed understanding of active obedience, since it generated responses that brought together several other doctrines to support the imputation of Christ's active obedience in a way that Reformed theologians had not previously done. Piscator was not alone in provoking later Reformed theologians to articulate the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's obedience to the law. This dissertation will point to other theologians who played their role in this controversy. However, a number of reasons turned Piscator into an iconic figure in the seventeenth century. Theological debates in which he was involved throughout his long career, his early opposition presenting solid arguments which anticipated much of the later debates, and his name being constantly repeated in later dogmatic responses to those who challenged the imputation of Christ's positive righteousness, all these contributed into making Piscator the major representative of the opposition. His pivotal role, then, provides a reason to focus on his theological discourse, though in connection with other theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who went alongside him on this issue of Christ's imputed righteousness.

Piscator's early position in Post-Reformation history is important for what it says concerning the theologians who preceded him. The research will demonstrate that representative theologians in the Reformed tradition prior to Piscator did not exhibit a precise delineation of the imputed righteousness of Christ, since in their context active obedience was touched upon in discussions of justification and Christ's mediatorial role but never so refined as to clarify how much of Christ's obedience was actually imputed to the Christian. Hence, it will conclude that it is anachronistic to refer to figures such as John Calvin, Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus as either for or against the imputation of active obedience as it was understood in the seventeenth century. Theodore Beza will be presented as an exception in formulating a clear and consistent doctrine which specified the different parts of Christ's righteousness that were imputed to the believer. In fact, it was mainly in response to Beza and those who concurred with him that Piscator presented his case which spurred a few controversies by the end of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Finally, this dissertation will also attest to the development of the doctrine of imputation of Christ's righteousness after Piscator and his followers, and demonstrate how the defense of active obedience as imputed provided an enhanced comprehension of issues regarding the law and the covenants, the meritorious cause of justification, and the person of Christ as mediator. Though not the only points of connection to active obedience, these three loci will be shown as constantly reappearing in Reformed defenses of Christ's active obedience as meritorious cause of our justification.

## 1.2. Brief Biography of Johannes Piscator and the Controversy Surrounding the Meritorious Cause of Justification

There are three more extensive biographies on Piscator<sup>1</sup> and several minor<sup>2</sup> ones that provide the data for the brief sketch of Piscator's life and works which follows. The history of the debates surrounding the meritorious cause of justification in which Piscator was involved comes mainly from Bos' detailed account,<sup>3</sup> but it has been complemented with primary sources such as personal letters and minutes of synods.

### 1.2.a. Piscator's Life and Legacy

Johann Fischer, who rendered his name in Latin as Johannes Piscator, was born on March 27, 1546, in Strasbourg. For over two decades, this metropolis of Alsace had received substantial Reformation teaching under the leadership of Martin Bucer (1491-1551) and Wolfgang Capito (1478-1541). Nonetheless, at the time of Piscator's birth and youth, the German lands were presenting considerable turmoil for Protestants such as the Fischers. Emperor Charles V, the major force of the Counter-Reformation, was using his power to bring the Holy Roman Empire back under the yoke of the Pope. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Georgio Pasore, *Oratio Funebris in Obitu Reverendi et Clarissimi Theologi Johannis Piscatoris beatae memoriae, communis nostril praeceptoris* (Herborn: Johannis –Georgii Muderspachii & Georgii Corvini, 1625); Johann Hermann Steubing, *Caspar Olevian; Johannes Piscator* (Leipzig: Carl Cnobloch, 1841), p. 98-117; Frans Lukas Bos, *Johann Piscator: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der reformierten Theologie* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, [1932]), 9-31.

<sup>2</sup> *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie*, s.v. "Piscator, Johannes"; *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, s.v. "Piscator, Johannes." Surprisingly, the recent multi-volume *Neue deutsche Biographie* does not have a biography of Piscator. Other less useful biographies are: Thomas Fuller et al., *Abel Redevivus: or, The dead yet speaking. The Lives and Deaths of the Moderne Divines* (London: Tho. Brudenell, 1651), 564; *A New General Biographical Dictionary*, s.v. "Piscator, Johannes"; *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (1911), s.v. "Piscator (Fischer), Johannes"; James T. Dennison, Jr., "Johannes Piscator and the Doctrine of Justification," *The Outlook* 53, no. 10 (Dec 2003): 8; J. Wesley White, "The Denial of the Imputation of the Active Obedience of Christ: Piscator on Justification," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007): 153-154.

<sup>3</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 71-146; cf. Gerhard Menk, *Die Hohe Schule Herborn in ihrer Frühzeit (1584-1660): ein Beitrag zum Hochschulwesen des deutschen Kalvinismus im Zeitalter der Gegenreformation* (Wiesbaden: Selbstverlag der historischen Kommission für Nassau, 1981), 249-255.

Schmalkaldic War broke out in 1546 and in the following year the Protestant forces were defeated. The emperor decided during the Diet of Augsburg (1547-1548) to impose on the imperial states the Interim – meant to be a provisional arrangement until a general council could reach an agreement on disputed issues – which required the reintroduction of Catholic practices in all Protestant territories of the empire. Religious tranquility would only come with the Peace of Augsburg, in 1555, when the Emperor signed a treaty with the Schmalkaldic League, the alliance of Lutheran princes.<sup>4</sup>

Piscator's youth also oscillated between trials and prosperity. His father died when he was five years old. When he was six, he was sent by his widowed mother to school to learn the vernacular language and not much later he engaged in the study of Latin. Piscator studied for five years in the German public school and, a year later, he joined the world-famous *Gymnasium* of the renowned humanist Johann Sturm.<sup>5</sup> His excellence as a student earned him medals, but because of his mother's poverty she took

---

<sup>4</sup> During 1548-1555, the Reformed orientation that cities like Strasbourg had with Martin Bucer was suppressed, and after the Religious Peace of Augsburg (1555) recognized both Lutheranism and Catholicism as legal confessions in the Holy Roman Empire (*cuius regio, eius religio*), Reformed Protestantism was excluded. In Strasbourg, Johann Marbach was largely successful in bringing the city to Lutheranism. Charles D. Gunnoe Jr., "The Reformation of the Palatine and the Origins of the Heidelberg Catechism, 1500-1562," in *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology*, ed. Lyle D. Bierma (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 29-33; cf. Bernd Moeller, "Imperial Cities and the Reformation," in *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays*, trans. H. C. Erik Midelfort and Mark U. Edwards, Jr. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 41-115; Thomas A. Brady Jr., *Protestant Politics: Jacob Sturm (1489-1553) and the German Reformation* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> Johann Sturm (1507-1589) founded the Strasbourg Gymnasium (1537) and was its rector for forty-three years (1538-1581). The Gymnasium became an Academy offering the bachelor and master of arts degrees in 1566, but only became a full-fledged university in 1621. Sturm was a friend of Bucer and Calvin, defended Zwinglian and Calvinist theology, and was accused of heresy by Johann Marbach in 1570. With the strengthening of Lutheranism and the reinforcing of the Formula of Concord, Sturm was relieved of his duties as rector in 1581. For more on his life and educational methodology, see the first two chapters of Lewis W. Spitz and Barbara Sher Tinsley, *Johann Sturm on Education: The Reformation and Humanist Learning* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995).

him away from school, desiring that her son would become an apprentice of a craftsman.<sup>6</sup> Thinking otherwise, one of his teachers found the minister Johann Thomas who took him into his house and paid for his coming studies in the Gymnasium in exchange for little chores and teaching his kids. For six years, Piscator studied classical languages, rhetoric and dialectic, in which arose an admiration for Sturm. But Piscator's interest and priority was theology. This is why the struggles within the theology department must have had a deep influence on him.<sup>7</sup>

The Reformed Jerome Zanchi (1516-1590) and the Lutheran Johann Marbach (1521-1581) led a dispute which split the church and the school in two parties. During the days of Bucer, both the church and the school were united at Strasbourg, and Bucer could work out differences between Lutherans and Reformed. However, some circumstances redirected the spiritual atmosphere of the city. Even at the time Bucer was in Strasbourg, the Gymnasium couldn't provide a complete theological education to its preachers and they had to go to other universities, mainly Wittenberg, where they studied with Luther. The preachers who came from there had an intolerant attitude. When Bucer had to leave the city because of the 1548 Augsburg Interim, the exclusivist Lutheran party came to the foreground. Marbach was the pushing force in this and he filled in Bucer's leadership. Marbach wanted to eradicate what he regarded as the Zwinglian heresy and bring about the pure teaching of Luther. This happened slowly because of some opposition by the humanist Sturm and his followers. But the opposition could not withhold the exclusivism. Zanchi, who had been professor of theology at Strasbourg since 1553, had differences

---

<sup>6</sup> Pasor uses the term "mechanico opifici." *Oratio Funebris in Obitu Reverendi et Clarissimi Theologi Johannis Piscatoris*, 8.

<sup>7</sup> His theology professors were Jerome Zanchi, Johann Marbach, Melchior Speccerus and Jacobus Glocerus.

with Marbach since the 1550s, but their public collision happened in 1561.<sup>8</sup> He opposed Zanchi mainly on matters of the Lord's Supper and Predestination; other initial disagreements were on eschatology and whether the Pope was the antichrist.<sup>9</sup> Zanchi, who was supported by Sturm and the collegiate church of St. Thomas, wanted to resolve the issue through a formal disputation. Marbach, who had all the pastors support him, believed the issue went beyond the jurisdiction of the school and, thus, required the intervention of the civil authorities. Strasbourg's ruling Senate and XXI decided to intervene and, in 1563, called foreign theologians to settle the struggle. Apparently, most who came were of Lutheran bent (including Jakob Andreae and Johannes Brenz), while Zanchi and Sturm only got the Reformed from Basel to come. A *Consensus* was written substantially reflecting Marbach's views, to which Zanchi subscribed pressured by Sturm, but later interpreted to favor his opinion. Under pressure for remaining with his standpoint, Zanchi resigned and left the city in 1563.<sup>10</sup>

The disputes between these two parties would have their effect on Piscator during his formative years. For Zanchius planted the seed of the Reformed faith, but Marbach took Piscator into his house until mid 1560s and was very influential over him. Marbach

---

<sup>8</sup> First, Zanchi was required to sign the *Confessio Augustana* as the condition of obtaining his prebend. In 1556 and 1557, he raised complaints on his view of the eucharist and was formally warned by the Scholarchs – the governing body of the school – to avoid statements which deviated from the confessional standing of the city. The dispute became major as it broke out in 1561. "Having received intimation from his students that Zanchi's lectures on eschatology and the perseverance of the saints were at variance with the teaching of Luther, Marbach once again referred the matter to the Scholarchs. It was as a result of this action that Zanchi came to be suspended on full pay until the orthodoxy of his views could be established." Zanchi was freed from his responsibilities in the school until its resolution in 1563. Christopher J. Burchill, "Girolamo Zanchi: Portrait of A Reformed Theologian and His Work," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15, no. 2 (1984): 193-194.

<sup>9</sup> James M. Kittelson argues that the critical theological issues centered upon predestination and the perseverance of the faithful, rather than upon the Lord's Supper. "Marbach vs. Zanchi: The Resolution of Controversy in Late Reformation Strasbourg," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 8, no. 3 (1977): 34.

<sup>10</sup> For a full report of the controversy, see Kittelson, "Marbach vs. Zanchi," 31-44.

wanted him as a professor in Strasbourg and pushed him to further his studies. Piscator thought of Wittenberg, but because of some Crypto-Calvinist tendencies in this school he ended up going to Tübingen for his master's, a degree which he earned in 1568.<sup>11</sup> There he studied theology with Jakob Andreae (1528-1590) and philosophy with Jacob Schegk (1511-1587). It was through Andreae that Piscator became familiar with John Calvin's *Institutes*, and his appreciation for the Genevan Reformer's writing grew in proportion to his criticism of the Lutheran faith.

In 1571 Piscator returned to his hometown to start his teaching career at Sturm's school which had become an Academy. He was asked to lecture on Philippians and Aristotle's *Organon*.<sup>12</sup> Marbach was hoping to be supported by Piscator in the debates with Sturm, but Piscator ended up having conflicts with Marbach by teaching differently from Gnesio-Lutherans. Based on Phil. 3:20, Piscator taught a "Zwinglian" presence of Christ among Christians, and from Phil. 4:3 he expounded a doctrine of predestination that raised concerns. He was judged by the church council to have broken the 1563 *Consensus* and later dismissed.<sup>13</sup> In the following years, he became a nomad, moving to different cities and getting different teaching positions for short amounts of time. He was in Heidelberg (1574-1577), Siegen (1577-1578), Neustadt (1578-1582), Moers (1582-1584), and rejected a call to go to the new University of Leiden and another from

---

<sup>11</sup> The *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* says that after earning his master's degree, Piscator journeyed through Wittenberg, Magdeburg and Brunswick, before returning to Strasbourg in 1571.

<sup>12</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 18.

<sup>13</sup> Bos (p. 19), apparently romanticizing the issue, says that when ordered to teach differently he preferred to leave. Other biographers (Pasor, Wencker) say that he was barred to teach. Some sources say that Piscator left the school still in 1571, others say he was dismissed in 1573.

Theodore Beza to go to Geneva.<sup>14</sup> In Heidelberg, he became very close to Caspar Olevianus (1536-1587) who not only became a fatherly figure, but also the one who led him to Ramism, as Piscator acknowledges in his preface to his *Animadversiones* on Ramus' Dialectic.<sup>15</sup> It was also in Heidelberg that Piscator married his wife, Ottilia Sinzingin, Olevianus' cousin.<sup>16</sup> In Heidelberg he was in close contact with the Reformed theologians Immanuel Tremellius (1510-1580), Franciscus Junius (1545-1602), Zacharias Ursinus (1534-1583), Petrus Boquinus (†1582). After the death of Frederick III, Ludwig, the new Elector (1576-1583), persecuted the Reformed faith as he re-introduced Lutheranism. Piscator and the other Reformed professors were ordered to leave the university and the town. Prince Casimir, disgusted with his brother's intolerance, made Neustadt a haven for the Reformed teachers who had been expelled.<sup>17</sup> There, Piscator also joined Ursinus, Zanchi, David Pareus (1548-1622) and Daniel Tossanus (1541-1602). But it would be at the recently organized school in Herborn that Piscator would have a long-lasting impact.

The Academy (*Hohe Schule*) in Herborn was created in 1584, by Johann VI (1535-1606), count of Nassau-Dillenburg, one of the four brothers of William of

---

<sup>14</sup> In a letter to Beza (1519-1605) from June 12, 1580, Piscator says that there were two reasons for not accepting the call to teach philosophy in Geneva: first, he is a Ramist, which the Genevans do not appreciate; second, he had been assigned by Prince Johann Casimir to start a new translation of the Bible to German and to write some catechetical lectures. Alain Dufour, Béatrice Nicollier and Hervé Genton eds., *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze* 1580 (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1999), 21:143-151.

<sup>15</sup> Johannes Piscator, *In P. Rami Dialecticam Animadversiones* (Londini: Henrici Bynnemani, 1581), 5-9. Cf. Howard Hotson, *Commonplace Learning: Ramism and Its German Ramifications, 1543-1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 102-103.

<sup>16</sup> They were married for 48 years (she died on February 4, 1622), had 12 children, 46 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. Pasor, *Oratio Funeris in Obitum Reverendi et Clarissimi Theologi Johannis Piscatoris*, 11-12.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. James I. Good, *The Origin of the Reformed Church in Germany* (Reading, PA: Daniel Miller, 1887), 232-270.

Orange.<sup>18</sup> Count Johann VI appointed Caspar Olevianus to coordinate the institution. Piscator accepted a professorship on October 1, 1584, at the exegetical department. Olevianus and Piscator were the major names in the school. Georg Pasor (1570-1637) says that when Piscator joined Olevianus in Herborn, they were called the Luther and the Melanchthon of that school. Olevianus had the “presence, spirit, eloquence and zeal of Martin Luther” (*facie, animo, oratione & zelo Martinum Lutherum*) while Piscator resembled Melanchthon physically and in style, whose manner of speech and judgment were not harsh (*macie corporis, stylo aequabili, eloquio nec non iudicii acrimonia referebat Melanchthonem*).<sup>19</sup> After Olevianus’ death in 1587, Piscator took on the role of leader and became a counselor for count John. The school flourished to its peak in Piscator’s days and in the early 1600s it had over three hundred students from all parts of Germany, but also from France, Poland and Hungary.<sup>20</sup> Piscator remained in Herborn, as its most renowned professor, until his death on July 26, 1625.<sup>21</sup> Herborn lost its influence during the Thirty Years War and never recovered.<sup>22</sup>

It was in Herborn that Piscator produced most of his writings. He was a prolific author who wrote philosophical, exegetical and dogmatic treatises.<sup>23</sup> Among the many

---

<sup>18</sup> The Nassau princes were school builders. Prince William of Orange founded the University of Leiden, and Count Lewis of Nassau founded the University of Franeker.

<sup>19</sup> Pasor, *Oratio Funeris in Obitu Reverendi et Clarissimi Theologi Johannis Piscatoris*, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Good, *The Origin of the Reformed Church in Germany*, 263-264; Fuller, *Abel Redivivus*, 564.

<sup>21</sup> During his 41 years in Herborn until his death, he left the city a couple times because of problems with pests as well with the Spanish invasion; the first time he left Herborn was in 1594, the second time in 1606 when the whole school went again to Siegen, and the third time was in 1614. At the end of his life, because of illness problems, he had students come to his home for classes. Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 30.

<sup>22</sup> For more on the early history of this school, see Menk, *Die Hohe Schule Herborn in ihrer Frühzeit (1584-1660)*.

<sup>23</sup> For lists of his works, see Steubing, *Caspar Olevian; Johannes Piscator*, 120-138; *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*.

works, three made Piscator renowned in his day. First, he wrote a summary of Calvin's *Institutes* in aphorisms (*Aphorismi doctrinae christianae ex Institutione Calvinii excerpti*, the first edition published in 1589), which had many editions and became widely read.<sup>24</sup> Secondly, his complete translation of the Bible to the German (the first edition was published in 1602-1603) was the first since Martin Luther's.<sup>25</sup> The third is not one work, but a set of them which best characterized him. Piscator wrote commentaries on every book of the Bible which gave him a reputation for being, most of all, a skilled biblical commentator.

### 1.2.b. Controversy over the Meritorious Cause of Justification

Piscator's objections regarding the imputation of Christ's obedience to the law in our justification received their first written expression in a letter exchange with Theodore Beza (1519-1605) in the 1580s. The most theological letter from within this exchange was Piscator's examination of Beza's *Annotationes minores* on Romans 8:2, which was written on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1586.<sup>26</sup> Beza did not respond to Piscator argument by argument but sent him a set of theses written in 1584<sup>27</sup> and commended that Piscator read the *Annotationes maiores* which provided Beza's extended standpoint.<sup>28</sup> The exchange was very respectful and friendly, just like the corrections presented by some of his comrades

<sup>24</sup> Olivier Fatio, "Présence de Calvin à l'époque de l'orthodoxie réformée: Les abrégés de Calvin à la fin du 16<sup>e</sup> et au 17<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Calvinus Ecclesiae Doctor: Die Referate des Internationalen Kongresses für Calvinforschung vom 25. bis 28. September 1978 in Amsterdam*, ed. W. H. Neuser (Kampen: Kok, 1980), 192.

<sup>25</sup> This translation which was officially adopted by the Reformed canton of Bern in the 1680s, was looked upon by the Lutherans as a rival of Luther's Bible. James I. Good, *History of the Swiss Reformed Church since the Reformation* (Philadelphia: Publication and Sunday School Board of the Reformed Church in the United States, 1913), 154-155.

<sup>26</sup> Dufour et al., *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze 1586* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2005), 27:49-63.

<sup>27</sup> Dufour et al., *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze 1584* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2003), 25:259-268.

<sup>28</sup> Dufour et al., *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze 1587* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2006), 28:29-30.

such as David Pareus, professor in Heidelberg, and Bernhard Textor (1560?-1602), a former colleague in Herborn.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, some controversies between parties in places like Zurich and Schaffhausen<sup>30</sup> were going beyond friendly discussions. Piscator wrote to Beza on February 17, 1596, about his disagreement with the attitudes of a former colleague of his. Apparently, Johannes Altenhovius (†1616) had been trying to convince the civil authorities that Theodore Beza, Johann Jakob Grynaeus (1540-1617) and Daniel Tossanus were heretics for believing that the whole of Christ's obedience was imputed to us. Altenhovius was trying to get Piscator's support in his opposition, but Piscator wrote to be forgiven of any suspicion his brothers (Beza and the others) might have had of him since his name and authority had been abused and misused in this controversy. Piscator promised that during the time in which he and Altenhovius were at the same school, Piscator had never discussed with him any thoughts against their opinion.<sup>31</sup> This epistle showed how much Piscator wanted to prevent this controversy from becoming more and more public.

However, his position had already spread through a set of theses that were sent as a personal correspondence.<sup>32</sup> Local debates started to occur constantly in Switzerland and Germany. The Basel theologians seem to have been regular opponents of Piscator and

---

<sup>29</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 106-110.

<sup>30</sup> Years later, Piscator's doctrines were still a matter of concern in Schaffhausen as shows the 1604 letter of Antoine de La Faye on behalf of the Company of Pastors in Geneva. Cf. Matteo Campagnolo, Micheline Louis-Courvoisier and Gabriella Cahier eds., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1604-1606)*, Travaux D'Humanisme et Renaissance CCXXXVI (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1989), 9:250-253.

<sup>31</sup> "Literae Io. Piscatoris ad fratres de controversia iustificationis" in *Clarorum virorum epistolae CXVII e Bibliothecae Gothanae autographis*, ed. Ernst Salomon Cyprian (Leipzig: Io. Frider. Gleditsch & filium, 1714), 74-76.

<sup>32</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 84-93. For a transcription of Piscator's theses, see Bos, 242-244.

others who denied the imputation of Christ's active righteousness.<sup>33</sup> First it was professor Grynaeus who wrote a set of antitheses in 1588, to which Piscator responded. Then it was Amandus Polanus (1561-1610) at the turn of the century.<sup>34</sup> Ludovicus Lucius (1577-1642) engaged Piscator in debates at the end of his life<sup>35</sup> and even Johannes Wollebius (1586-1629) wrote a response to Piscator's teachings in his *Compendium Theologiae Christianae* (originally published in 1626).<sup>36</sup> In German lands, Count Ludwig von Sayn-Wittgenstein searched for learned explanations from both sides on an issue that was causing disunity in his own land; he received letters from David Pareus,<sup>37</sup> on the one hand, and Daniel Tossanus<sup>38</sup> on the other. But when the Reformed Churches of France deliberated on the issue, then Piscator's standpoint became a matter of international discussion.

---

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Johann Jakob Grynaeus, Amandus Polanus von Polansdorf and Ludwig Lucius, *Triga Basileensivm Theologorum. Hoc Est: Disputatio Tripartita, Johan. Jacobi Grynaei, Amandi Polani, Ludowici Lucij: De Perfectae Obedientiae Servatoris nostri Jesu Christi imputation: In Gratiam Pietatis [et] veritatis studiosorum conjunctim edita. Apprimè utilis, & digna, quae hoc tempore, ob controversiam Socinianam consideretur* (Ambergae: Johann Schönfeld, 1613). For an overview of the theological instruction in Basel during this period, see Amy Nelson Burnett, *Teaching the Reformation: Ministers and Their Message in Basel, 1529-1629* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 127-154.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 104-105. For Polanus' side of their dialogue, see the letters in Cyprian, *Clarorum virorum epistolae CXVII*, 136-142. For a letter from Polanus to the Company of Pastors in Geneva connecting the Piscator affair with the intentions of change of the Confession, see Campagnolo et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1604-1606)*, 9:259-261.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Johann Piscator and Ludovicus Lucius, *De causa Meritoria nostri coram Deo Justificationis inter J. Piscatorem et L. Lucium amica disceptatio* (Basel: Genathius, 1630); Thomas Gataker, *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis; et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis, Scripta quaedam adversaria; de Causâ meritoria nostri coram Deo Justificationis: unâ cum Thomae Gatakeri Londinatis Animadversionibus in utraque* (London: G. M., 1641).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Johannes Wollebius, *Compendium Christianae Theologiae* (London: J. Y. sumptibus Dan. Frere, 1647), 78-79, 87-89. For the English translation, see John Wollebius, *The Abridgment of Christian Divinitie*, trans. Alexander Ross (London: T. Mab and A. Coles, 1650), 109-110, 120-124.

<sup>37</sup> David Pareus, "The Epistle of D. David Parie to the illustrious and noble Count, Lord Ludovick Witgenstenius, &c. Concerning Christs active and passive justice," in *The Summe of Christian Religion*, delivered by Zacharias Ursinus (London: James Young, 1645), 791-806.

<sup>38</sup> Cyprian, *Clarorum virorum epistolae CXVII*, ep. 101 (p. 169-170), ep. 102 (p. 170-172), ep. 104 (p. 173-174), ep. 107 (p. 178-180), ep. 108 (p. 180-181).

The debates over Piscator's doctrine started because of French students who came from Herborn as devoted followers of their professor.<sup>39</sup> At the Synod of Gap (1603), Piscator's teaching was censured and letters were written to him, to many Reformed universities and churches all over Europe.<sup>40</sup> In October of 1603, the Synod wrote to Piscator about his "evil" teaching settling in the minds of young ministers,<sup>41</sup> and on January 24, 1604, Piscator responded with a long letter explaining his position.<sup>42</sup> In Rochel (1607) the Synod received Piscator's response and evaluated as having arguments that did not convince. Bernard Sonis, the minister and professor at Montauban,<sup>43</sup> at the request of the Assembly wrote a book responding to Piscator, but it was not published for

---

<sup>39</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 110.

<sup>40</sup> John Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata: or, The Acts, Decisions, Decrees, and Canons of those Famous National Councils of the Reformed Churches in France* (London: Printed for T. Parkhurst and J. Robinson, 1692), I.227; J. Aymon, *Tous les Synodes nationaux des Églises réformées de France* (La Haye: C. Delo, 1710), I.257-258. For a copy of the letter sent to the church in Zurich, see Matteo Campagnolo, "Deux lettres du synode national de Gap aux Églises soeurs (1603)," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 135 (April-May-June 1989): 276-278. Concerning Piscator's teaching, which the letter above does not describe extensively, it is said: "fide ac passiva Christi justitia, qua una nos justificari coram Deo ac servari docet et asserit, praeterita interim et exclusa universa Christi oboedientia, quam vel ab ipsa conceptione in utero Virginis ad ultimum usque vitae halitum patri suo ac nostro perfectissime praestitit" (p. 277). The Company of Pastors in Geneva, in a meeting on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1603, writes what they heard from Monsieur Renault, pastor of the church in Bordeaux, who was encharged to deliver the decisions of Gap: "Il nous a remontré aussi comme la doctrine de Monsieur Piscator: *de activa Christi justitia et obedientia quasi nihil faceat ad nostram salutem* est intolerable et infecte leurs Eglises par quelques jeunes gens qui, ayant esté souzb luy à Herborne, apportent ce dogme ès Eglises de France et les troublent, dont ilz luy escrivent par exprès afin qu'il corrige cela." Gabriella Cahier and Matteo Campagnolo, *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1600-1603)*, Travaux D'Humanisme et Renaissance (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1986), 8:262.

<sup>41</sup> "Epistle 67 – Johanni Piscatori Synodus Gallica S.P.D." in *Praestantium ac eruditorum virorum epistolae ecclesiasticae et theologicae*, ed. Christian Hartsoeker and Philip van Limborch, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Amsterdam: H. Wetstenium, 1684), 121.

<sup>42</sup> "Epistle 68 – Reverendis Amplissimis & Doctissimis viris Dominis Pastoribus Ecclesiarum Gallicarum," in *Praestantium ac eruditorum virorum epistolae ecclesiasticae et theologicae*, 121-125.

<sup>43</sup> Brian Armstrong, "Semper Reformanda: The Case of the French Reformed Church, 1559-1620," in *Later Calvinism: International Perspectives*, vol. 22 of Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, ed. W. Fred Graham (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994), 132.

peacemaking sake,<sup>44</sup> a common practice of the French Synod concerning controversial books on any side of a debate.

Another example of their spirit of peace was the reprimand brought upon Felix Huguet, a minister in Dauphiny, for publishing a book against Piscator's unpublished book as if he had the authorization of the Synod, which he did not have. A third endeavor towards peace came from a letter written by John of Nassau to pastor Regnault – who brought the letter to Synod – promising he would hinder the spread of Piscator's teachings provided the latter were not provoked by public controversies. Yet, the delegates reaffirmed their doctrine: "That the whole Obedience of Christ both in his Life and Death is imputed to us for the full remission of our Sins, and acceptance unto Eternal Life; and in short that this being but one and the self-same Obedience is our entire and perfect Justification."<sup>45</sup>

At the Synod of Privas (1612), Pierre du Moulin (1568-1658)<sup>46</sup> was thanked for having written against Daniel Tilenus (1563-1633), the professor at Sedan, on justification<sup>47</sup> concerning the same issue of controversy with Piscator; he was also

---

<sup>44</sup> The Records of the Company of Pastors in Geneva say that in 1606, there were two letters written by Ferrier and Sonis which touch on the teaching of Piscator. The editors say these letters are not extant, but the data explains why the Synod in Rochel requested Sonis to write a formal rebuttal to Piscator. Cf. Campagnolo et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1604-1606)*, 9:222.

<sup>45</sup> Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata*, I.265; Aymon, *Tous les Synodes nationaux des Églises reformées de France*, I.301-302.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Brian Armstrong, "The Changing Face of French Protestantism: The Influence of Pierre du Moulin," in *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin*, vol. 10 of Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, ed. Robert V. Schnucker (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1988), 131-149; J. Van Der Meij, "Pierre du Moulin in Leiden, 1592-1598," in *Lias* 14, no. 1 (1987): 15-40.

<sup>47</sup> Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata*, I.344. In the previous national synod – St. Maixant, 1609 –, Tilenus was probably warned as to his teachings. Quick (I.316) records: "Letters shall be dispatcht from this Assembly unto Monsieur Tilenus Professor at Sedan, about the matters relating to him, proposed in this Synod." Aymon (I.361) portrays the same vagueness on Tilenus at St. Maixant. Brian Armstrong barely touches on this controversy and his conclusions are critical of the increasing lack of inclusiveness and

advised not to publish his book yet.<sup>48</sup> Privas reasserted their interpretation of article 18 of the Confession demanding subscription from all pastors and candidates for the ministry.

The article to which they had to subscribe said:

That our Lord Jesus Christ was obedient to the Moral and Ceremonial Law, not only for our good, but also in our stead, and that his whole Obedience yielded by him thereunto is imputed to us, and that our Justification consists not only in the forgiveness of sins, but also in the Imputation of his Active Righteousness; and subjecting my self unto the Word of God, I believe that the Son of Man came to serve, and that he was not a Servant because he came into the World.<sup>49</sup>

The same Synod wrote a refutation of Piscator's doctrine.<sup>50</sup>

The position of the Synod against Piscator and Tilenus was reasserted in Tonneins (1614), that man

cannot be justified but by Jesus Christ our Saviour, who being incarnate, was obedient unto his Father from the first moment of his birth, unto the last of his ignominious death upon the Cross, having most perfectly both in his life and death, fulfilled the whole Law given unto men, and that particular Commandment imposed on him by his Father of suffering, and giving his Soul a ransom for many: By which most perfect Obedience we are justified, because it is counted ours by the Grace of God, and apprehended by that Faith which he gives unto us. From which we are assured, that through the merit of this whole Obedience we have, and shall obtain the forgiveness of all our sins, and be made worthy of everlasting life.<sup>51</sup>

---

constant charges of heresy within the French Reformed Church. "Semper Reformanda: The Case of the French Reformed Church, 1559-1620," 134-138.

<sup>48</sup> Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata*, I.378; Aymon, *Tous les Synodes nationaux des Églises réformées de France*, I.432.

<sup>49</sup> Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata*, I.348; Aymon, *Tous les Synodes nationaux des Églises réformées de France*, I.400.

<sup>50</sup> Aymon, *Tous les Synodes nationaux des Églises réformées de France*, I.457-461. Quick does not have this document.

<sup>51</sup> Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata*, I.401; Aymon, *Tous les Synodes nationaux des Églises réformées de France*, II.13-14. These words apparently say more than Bos' conclusion that Tonneins returned to the view of La Rochelle of an inclusive obedience imputed rather than a specific "obedientia activa." Cf. Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 127.

Tonneins admonished all pastors, professors and members of their churches to hold fast to this doctrine and not teach against it. Pastors should be specifically watched by ecclesiastical authorities to make sure that none act contrary to these admonitions.<sup>52</sup>

Tonneins also received a letter from the king of Great Britain, James I, asking that the controversy between du Moulin and Tilenus be settled peacefully. The synod decided to hand this issue over to a peacemaking committee at Saumur.<sup>53</sup> In Vitré (1617), the committee reported an accord between both parties in points of doctrine,<sup>54</sup> but at the end of the paragraph Quick comments: “However afterward Tilenus deserted the Communion of our Churches, and died in that of the Arminians.”<sup>55</sup> The same synod encouraged the printing of Sohnis’s works, without mentioning which ones;<sup>56</sup> still due to the decisions of the previous synods, it is unlikely that his book against Piscator was ever printed.

During this long debate in French circles, the issue of active obedience became much debated by many and Piscator was opposed by a number of theologians. Lutherans

---

<sup>52</sup> Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata*, I.401; Aymon, *Tous les Synodes nationaux des Églises réformées de France*, II.14.

<sup>53</sup> Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata*, I.418, 437-439. Besides the king of Great Britain, the Duke of Bouillon who oversaw the university where Tilenus taught (Sedan), the Church of Geneva, and the Elector Prince Palatine also wrote letters to the synod on this issue (Quick I.418, 440-444, 447-448; Aymon II.62-63, 65-72, 76-77). This illustrates the magnitude of this controversy and the concern that the Reformed be unified rather than divided over less than essential matters. Cf. W. Brown Patterson, “James I and the Huguenot Synod of Tonneins of 1614,” *Harvard Theological Review* 65, no. 2 (Apr. 1972): 241-270. Another testimony to the endeavors of the Synod that this issue be settled peacefully was the fact that Philippe Duplessis-Mornay, who was showing his ecumenical spirit in providing religious co-existence between Protestants and Catholics in Saumur, was chosen as the head of this peacemaking committee.

<sup>54</sup> Apparently, there was no accord on the effects of the hypostatical union of both natures in Christ as tied to Christ’s relationship to the law. The agreement was doctrinal insofar as both parties were demanded respect towards the other and consideration for being within the confessional boundaries established by the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon and reinforced by the confessions of the Reformed Churches. See the agreement in Cahier et Campagnolo, *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1614-1616)*, 12:459-461.

<sup>55</sup> Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata*, I.483. Aymon (II.88) does not make any such comment.

<sup>56</sup> Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata*, I.508.

such as Balthasar Mentzer<sup>57</sup> (1565-1627) and Heinrich Eckhard<sup>58</sup> (1580-1624) – both professors at the University of Giessen –, Piscator’s former student Hermann Ravensperger<sup>59</sup> (1586-1625) and Raphael Eglinus<sup>60</sup> (1559-1622) were among those who wrote specifically against Piscator. The debate over active obedience showed its international status as it reached the Synod of Dort. By the end of the meeting (May 1619), during some revisions made to the Belgic Confession, a modification of article 22 responded to the issue of active obedience against Piscator’s position. Since the delegates from Hesse (Georgius Cruciger, Paulus Steinius, Daniel Angelocrator, Rudolphus Goclenus) and from the Palatinate (Abrahamus Scultetus, Paulus Tossanus and Henricus Altingius) were supportive of Piscator’s view and had left written advices to address the issue,<sup>61</sup> the chairman of the Synod, Johannes Bogerman (1576-1637), proposed to replace the phrase “and as many holy works he has done for us” with the words “Christ’s obedience” in order to express an idea that would convey both views and keep opposing parties content. Bogerman’s proposition was rejected by a large majority who decided to expand the original statement “and the many holy works as he has done for us,” with the

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Balthasar Mentzer, Joachim Vaget, *De Iustificazione Hominis Peccatoris Coram Deo, Et Inprimis Causa Eius Meritoria, Disputatio Theologica & Scholastica: In Qua Simul Iudicium Exponitur De libro cuiusdam Politici, novae Johannes Piscatoris opinio opposito; De cuius subiectis Thesibus, Duce Rege Regum: Sub Praesidio Balthasaris Mentzeri, SS. Theologiae D. Professoris, Et Hoc Tempore Prorektoris in Academia Giessena, Publice respondebit M. Joachimus Vagetius Hamburgensis* (Giessae Hassorum: Hampelius, 1610).

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Heinrich Eckhard, *Joannis Piscatoris... De Meritoria Causa Nostrae Iustificationis Nova & inaudita opinio succinctè & perspicuè refutata: Addita etiam est Theologia Calvinistarum in Articulis symboli Apostolici...; Accessit item disputatio Theologica, ad cujus Themata pro consequendo Gradu Doctoratus in Academia Marpurgensi responsurus erat autor hujus libelli* (Jenae: Cristoph Lippoldt, 1607). Eckhard argues that Piscator, on the doctrine of justification, departed from his Calvinist theology and those who followed Calvin (*Calvinianae suae Theologiae & societatis gregalibus divortium facere maluit*) [p. 2].

<sup>59</sup> Menk, *Die Hohe Schule Herborn in ihrer Frühzeit (1584-1660)*, 254.

<sup>60</sup> Pasor, *Oratio Funebris in Obitum Reverendi et Clarissimi Theologi Johannis Piscatoris*, 19.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. H. H. Kuyper, *De Post-Acta of Nahandelingen van de Nationale Synode van Dordrecht in 1618 en 1619 gehouden* (Amsterdam: Hoveker & Wormser, [1899]), 514-516.

explanatory words “and in our place”.<sup>62</sup> Thus, Dort closed its meeting with a direct opposition to the position held by Piscator.

After Piscator’s death, his name was still mentioned in several debates both in continental Europe as well as in British soil. His name became an icon of the denial of the imputation of Christ’s active obedience, though many others in Reformed circles had expressed their agreement with Piscator by the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Some of these disputes after Piscator will receive attention in part III of this dissertation.

### 1.3. Survey of History of Scholarship

There is a shortage of secondary sources both on Johannes Piscator as well as the history of the doctrine of active obedience within Reformed circles, even though both Piscator and active obedience were the object of significant debates in the Post-Reformation period. Scarcity of studies on both of these issues leads modern interpreters of mid-Sixteenth Century Reformers to overlook the development of the doctrine of imputation of righteousness and the discontinuities between mid-Sixteenth Century Reformers and Post-Reformation theology. Their anachronistic evaluation leads them to conclude that some Reformation figures were either for or against the imputation of Christ’s active obedience. Those who variously construed the thought of Calvin, Ursinus and Olevianus on Christ’s active obedience during the 17<sup>th</sup> century were involved in polemics, and often produced contrasting analyses. However, even contemporary scholarship has been guilty of the same hermeneutical duality without noticing the

---

<sup>62</sup> Nicolaas H. Gootjes, *The Belgic Confession: Its History and Sources*, Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Thought, ed. Richard A. Muller (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 151-152; Kuyper, *De Post-Acta*, 223, 338-341.

development of the doctrine in Protestant Scholasticism and Puritan writings. The secondary opinion surrounding this problem will be assessed in chapter two, examining both the views of seventeenth-century theologians and those found in the more recent literature.

The historiography on Piscator is very limited, and the brief allusions to him in historical or theological surveys are arguably incorrect.<sup>63</sup> Willson portrays Piscator's position as claiming that "it must be on the footing of our own personal holiness that we gain admission to Heaven."<sup>64</sup> Buchanan makes the same theological deduction when he says that Piscator's exclusion of the imputation of Christ's active obedience as the believer's title to eternal life "left a door open for the introduction of his own personal obedience, as the only ground of his future hope, after he had obtained the remission of his past sins."<sup>65</sup> Buchanan's deduction works in his theological system, but not in Piscator's. The Herborn professor only trusted in the merit of Christ's satisfaction on the cross for our sins as the ground of future hope. The personal obedience was merely an eternal obligation that rational creatures would have before God. Shedd comments that Piscator "contended that the holiness of Christ does not justify in the forensic and objective sense, but only as it becomes the inward principle of the soul,—adopting

---

<sup>63</sup> Not only in matters of justification, but even some representations of Piscator's view of predestination appear to be ungrounded. Some writers claim that Piscator fell to Arminianism. Cf. Rose, *A New General Biographical Dictionary* vol. 11, 126; Albert Henry Newman, *Modern Church History (A.D. 1517-1932)*, vol. 2 of *A Manual of Church History* (Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1933), 338; Müller, "Piscator (Fischer), Johannes," s.v. in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. Such interpretation can be corrected by the remarks of Sinnema. Cf. Donald W. Sinnema, "The Issue of Reprobation at the Synod of Dort (1618-19) in Light of the History of this Doctrine" (Ph.D. diss., University of St. Michael's College, 1985), 91-95.

<sup>64</sup> James R. Willson, *A Historical Sketch of Opinions on the Atonement* (Philadelphia: Edward Earle, 1817), 42.

<sup>65</sup> James Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification: An Outline of Its History in the Church and of Its Exposition from Scripture* (Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2006), 175.

substantially the Tridentine theory of justification by sanctification.”<sup>66</sup> However, Piscator was vehemently against the Roman Catholic understanding of justification, as his book against Robert Bellarmine shows.<sup>67</sup>

Other assessments on Piscator and justification are either limited in sources, partial in its perspective or reliant on secondary sources. Both Dennison<sup>68</sup> and White<sup>69</sup> describe Piscator’s point of view based on his single work translated into English. Baur<sup>70</sup> deals with Piscator in contrast to the Lutherans rather than the Reformed counterpart with whom he debated the most. Ritschl<sup>71</sup> confesses having no access to Piscator’s writings, so he relies mainly on Gerhard’s *Loci Theologici* (1621) and Baur. Though all these have correct interpretations on most of what they say of Piscator, their assessment is methodologically flawed and thus incomplete.

The only significant book-length treatment of Piscator was done by Frans Lukas Bos, based on his doctoral dissertation.<sup>72</sup> But the book deals with Piscator’s theology as a whole — including topics such as his exegesis, philosophy, view of the Lord’s Supper, predestination and covenant — leaving only a chapter for his view on the meritorious

---

<sup>66</sup> William G. T. Shedd, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, n.d.), 2:344.

<sup>67</sup> *De justificatione hominis coram Deo, libri duo: Oppositi sophismatis Roberti Bellarmini jesuitae*, first published in 1590.

<sup>68</sup> Dennison, “Johannes Piscator and the Doctrine of Justification,” 8-11.

<sup>69</sup> White, “The Denial of the Imputation of the Active Obedience of Christ: Piscator on Justification,” 147-154.

<sup>70</sup> D. Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Die Christliche Lehre Von Der Versöhnung In Ihrer Geschichtlichen Entwicklung Von Der Ältesten Zeit Bis Auf Die Neueste* (Tübingen: C. F. Osiander, 1838), 352-370.

<sup>71</sup> Albrecht Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, trans. John S. Black (Edinburgh: Edmonton and Douglas, 1872), 248.

<sup>72</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*. Full citation in footnote 1.

cause of justification. Though this is the best treatment on Piscator, there are a couple shortcomings that hinder the author's intention of portraying how Piscator was "a contribution to the history of Reformed theology," as the subtitle indicates. First, he addresses antecedents very briefly — mainly addressing the Reformers without mention of the medieval idea of active obedience — and he does not look at how the doctrine was shaped in view of Piscator's argumentation. Thus, as an example of his limited understanding of the arguments in the history of the debates on this doctrine, Bos regards Christ's obedience as the counterpart to all of Adam's disobedience as a "strange analogy".<sup>73</sup> Secondly, he commits a methodological mistake by reconstructing some of Piscator's thought on active obedience based on letters written to Piscator, rather than from Piscator's own writings. He makes good use of letters (in print or in manuscript) to piece together the history of the conflicts in which Piscator was involved, but does not explore Piscator's published writings to systematize his thought.

There is also a general scarcity of historical studies on Christ's active obedience and some misrepresentations in them. Gootjes<sup>74</sup> addresses the confessional development of the doctrine of Christ's active obedience and Van Dixhoorn<sup>75</sup> analyses the issue within the debates over justification during the Westminster Assembly. Both are significant but very limited contributions to the broader understanding of its historical development in Reformed thought. Hodge's understanding of the history after Piscator is flawed since he notes that Piscator's "departure" from traditional Protestant doctrine of justification

---

<sup>73</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 139.

<sup>74</sup> Nicolaas H. Gootjes, "Christ's Obedience and Covenant Obedience," *Koinonía* 19, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 2-22.

<sup>75</sup> Chad B. Van Dixhoorn, "Reforming the Reformation: Theological Debate at the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1652," vol. 1 (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2004), 270-344.

“passed away without leaving any distinct trace in the theology of the Reformation.”<sup>76</sup>

The fact that Piscator’s doctrine was condemned in French and Swiss Reformed circles as well as by Lutherans, as Hodge observes,<sup>77</sup> should not lead one to diminish the lingering significant minority within the Reformed who used Piscator to deny the traditional understanding of the imputation of Christ’s active obedience. Richard Baxter lists David Pareus, Abraham Scultetus, Johann Heinrich Alsted, Marcus Friedrich Wendelin, John Cameron, Sibbrandus Lubbertus, John Forbes, Anthony Wotton, and Thomas Gataker among some Reformed supporters of Piscator on the issue of active obedience.<sup>78</sup> Frans Lukas Bos adds to this list the names of Rudolph Goclenius, Jacobus Kimedoncius, Johannes Bogerman, among others.<sup>79</sup> In the following chapters, some of these theologians will receive brief surveys of where they stand concerning Christ’s active obedience, thus demonstrating that Piscator’s position had significant continuity among Reformed in the seventeenth-century.

Another inaccuracy which seems to remain among histories of soteriology concerns the person of Christ in relation to the law. Ritschl creates a distinction of the Lutheran and the Reformed perspectives on the person of Christ and the obligation to obey the law, where he asserts that since the Reformed tradition did not hold to the Lutheran understanding of *communicatio idiomatum* which affirmed the God-man to be Lord of the law, Christ as a man was under the obligation to fulfill it. Ritschl concludes from this that Lutherans and Reformed assertions concerning the vicarious nature of

---

<sup>76</sup> Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 3:182.

<sup>77</sup> Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3:185.

<sup>78</sup> Richard Baxter, *A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness* (London: St. Paul’s Church-Yard, 1676), 18-21.

<sup>79</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 136.

Christ's active obedience resulted from different arguments. The Lutherans argued from Christ's superiority to the law according to both natures, while the Reformed had to appeal to Christ's whole life as our surety and head.<sup>80</sup>

Franks reads Piscator via Ritschl and follows him regarding the Reformed tradition on Christ and his obligation towards the law as a human being.<sup>81</sup> McGrath perpetuates the same interpretation of the history of Reformed and Lutheran Christology.<sup>82</sup> Though it is true that Lutherans and Reformed had different understandings of the person of Christ, such a distinction of argumentation in favor of active obedience imputed fails to observe that one of the Reformed arguments against Piscator was that the complex person (divine-human) of Christ freed him from the obligation of fulfilling the law on his own behalf. Thus, not only the Lutherans but even the Reformed would argue from the personhood of Christ, rather than merely from his mediatorial role.

In light of the paucity of sources both on Piscator and on the history of the doctrine of Christ's active obedience as well as the many shortcomings of the works which attempt to deal with these two, this dissertation intends to contribute by filling part of the historiographical gap and correcting some historical readings of the doctrine of active obedience.

---

<sup>80</sup> Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, 250-251.

<sup>81</sup> Robert S. Franks, *A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 359.

<sup>82</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 273.

#### 1.4. Explanation of the Methodology and Structure

This dissertation is not concerned with the history of technical terms such as “active obedience,” since in the early debates the terminology was very fluid and later theologians might have disagreed with the terminology. Therefore, the explanation will focus on the concept which receives a variety of terms. In order to clarify what will be meant by the term “active obedience” throughout this research, it is important to define it. This doctrine claims that Christ’s vicarious redemptive work is not restricted by his death and resurrection, but also includes his life (from conception to his passion). It does not mean that everything performed during the period of his humiliation is performed in the place of another (e.g. miracles and teaching), because the major focus of the doctrine is not chronological. Nor does it focus on Christ’s moral accomplishments (e.g. endurance of suffering, holiness, love) as an example to be followed – although this teaching does have its place in Reformed theology – because the doctrine is concerned simply with substitutive acts of Christ. It focuses particularly on his obedience rendered to the law, thus acquiring from the law the status of righteous. The importance of this mediatorial function in Reformed theology is the understanding that in order for a Christian to be regarded justified, the second Adam (Christ) needs not only to pay for the penalty resulting from the transgressions of the law (both original sins and actual sins) but also to fulfill the law perfectly in order to acquire the right to eternal life. In other words, justification was taken as going beyond having sins remitted, but also as having positive righteousness (doing what the law commands) through the imputation of Christ’s active obedience. Both sides (negative and positive) of a single righteousness are required within a covenantal structure (covenant of works) where eternal life comes as a result of

obeying the law. This summarized definition will enable the reader to look for the elements of the doctrine which come up early on in the history of Reformed theology and which ones do not.

In order to assess the development of the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's active obedience, the topic will undergo a chronological treatment. The first part will start with a survey of what some Medieval theologians affirmed on the given issue in order to secure the reader as to what distinctions were already present by the time of the Reformation. This survey will be followed by a section on the Lutherans to show the crisp concept arising out of polemics a couple decades before Piscator's first writings against active obedience imputed. The last section of the first part analyzes the Reformed theologians (Calvin, Beza, Ursinus and Olevianus) who wrote before Piscator and how they could be classified regarding the matter. These four theologians have been chosen not only because of their status as representatives of the tradition, they are also figures with whom Piscator dialogued – whether personally or through their writings – and who are important within the history of the doctrine. This will end the overview of the doctrine prior to Piscator and enable a reassessment of secondary literature on the Reformers.

Part 2 will examine Piscator's point of view both exegetically as well as theologically. This portion of the study will start by pointing out the similarities Piscator had with the Protestant understanding of justification — how Christ obeyed the law for us and how his righteousness is imputed to us (though these two ideas differ from the later understanding of imputation of Christ's active obedience) — before analyzing his unique and innovative argumentation. His activity as a commentator allowed him to carefully

address all the “proof-texts” for imputation of active obedience, used by his theological adversaries both during his lifetime and afterwards. As one who commented on all the books of the Bible he confidently proposed a silence of Scripture in respect to the imputation of Christ’s active obedience. For these reasons, his commentaries will be an important source for investigation. Piscator will also be analyzed theologically through his disputations, theological letters, as well as his treatises on justification, mainly the one on the meritorious cause of justification (*Apologia Disputationis de Causa Meritoria Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*), published in 1618. This appraisal of Piscator’s doctrine will set the context for the responses to his doctrine that arise in the seventeenth century. It will also facilitate future research to compare what arguments are already present in Piscator’s theological framework and which ones arise in seventeenth century opponents of Christ’s active obedience imputed.

The third part of this dissertation will be a tentative systematic organization of the doctrinal development that arose in the responses to Piscator’s ideas and was embraced by theologians. This part will single out a few debates over active obedience which happened during Piscator’s life and after. It will also scrutinize seventeenth century Reformed theologians both from the British Isles as well as Continental Europe to look at the various doctrines interconnected with active obedience and how they were used as arguments in favor of it.

This last part of the dissertation will show that there were developments in at least three areas. *First*, in regards to the law and the covenants. The idea of Christ fulfilling, through his active obedience, the covenant of works became a much clearer idea as seventeenth Century theologians worked in response to Piscator. This was a reworking of

the concept of the divine law being stable and valid in all dispensations, always requiring the fulfillment of its demands. In Wilhelmus à Brakel's (1635-1711) words: "The law does not demand *either* punishment or holiness, but *both*."<sup>83</sup> Also, the importance of Calvin's third use of the law was maintained, in spite of accusations from Piscator and his followers that the imputation of active obedience left no reason for the Christian to obey the law.

*Second*, there was development in regards to justification. Both active and passive obedience were taken as two sides of the coin of justification, sides which cannot be separated from one another. This was a response to Piscator's clear-cut disjunction. Part of the reason why he criticized the imputation of active obedience was because he thought that the righteousness obtained through Christ's life would obfuscate the work of the cross, that is, would make the payment for sin unnecessary. Though upholding the unified view of Christ's whole obedience, the defenders of the imputation of Christ's active obedience still emphasized the need for a twofold obedience. The necessity of it becomes tied to the distinction (without separation) between remission of sins and eternal life. In Wollebius' words: "As Christ's Passion was necessary to expiate sin; so was his active Obedience and Justice, to obtain life eternal."<sup>84</sup>

*Third*, there was development in regards to the person and mediatorial work of Christ. Countering Piscator, Christ according to his humanity became understood as not

---

<sup>83</sup> Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, trans. Bartel Elshout (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1992), 1:610-611.

<sup>84</sup> Wollebius, *The Abridgment of Christian Divinitie*, 120. Wollebius observes that active and passive obedience do not differ in time nor in subject. It should not be understood as a division of parts, but it is merely "a distinction taken from the end; to wit, the twofold satisfaction, for punishment, and for life eternal; The curse upon the transgressors of the Law requires the former, *Deut. 27.26*. The promise of life under the condition of perfect obedience and righteousness requires the latter, *Lev. 18.15*." (p. 109)

having to obey the law for himself because this obligation is required of a person, not simply of a nature. In other words, his complex person (divine-human) freed him from the obligation of living a perfect life for his own sake in order to please God the Father. His divine holiness allowed him to be pleasing to God from his birth; thus, his life of obedience was due only as a Mediator. This was the context in which Beza's threefold righteousness of Christ was addressed again and explained in more detail.

Finally, the epilogue will gather the conclusions to reassert the thesis of development of the doctrine and how the controversial name of Piscator became iconically attached to discussions over Christ's active obedience.

## **PART I**

### **THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE BEFORE PISCATOR**

In the Post-Reformation period, the doctrine of Christ's active obedience was mainly dealt under two theological loci. From a more Christological perspective, it was discussed under Christ's mediatorial role where He was said to have perfectly obeyed the law in our stead. The controversies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries surrounding this discussion were not whether Christ perfectly obeyed the law during the period of his humiliation, not even if in some sense he obeyed it for us, for no reputable Reformed theologian denied either idea. The issue was whether his positive righteousness, his active obedience of the law had a substitutionary purpose. The other locus, related to what is traditionally considered soteriology, was the doctrine of justification, where Christ's active obedience was claimed to be imputed to believers, thus being the meritorious cause of their justification. In close relation to the doctrine of justification, the discussions of law versus gospel also touched upon Christ's active obedience.

In regards to the doctrine of justification and its correlate debates over law and gospel, it might appear unlikely to some that it would undergo significant development in the Post-Reformation period since it had been the major banner of the Protestant Reformation from its very beginning. Martin Luther (1483-1546) spoke broadly of it:

“On this article rests all that we teach and practice against the pope, the devil, and the world.”<sup>1</sup> Since the topic of justification had been thought through and worked out by every major first and second generation theologian, one would think that all the major issues had been covered by the end of John Calvin’s life (1509-1564). Some issues were, in fact, solidly Protestant by the early 1560s. Luther’s *iustitia aliena* (alien righteousness) as our justifying righteousness,<sup>2</sup> his identification of *iustitia Christi* (the righteousness of Christ) as the righteousness of God of Romans 1:17,<sup>3</sup> and Philip Melancthon’s (1497-1560) solidification of the notion of an imputed righteousness were all part of this forensic equipment that characterized the Protestant view of justification.<sup>4</sup> By the 1530s we already see Melancthon asserting the notion of imputed righteousness,<sup>5</sup> and this teaching became iconic of Protestant belief. When the controversy surrounding the teaching of Andreas Osiander (1498-1552) came about, both Lutheran and Reformed struck hard at his abandonment of the forensic idea of justification. Therefore, the topic under debate in this chapter is not simply the teaching of imputed righteousness, for it is undisputable that such doctrine was taught by the first Reformers. The issue is narrower as it responds to the question ‘What constitutes this righteousness?’ In other words, does

---

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, “The Smalcald Articles” in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), II.i (292).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Martin Luther’s “Two Kinds of Righteousness” (1519) in *Luther’s Works* vol. 31, ed. Harold J. Grimm (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 297-306, hereafter *LW*; Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* 2 band (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1966), 145-152, hereafter *WA*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Heiko A. Oberman, “‘Iustitia Christi’ and ‘Iustitia Dei’: Luther and the Scholastic Doctrines of Justification,” *Harvard Theological Review* vol. 59, no. 1 (Jan 1966): 1-26.

<sup>4</sup> Timothy J. Wengert, *Law and Gospel: Philip Melancthon’s Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over Poenitentia*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 179-185; McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 212-213.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Strehle, “Imputatio iustitiae: Its Origin in Melancthon, its Opposition in Osiander,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 50, no. 3 (1994): 201-219; McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 237-241.

it consist merely in Christ's payment for sins on the cross or does it include his lifelong obedience to the divine precepts as a second Adam?

If the broader issue of imputed righteousness was settled in controversy with Rome, the narrower topic of the imputation of Christ's active obedience was debated in intramural controversies. What needs to be assessed is if major Reformed theologians prior to Johannes Piscator had any clear teaching on it. Four theologians representative of the Reformed tradition – i.e. John Calvin, Theodore Beza, Zacharias Ursinus, Caspar Olevianus – have been chosen for their close connection to Piscator and for the importance of their names in the controversies on active obedience.

It is important to know if prior to Piscator's denial of the imputation of Christ's active obedience, any of the four Reformed theologians mentioned above either affirmed or denied the doctrine. Any claim on the issue needs to encompass an evaluation of secondary literature based on the analysis of primary sources. Hence, chapter 2 will examine the discussion of the issue both in the era of Protestant Orthodoxy as well as in more recent times through a sample of secondary literature. Chapter 3 will provide a fresh reading of the Reformers against their background with the intention of reassessing the mid-sixteenth century understanding of Christ's active obedience.

The major contention of Part 1 is that, with the exception of Theodore Beza, representative theologians in the Reformed tradition prior to Piscator did not exhibit a precise delineation of the imputed righteousness of Christ. When in their discussions of justification they referred to an imputed righteousness or when they outlined Christ's mediatorial role and thus referred to his obedience in the context of redemption, in general there was no refinement clarifying how much of Christ's obedience was actually

imputed to the Christian. Their ambivalent and inconsistent language, their early stage in the development of the doctrine of imputed righteousness, and their polemical context of opposition to the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification by works, all these made their writings unaware of and unconcerned with distinctions which were unfolded later.

**CHAPTER 2**  
**EARLY AND MODERN INTERPRETATIONS**  
**OF THE REFORMERS' VIEWS**

The thesis that major representatives of the Reformed tradition in the sixteenth century were not clear as to what constituted the imputed righteousness of Christ implies that secondary literature often makes anachronistic judgments on figures such as Calvin, Ursinus and Olevianus when asserting that they were either for or against the imputation of Christ's active obedience. Such doctrine was slowly being shaped with the rise of controversies within Lutherans and Reformed in the second half of the sixteenth century. Therefore, the early Reformers offered no definitive verdict as to which side they were on. But the interpretations, whether early or recent, of these Reformers have a tendency for opposite evaluations. Seldom can a more moderate interpretation be found.

**2.1. The Interpretation of Protestant Orthodoxy**

For the sake of having renowned names siding with their cause, debaters of late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries claimed to have Calvin, Ursinus and Olevianus (and even Beza, surprisingly) defending their position. Those who believed the Reformers taught merely the imputation of Christ's passive obedience, held that justification meant forgiveness of sins to the exclusion of Christ obeying the law in our stead. Johannes Piscator provides such a reading of Calvin in his *Aphorismi doctrinae christianae ex*

*Institutione Calvini excerpti* (1589), a sort of summary of Calvin's *Institutes*. This was possibly the most popular book written by Piscator, with eleven editions from 1589 to 1630.<sup>1</sup> After Olevianus' death in 1587, Piscator took over the course on Calvin's *Institutes* in Herborn, and thus designed a book which instead of summarizing Calvin with the Genevan's own language – as Olevianus' *Institutionis Christianae Religionis Epitome* (1586) had done, which still made it a long volume – would summarize the text in aphorisms of Piscator's own composition for class disputations.<sup>2</sup> His reconstructions of Calvin's doctrines, which do not follow the limits set by the books and chapters of the *Institutes*, according to Olivier Fatio, “tell us as much about his own theology as about that of Calvin.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, when dealing with justification, Piscator writes that the righteousness of Christ which covers a man so he does not appear a sinner in the sight of God is the righteousness purchased by the death of Christ.<sup>4</sup> “The cause which moueth Gods mercy in our iustification is the satisfaction and merite of Christ, that is, his obedience vnto his father in his death for vs: & this obedience is imputed vnto vs for righteousness...”<sup>5</sup> It is merely the obedience in his death which counts as merit for our redemption and is imputed. Piscator does not leave out the purpose of Christ's life in the scheme of redemption: to become the suited sacrifice that pleases and pacifies God.

---

<sup>1</sup> Fatio, “Présence de Calvin à l'époque de l'orthodoxie réformée,” 192.

<sup>2</sup> In the preface to Beza, Piscator writes: “I haue not followed the very words of the authour (for that could not well be done, the authors stile being full and large, and Aphorismes requiring breuitie) and I added something in the sentences, which is not in that abridgment [Olevianus' *Epitome*]: yet the worke agreeth wel, as I thinke, and as the brethren iudge, with the authors doctrine”. *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, trans. H. Holland (London: Richard Field and Robert Dexter, 1596), fol. A iiii verso.

<sup>3</sup> Fatio, “Présence de Calvin à l'époque de l'orthodoxie réformée,” 197.

<sup>4</sup> Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, XIII.iii.

<sup>5</sup> Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, XIII.xvi.

And to the end that this obedience and righteousness of Christ might be imputed vnto vs: it was necessarie first that he should yeeld perfet obedience to the law of God himself, liuing thereafter in all holynesse of life. And to performe this, it was necessarie also, that he should be sanctified & without sin from his beginning, & first conceptiō in his mothers wombe: for if he had not bene a holy Priest, and a holy sacrificer, he could not haue pleased God: and so could not haue pacified him for vs. And yet further I ad, that this our high Priest, and mediator, must be very God, that the obedience of his death might be of price sufficient for our sinnes, and meet to giue vs an euerlasting righteousness.<sup>6</sup>

In aphorism 27, of chapter 13, Piscator regards the “full and perfect obedience to his law” to be merely Christ’s death. Interestingly, he cites the reference of Deuteronomy 27:26 and Leviticus 18:5, texts which would often be quoted by the opposing position to refer to both requirements of the law: punishment and obedience. In a later book, Piscator explicitly calls upon the authority of Calvin to defend his own position. He says that Calvin, in his commentary on Romans 4:6, affirmed that “righteousness, according to Paul, is nothing else than the remission of sins”.<sup>7</sup> Piscator drew the same conclusion concerning the work of other Reformers. In a letter to Daniel Tossanus, written on December of 1595, Piscator claims that the teaching of Beza in his 1559 Confession regarding the imputation of righteousness is not supported by Scripture and, thus, Piscator is annoyed by Tossanus accusing him that his teaching is novelty, as if it were not taught by Luther, Ursinus and Olevianus.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, XIII.xvii.

<sup>7</sup> Johannes Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis de Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo* (Herbonae Nassoviorum, 1618), 50.

<sup>8</sup> “Illud mihi grave ac molestum cognitum fuit, quod doctrinam hanc insimulas novitatis. Quasi vero non hoc ipsum docuerint fideles servi Dei Lutherus, Ursinus, Olevianus.” In the very next sentence, Piscator mentions the Lutheran Georg Karg and asserts that if he held the same opinion as Piscator did, he should not have abandoned it: “Nam ad Cargium quod attinet: si ille hanc sententiam tradidit, et ab eadem auditis theologis Wittenbergensis discessit: inconstanter et male fecit.” Apud Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 245.

David Pareus,<sup>9</sup> the student of Ursinus who later became professor in Heidelberg, claims that the Reformers defended his position that only Christ's passive obedience was our righteousness and that the whole of justification consisted in the remission of sins.<sup>10</sup> He mentions names such as Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Bullinger, Calvin, Vermigli, Musculus, Hyperius, Ursinus and Olevianus, and he claims that "none of those made a tripartite, or bipartite imputative justice".<sup>11</sup> For further support of his view, he appeals to documents such as the Apology to *The Augsburg Confession* (1531), *The Gallican Confession* (1559), and *The Heidelberg Catechism* (1563). The latter is particularly important since it was composed by Ursinus and Olevianus, among others.<sup>12</sup> Although the Catechism does not necessarily reflect the position of these two writers on every point, since the document was a result of a committee work, it does reflect the result of their theological reasoning and approval, mainly Ursinus' – who is held to be the primary theological mind behind the Catechism.

Pareus finds it particularly important to spend a good portion of his letter defending the Heidelberg Catechism against the claim of his opponents that it did teach a tripartite imputative justice. So he needs to address the two sections in which such

---

<sup>9</sup> For short biographies of Pareus, cf. Peter Bayle, *The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle* vol. 4 (London: printed for D. Midwinter et. al., 1734-1738), 471-475; Fuller, *Abel Redevivus*, 577-582.

<sup>10</sup> Pareus, "The Epistle of D. David Parie to the illustrious and noble Count, Lord Ludovick Witgenstenius, &c. Concerning Christs active and passive justice," 794, 798.

<sup>11</sup> Pareus, "Concerning Christs active and passive justice," 799. A bipartite imputative justice would include Christ's passive obedience and his active fulfilling of the law; the tripartite justice would add Christ's holy human nature with which he was conceived or, to use the technical term of the time, his 'habitual sanctity'. Cf. Pareus, "Concerning Christs active and passive justice," 792-793.

<sup>12</sup> For the debates surrounding the authorship of the Catechism, cf. Lyle D. Bierma, "The Purpose and Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism," in *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology*, ed. Lyle D. Bierma, Text and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 49-74.

teachings are alleged to be in: questions 60 and 61, which deal with justification, and question 36, which deals with the incarnation.

As for the first [q. 60 and 61], either we must confesse, that these fight against the former, which charity, and Christian candor will not allow; or the partition must be denied, and a convenient interpretation, and a reconciliation of them must be found... I say then, that the Catechisme joynes these three together, but doth not (as we said) divide them expresly as three: it joynes, I say, these three, not as if it divided imputative justice into these three, as into divers parts, as if the imputed satisfaction did make us not unjust, the justice just, the sanctity holy; for it taught the contrary before: but either because the Compilers of the Catechisme did retain this phrase, out of Mr. Beza's Confession, (whose it is properly knowne to be) not fearing there would be cavilling about it; *they themselves in the meane while neither intending, nor observing any partition*: or, because they would more emphatically note by these phrases, as Synonymous, the whole course of his obedience, and humiliation till death: for, Christs humiliation and death is our satisfaction; because by it satisfaction is made to divine justice for us: It is also justice; because it is the fulfilling of the Law by suffering: It is lastly holinesse, because it is a holy Sacrifice...<sup>13</sup>

Pareus could only see the three words of both answers of the Catechism – satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness – to be synonymous, a re-wording of the same salvific work from a different perspective.

As for the 36. Question, it is plaine, that it handles not the materiall, but the efficient cause, or *sine qua non* of our justice: the innocency therefore and sanctity of the Mediatour, is said to cover effectively originall sinne, which is the spring of all the rest; because it maketh, as it were *causa sine qua non*, that our Mediatour can hide and expiate our sins; for, it behooved him to be borne in innocency and perfect holinesse, that he might become a sacrifice for us, *Heb. 7*. Now, to cover, cannot be understood to merit, both because the 56. Question of our Catechisme teacheth otherwise; as also, because that of *John* is repugnant to it, *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin*.<sup>14</sup>

Pareus believes that answer 36 is merely pointing to the person of the Mediator, the efficient cause of our justification, and the need for him to be blameless – from his conception and throughout his life – in order to become a sacrifice for us.

---

<sup>13</sup> Pareus, "Concerning Christs active and passive justice," 804.

<sup>14</sup> Pareus, "Concerning Christs active and passive justice," 805.

John Forbes (c. 1568-1634) believed that Calvin, in agreement with his own opinion, excluded all things from the matter of our righteousness except the blood and death of Christ alone.<sup>15</sup> After all, Calvin presented righteousness as simply opposed to guiltiness and justification to be made of only one part, remission of sins. The references provided by Forbes are the *Institutes* III.xi.4, 11, 21, 22, which would later be used by John Goodwin.

Thomas Gataker (1574-1654), in a postscript to a book published by Anthony Wotton's son defending him against George Walker's charge of Socinianism, also defends Wotton from accusations of heresy. As Gataker deals with the belief that justification consists of remission of sins, he claims Wotton to have had honored divines on his side, such as Calvin (on Romans 4:6), Beza, Olevianus (on Romans 4:6), Ursinus (lectures on Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 60), Zanchi, Piscator, Pareus, Musculus, Bullinger, and Fox.<sup>16</sup> It is worth mentioning that besides the three theologians that have been under examination, the evidence offered by Gataker concerning some other names of the list above also comes from their comments on Romans 4. As we will later see, these theologians are merely reflecting the scriptural language of Romans 4 in the context of opposition to the Roman Catholic view that justification is more than mere remission of sins, for it must include inherent righteousness.

---

<sup>15</sup> John Forbes, *A Treatise Tending to Cleare the Doctrine of Ivstification* (Middelbvrgh: Richard Schilders, 1616), 93-110.

<sup>16</sup> Samuel Wotton ed., *Mr. Anthony Wotton's Defence Against Mr. George Walker's Charge, Accusing Him of Socinian Heresie and Blasphemie* (Cambridge: Roger Daniel, 1641), 58.

John Goodwin (c.1594-1665), the independent minister charged with Arminianism,<sup>17</sup> believed that Calvin, along with Luther, Melancthon, Musculus, Hyperius, Beza, Zanchi, Fox, and Ames, understood justification to be simply remission of sins, and nothing else.<sup>18</sup> His quotations from these authors also come mainly from commentaries on Romans 4 or Psalm 32, the psalm quoted by Paul in the former text.

Goodwin argued

that this was Calvins opinion, that Justification is compleate in forgivenessse of sins, is most evident from many and frequent passages in his writings: by which it is apparent (against all confidence of contradiction) that he held no such imputation of Christs righteousnessse for justification, as some charge him withal, except they will conceive of him, that (like unto Rebecca) he had two nations in his womb, two contrary opinions in his judgment at once.<sup>19</sup>

Goodwin thought that Calvin had to be either in favor of a twofold righteousness being imputed or merely remission of sins. To him, it was inconceivable that Calvin could have hinted at both opinions or that, in his context, he was worried about neither.

Goodwin's quotations of Calvin's "frequent passages" focus on the Reformer's comments in Romans 4 and the eleventh chapter of Book III, of the *Institutes*.<sup>20</sup>

Commenting Romans 4:6-8, Calvin wrote: "by these words we are taught that righteousness, according to Paul, is nothing else than the remission of sins".<sup>21</sup> In the *Institutes*, Calvin made similar comments:<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 ed., s.v. "Goodwin, John (c. 1594-1665)"; Ellen More, "John Goodwin and the Origins of the New Arminianism," *The Journal of British Studies* 22, no. 1 (Autumn, 1982): 50-70.

<sup>18</sup> John Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei, or A Treatise of Justification* (London: R.O. and G. D., 1642), 79-83.

<sup>19</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, 79.

<sup>20</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, 119-124, 212-215.

<sup>21</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 159-160; G. Baum et al. ed., *Ioannis Calvinii Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia* [hereafter, *CO*] (Brunsvigae: C. A. Schwetschke et filium, 1863-1900), 49:71.

“to justify” means nothing else than to acquit of guilt him who was accused, as if his innocence were confirmed.

Moreover, in the fourth chapter of Romans he first calls justification “imputation of righteousness.” And he does not hesitate to include it within forgiveness of sins... There he is obviously discussing not a part of justification but the whole of it.

the righteousness of faith is reconciliation with God, which consists solely in the forgiveness of sins... It is obvious, therefore, that those whom God embraces are made righteous solely by the fact that they are purified when their spots are washed away by forgiveness of sins. Consequently, such righteousness can be called, in a word, “remission of sins”.

The apostle [in Acts 13:38-39] so connects forgiveness of sins with righteousness that he shows them to be exactly the same.

These, which are some of the most significant quotations brought by Goodwin, are not understood by him to be merely Calvin’s opposition to the Roman Catholic teaching of justification by works, by inherent righteousness – which was the argument of Goodwin’s opponents.<sup>23</sup> Calvin is just being faithful to the teachings of Paul. For Calvin to teach something that went beyond Paul — namely, imputation of Christ’s active obedience — meant he was placing himself in the position of the Holy Spirit.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, in the context of Calvin versus the Roman Catholics, Goodwin used the evidence according to his purpose. He both gathers support from a Roman Catholic’s read of Calvin saying that the Genevan Reformer’s error was to assert the entirety of justification to be remission of

---

<sup>22</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 20 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), III.xi.3, 4, 21, 22; *CO* 2:535, 550, 551.

<sup>23</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, 213.

<sup>24</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, 214.

sins, but also corrects another Roman Catholic theologian for claiming that Calvin saw justification to include also imputation of righteousness.<sup>25</sup>

Richard Baxter (1615-1691), who stirred much controversy over the issue of justification, shielded Pareus and Piscator — besides others such as Abraham Scultetus, Louis Cappel, Wotton, Gataker, Goodwin and John Ball — from the label of heretics by appealing to Calvin, Ursinus, Olevianus “and most other modern Divines that writ before this Controversie was agitated” as being on Pareus’ and Piscator’s side.<sup>26</sup> Elsewhere, Baxter has a history of the doctrine of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to believers in its controversial setting.<sup>27</sup> There he states that Olevianus and Ursinus, among others, maintained that Christ’s

*Active Righteousness* was not Imputed to us, though it profited us; but was *Justitia Personae* to make Christ a fit Sacrifice for our sins, having none of his own, but the Suffering was his *Justitia Meriti*. His Obedience they said was performed *nostro bono, non nostro loco*, for our good but not in our stead; but his *Sufferings*, both *nostro bono & loco*, both *for our good* and in *our stead*: but neither of them so strictly *in nostra Persona* in our Person, as if we did it by and in Christ.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, we have those who held to the imputation of Christ’s active obedience claiming to be following faithfully the writings of Calvin, and other renowned Reformers. George Downname (†1634) believed that “this is the conceived doctrine of the Church of England, that Christ satisfied the justice of God and redeemed us, not onely by

---

<sup>25</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, 79, 122-124. The latter Roman Catholic theologian was Robert Bellarmine, who was used as an argument by the party that read imputation of active obedience into Calvin.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification* (Hague: Abraham Brown, 1655), 36.

<sup>27</sup> Baxter, *A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness*, 5-47.

<sup>28</sup> Baxter, *A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness*, 17-18. The very last part of the quotation is a reference to “strict imputation,” the idea that one receives the righteousness of Christ and not merely the effects of it, which Baxter denied. Cf. J. I. Packer, *The Redemption & Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter: A Study in Puritan Theology* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2003), 241-265; Hans Boersma, *A Hot Pepper Corn: Richard Baxter’s Doctrine of Justification in Its Seventeenth-Century Context of Controversy* (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1993), 234-245.

the oblation of his body and shedding of his blood, but also by the full and perfect fulfilling of the Law, and the same was taught by Calvin (not to mention all the rest of our Divines).”<sup>29</sup> Downname supports his claim from *Institutes* II.xvi.5 – the most often quoted passage to place Calvin in favor of active obedience imputed – where Calvin talks about Christ redeeming “by the whole course of his obedience” and then quotes Romans 5:19; the basis of Christ freeing us from the curse of the law is “the whole life of Christ” and Calvin quotes Galatians 4:4-5 to support that. “In short, from the time when he took on the form of a servant, he began to pay the price of liberation in order to redeem us. Yet to define the way of salvation more exactly, Scripture ascribes this as peculiar and proper to Christ’s death.” Calvin continues: “For this reason the so-called ‘Apostles’ Creed’ passes at once in the best order from the birth of Christ to his death and resurrection, wherein the whole of perfect salvation consists. Yet the remainder of the obedience that he manifested in his life is not excluded.”<sup>30</sup> And then Calvin claims biblical support from Phil. 2:7-8, among other texts. Still in the same chapter of his treatise, Downname explains that

although many of our Divines, as hath beene said, have taught, that unto justification remission of sinnes is onely required: yet their assertion, as hath also beene showed, is to be understood (as *Bellarmino* himself understandeth *Calvin*) as spoken in opposition to the Papists; who say, that to justification concurre, not onely remission of sinnes, but also inward renovation or sanctification. To contradict them, our Divines have said, that wee are justified by remission onely.<sup>31</sup>

George Walker (1582?-1651), in a book where he is countering Anthony Wotton and those who were reviving his teachings (i.e. John Goodwin), spends several pages

---

<sup>29</sup> George Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1634), 29.

<sup>30</sup> Calvin, *Institutes* II.xvi.5; *CO* 2:371.

<sup>31</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 41; see p. 34.

showing that the early Reformers – such as Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, Beza, Musculus, Junius, etc. – were never in favor of the imputation of our faith, properly speaking, but of the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ.<sup>32</sup> As for Calvin, Walker believes he was quite plain and perspicuous in teaching the imputation of Christ’s perfect obedience to the law, especially in the *Institutes* book III, chapters 11 and 12.<sup>33</sup> Walker says that Calvin uses ‘remission of sins’ in two ways in this section. First, in a “large sense,” where it refers to the full satisfaction of Christ – which involves the passive and the active obedience – for the guilt of all sins, both of commission and omission, thus meaning the ‘whole justification’ (*totum iustificationem*); that is the meaning in *Institutes* III.xi.4. The second use is a more “strict sense,” and it refers to the divine communication of that part of Christ’s satisfaction which takes away the guilt of all sins committed, but does not supply the omission of righteousness; that is the meaning in *Institutes* III.xi.2.<sup>34</sup>

Daniel Featley (1582-1645), in his fifth speech in the Westminster Assembly on the issue of Christ’s active obedience, quoted Calvin on Romans 3:31: “where there is a coming to Christ, there is first found in him the perfect righteousness of the law, which becomes ours by imputation.”<sup>35</sup> Featley also quotes the threefold righteousness of Heidelberg Catechism answers 60 and 61, which Featley calls Ursinus’ Catechism. These are just two among other names such as Luther, Vermigli, Beza, Hemmingius, which

---

<sup>32</sup> George Walker, *Socinianisme in the Fundamentall Point of Justification Discovered, and Confuted* (London: R.O., 1641), 314-350.

<sup>33</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the Fundamentall point of Justification discovered, and confuted*, 337-338.

<sup>34</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme*, 338-340. Page number 340 shows up incorrect in the original (as 310).

<sup>35</sup> Calvin, *Comm. on Romans*, 152. “Ubi vero ad Christum ventum est, primum in eo invenitur exacta legis iustitia, quae per imputationem etiam nostra fit.” *CO* 49.67. Featley’s “exact justice of the law” is a more literal translation.

Featley uses to counter the argument that the imputation of Christ's active obedience is a novelty.<sup>36</sup>

Francis Turretin (1623-1687) claims that Calvin teaches the imputation of Christ's active obedience "in many parts of his works." Turretin focuses on *Institutes* II.xvi.5, but also brings up Calvin's commentaries on Romans 5:19 and Galatians 4:4.<sup>37</sup> On Romans 5:19, Calvin comments:

And then, as he declares that we are made righteous through the obedience of Christ, we hence conclude that Christ, in satisfying the Father, has provided a righteousness for us. It then follows, that righteousness is in Christ, and that it is to be received by us as what peculiarly belongs to him. He at the same time shows what sort of righteousness it is, by calling it obedience. And here let us especially observe what we must bring into God's presence, if we seek to be justified by works, even obedience to the law, not to this or to that part, but in every respect perfect; for when a just man falls, all his former righteousness will not be remembered. We may also hence learn, how false are the schemes which they take to pacify God, who of themselves devise what they obtrude on him. For then only we truly worship him when we follow what he has commanded us, and render obedience to his word. Away then with those who confidently lay claim to the righteousness of works, which cannot otherwise exist than when there is a full and complete observance of the law; and it is certain that this is nowhere to be found.<sup>38</sup>

As for Calvin's comments on Galatians 4:4-5, he wrote:

Christ the Son of God, who might have claimed to be exempt from every kind of subjection, became subject to the law. Why? He did so in our room, that he might obtain freedom for us. A man who was free, by constituting himself a surety, redeems a slave: by putting on himself the chains, he takes them off from the other. So Christ chose to become liable to keep the law, that exemption from it might be obtained for us; otherwise it would have been to no purpose that he

---

<sup>36</sup> Daniel Featley, *Sacra Nemesis, The Levites Scourge* (Oxford: Printed by Leonard Lichfield, 1644), 35-37; *The Dippers Dipt* (London: N. B. and Richard Royston, 1647), 204-206.

<sup>37</sup> Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 2, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1994), XIV.xiii.32.

<sup>38</sup> Calvin, *Comm. on Romans*, 212-213; *CO* 49:101-102.

should come under the yoke of the law, for it certainly was not on his own account that he did so.<sup>39</sup>

In the same section, Calvin shows he really understands the subjection to the law as active obedience rather than passive, for he anticipates one of Piscator's objections and refutes it:

We must here observe, the exemption from the law which Christ has procured for us does not imply that we no longer owe any obedience to the doctrine of the law, and may do whatever we please; for the law is the everlasting rule of a good and holy life. But Paul speaks of the law with all its appendages. From subjection to that law we are redeemed, because it is no longer what it once was.<sup>40</sup>

Concerning the reason why some orthodox writers assert that justification is contained in the remission of sins alone, Turretin makes the same allegation as George Downame, that it was written in the context of Roman Catholic controversy.<sup>41</sup>

Anthony Burgess (†1664) shows a slightly more balanced appraisal of earlier Reformers. Along the same lines of Downame, he asserts that Calvin "by placing our Justification in remission of sinne, onely oppose inherent renovation against the Papists."<sup>42</sup> He believes that Olevianus was only in favor of passive obedience imputed, Beza clearly defended active obedience completing our righteousness imputed, and Ursinus, though often charged as being against the imputation of Christ's active obedience, was more conciliatory rather than siding with either camp.<sup>43</sup> What is noteworthy is Burgess' historical sensibility in a polemical treatise when he asserts "that

---

<sup>39</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 118-119; CO 50:227.

<sup>40</sup> Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, 119; CO 50:227.

<sup>41</sup> Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 2, XVI.iv.3.

<sup>42</sup> Anthony Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification* (London: Paul's Church-yard, 1654), 265. This is part 2 of a two part treatise on justification which came out in 1655.

<sup>43</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 342-343.

the obedience of Christ hath in this later age (by reason of different opinions newly raised) been divided into active and passive”.<sup>44</sup> To assert that the distinction between active and passive obedience was a recent one, was fairly unusual for his day considering the polemics surrounding the issue.

## 2.2. The Interpretation of Scholarship from the Nineteenth Century to the Present

Scholarship of the past two centuries has waged the same battle in an attempt to place the Reformers on either side of the debate over active obedience. Though distant from the controversies of late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, scholars tend to be anachronistic in their judgment of theologians such as Calvin, Ursinus and Olevianus. Robert W. Landis, whose agenda was to find historical support in favor of “new-school” Presbyterians such as Albert Barnes who were under ecclesiastical attack on the issue of active obedience, wrote a three part article to show the “true” Calvinist position on justification, faith and active obedience.<sup>45</sup> First, he attempts to prove that the Reformers “employed the terms pardon, or forgiveness, and justification interchangeably, and really as synonymes”.<sup>46</sup> On Calvin he brings the evidence from the passages in *Institutes* III.xi already cited. On Ursinus, Landis quotes from his comments on *Heidelberg Catechism* Q&A 60 and 61. Some of the later names which he brings out as representatives of an

---

<sup>44</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 341.

<sup>45</sup> R. W. Landis, “What Were the Views Entertained by the Early Reformers, on the Doctrine of Justification, Faith, and the Active Obedience of Christ? Part I,” *The American Biblical Repository* 11, no. 30 (April 1838):448-481; Part II, *The American Biblical Repository* 12, no. 31 (July 1838): 179-197; Part III, *The American Biblical Repository* 12, no. 32 (Oct 1838): 420-457.

<sup>46</sup> Landis, “What Were the Views Entertained by the Early Reformers... Part I,” 454.

orthodox position are Pareus, Piscator, Tilenus and Wendelin, who are known for denying the imputation of active obedience. His objectivity may be questioned inasmuch as he states that during controversy “the Calvinistic church, almost entirely, at the first, took the ground that pardon was the whole of justification.”<sup>47</sup> Any who admitted the distinction between active and passive obedience, like Polanus and Gomarus, was found to be either in tune with Landis’ position or an “innovator.”<sup>48</sup>

Heinrich Heppe believed that the “older German-Reformed theologians (chiefly those of Heidelberg, Herborn, Anhalt like Ursin, Piscator, Scultetus) had of course taught with apparent agreement, that Christ gave the ‘active obedience’ purely for himself, in order to be able as the holy deliverer to offer the Father the only representative ‘passive obedience’.”<sup>49</sup> Heppe adds that Marcus Friedrich Wendelin (1584-1652) was able to prove this doctrine to be the right one,<sup>50</sup> but it became known as “the peculiar heresy of Piscator.”<sup>51</sup>

Albrecht Ritschl has a more nuanced assessment of the Reformers’ position. Since he believes that the Heidelberg Catechism (Q. 36, 37) and the Second Helvetic Confession (chap. 11) are the first public documents “that recognise the active obedience of Christ along with, or even before, the passive obedience, as a ground of

---

<sup>47</sup> Landis, “What Were the Views Entertained by the Early Reformers... Part I,” 473.

<sup>48</sup> Landis, “What Were the Views Entertained by the Early Reformers... Part I,” 477.

<sup>49</sup> Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (N.p.: Wakeman Great Reprints, n.d.), 460.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Marci-Friderici Wendelini, *Christianae theologiae libri duo* (Amstelodami: Joannem Janssonium, 1657), 491-495.

<sup>51</sup> Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 460.

justification,”<sup>52</sup> he takes Calvin not to be in favor of active obedience as Protestant Orthodoxy would be, but as having a part for Christ’s life in the whole of redemption.

His achievement of righteousness for us rests upon the whole course of His obedience; the ground of the forgiveness which frees us from the curse of the law is spread over the entire life of Christ; as soon as He assumed the form of a servant, He began to pay the price of our liberation. Death is merely the close of this series of prestations. For as the sacrifice in its death must be voluntarily offered (for its value is rooted in love as the motive) it is only His general active obedience that guarantees the significance and efficacy of His suffering unto death.<sup>53</sup>

Ritschl still makes Calvin to understand active obedience to be preparatory for the lifelong work of satisfaction; only suffering is vicarious. As for Ursinus, Ritschl defines him as a precursor of Piscator’s view: “Ursinus regards active obedience only as a preliminary to the penal satisfaction, and comprehends the *status humiliationis* under the idea of His passion.”<sup>54</sup> Despite a more nuanced definition of how Calvin viewed the vicarious importance of Christ’s life, Ritschl makes Calvin to be very much like Ursinus, both being closer to Piscator than to his opponents.

Alan Clifford fails to notice the difference between not being clear on something and clearly being against it. In other words, if early English and Continental early Reformers were not clearly teaching the imputation of Christ’s active obedience does not mean that they were against it. To say that they defined justification as forgiveness of sins does not mean that they excluded imputed righteousness; active obedience is a later discussion. But Clifford reasons that “it is precisely because justification is no more than forgiveness that Calvin never suggested the imputation of Christ’s active obedience;” the

---

<sup>52</sup> Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, 214.

<sup>53</sup> Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, 213.

<sup>54</sup> Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, 248, footnote 2.

need for both is Beza's invention.<sup>55</sup> Clifford conceives the function of causality mistakenly when he allows for active obedience to be considered merely the 'meritorious cause of justification', but not part of justification.<sup>56</sup> For Calvin, Christ's active obedience "merely demonstrated his qualification to be the guiltless sin-bearer. His own obedience was thus immediately relevant to himself, and to the believer's justification only indirectly."<sup>57</sup> Thus, Piscator and John Wesley are the correct interpreters of Calvin, rather than Beza and John Owen.<sup>58</sup> When Calvin does talk about imputation of righteousness, he is not saying the same thing as double-imputation orthodoxy, as explained by David Pareus, in Clifford's view, "the most accurate interpreter of Calvin."<sup>59</sup>

On Ursinus and Olevianus, Clifford provides unique support for his allegation concerning the answer to Question 60 of the *Heidelberg Catechism*:

---

<sup>55</sup> Alan C. Clifford, *Atonement and Justification: English Evangelical Theology 1640-1790; An Evaluation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 171.

<sup>56</sup> Clifford, *Atonement and Justification*, 180, footnote 8. Clifford appears to reflect an understanding of causality which was typical of writers such as John Goodwin and Richard Baxter, both of whom were in their day widely regarded as unorthodox on matters of justification. McGrath's summary of Baxter's position is illustrative: "According to Baxter, Christ has fulfilled the old covenant, and has therefore made it possible for humans to be justified on the basis of the somewhat more lenient terms of the new. The righteousness of Christ in fulfilling the old covenant is thus the meritorious cause of justification, in that it is on account of this fulfillment that the faith of the believer may be the formal cause of justification under the new covenant." McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 287. When Clifford applies the distinction that active obedience was the meritorious cause of justification in sixteenth-century writers but not imputed (i.e. not the formal cause), his judgment is anachronistic and does not correspond to Calvin who claimed "Christ, with his obedience" to be the "material cause." Moreover, Calvin was specifically against making the formal cause any other than Christ's righteousness. "They falsely represent the material and the formal cause, as if our works held half the place along with faith and Christ's righteousness. But Scripture cries out against this also, simply affirming that Christ is for us both righteousness and life, and that this benefit of righteousness is possessed by faith alone." Cf. *Institutes* III.xiv.17; *CO* 2:575-576.

<sup>57</sup> Clifford, *Atonement and Justification*, 171. Cf. idem, "John Calvin and the *Confessio Fidei Gallicana*," *Evangelical Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (July 1986): 203-205.

<sup>58</sup> Clifford, *Atonement and Justification*, 169-171, 186-191; idem, "The Gospel and justification," *Evangelical Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (July 1985): 257-258.

<sup>59</sup> Alan Clifford, "Justification: The Calvin-Saumur perspective," *Evangelical Quarterly* 79, no. 4 (Oct 2007): 335, footnote 24.

While the ‘official’ catechism is undoubtedly OP [old-perspective; i.e. the double-imputation interpretation of the Reformers] in tone and substance, the standard text of Lord’s Day 23 is not the original as drawn up by the catechism’s authors Professor Zacharias Ursinus (1534-83) and Pastor Caspar Olevianus (1536-87). According to the original text, the authors clearly taught that Christ’s ‘passive obedience’ only is imputed to the believer for justification. Agreeing with Calvin rather than Beza, they emphatically believed that such was the true teaching of Holy Scripture. At some stage between the first and second printings, changes were introduced by unknown theologians without the authors’ consent. This information is supplied by the son of David Pareus (1548-1622) who was Ursinus’ successor at Heidelberg.<sup>60</sup>

Clifford supports this allegation concerning Ursinus and Olevianus by quoting Ursinus’ *Commentary* on the catechism and Olevianus’ *A Firm Foundation*. Lastly, Clifford omits the majority of the Puritan writings on the issue when he affirms that most of the English Reformers and several Puritans taught the ‘passive obedience’ view of imputation.<sup>61</sup> It suffices to note that in the Westminster Assembly, the imputation of Christ’s active obedience was approved to be included in the 39 Articles with a vast majority, having only 3 or 4 dissenting.<sup>62</sup>

Norman Shepherd believes that the doctrine of active obedience was a production of later Reformed theology which shifted from the Reformation faith/grace paradigm to a pre-Reformation Roman Catholic works/merit paradigm, merely substituting the imputed righteousness of Christ for an infused righteousness.<sup>63</sup> Ursinus left the door open for the

---

<sup>60</sup> Clifford, “Justification: The Calvin-Saumur perspective,” 343-344. In the footnote, Clifford quotes what he thinks are the words of Philip Pareus, the son of David Pareus, found in Peter Bayle’s 1734 *The Dictionary Historical and Critical*. However, the words quoted are Bayle’s, and he says nothing on any change of the original answer to Question 60. All Bayle says is that David Pareus would not permit that any should depart from Ursinus’ Catechism by teaching a triple imputation. Bayle is just reflecting Pareus’ interpretation of the Heidelberg Catechism, as we have seen above.

<sup>61</sup> Clifford, “Justification: The Calvin-Saumur perspective,” 345.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. the Minutes of the Assembly in Van Dixhoorn, “Reforming the Reformation: theological debate at the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1652,” III.77.

<sup>63</sup> Norman Shepherd, “Justification by Works in Reformed Theology,” in *Backbone of the Bible*, ed. Andrew Sandlin (Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 2004), 111, 116-117.

later paradigm shift with his distinction between legal righteousness and evangelical righteousness as well as with the hypothetical assertion that had Adam in the Garden persevered in legal righteousness he would have had a legal justification; however, Ursinus himself still clung to the faith/grace paradigm.<sup>64</sup> Shepherd quotes Ursinus' *Commentary*: "Legal righteousness is performed, either by obedience to the law, or by punishment. The law requires one or the other."<sup>65</sup> Shepherd focuses on the statement that it is 'either/or', inferring that it can't be both.

The righteousness Christ wrought out for us was not the fulfillment of the demands of the law during the whole course of his life but rather his death and resurrection to pay the penalty for sin. In other words, the righteousness of Christ imputed to us for our justification is not his active obedience but his passive obedience.<sup>66</sup>

Shepherd tries to make a case that the three words of Answer 60 of the Catechism — "satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness" — all refer to the suffering and death of our Lord throughout the *Commentary*.<sup>67</sup>

J. Wesley White agrees with Shepherd that Ursinus did deny the imputation of the active obedience of Christ, but not before 1566. White makes this assessment based on the interpretations of Heinrich Heppe, Johann Gerhard and mainly Bernhardinus de Moor, who quotes a testimony of John Jacob Schultens saying that Ursinus did not hold to this position before 1566.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Shepherd, "Justification by Works in Reformed Theology," 115-116.

<sup>65</sup> Zacharias Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. G. W. Williard (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, n.d.), 325.

<sup>66</sup> Shepherd, "Justification by Works in Reformed Theology," 105.

<sup>67</sup> Shepherd, "Justification by Works in Reformed Theology," 107-108.

<sup>68</sup> White, "The Denial of the Imputation of the Active Obedience of Christ," 147-148.

Frans Lukas Bos is the most nuanced and balanced on Ursinus when he argues the Reformer's vagueness; he says the same is valid for Olevianus. Bos believes that Ursinus' works evidence differing perspectives on the issue. In the 1564 edition of his *Gründlichen Berichts vom heiligen Abendmahl* (Foundational Report of the Holy Supper), he writes that we take part in all of Christ's earnings: his obedience, righteousness and holiness (*gehorsam, gerechtigkeit und heyligkeit*) and a similar assertion is made in Answers 60 and 61 of the Heidelberg Catechism. However, on the 1566 edition of his report on the Holy Supper, he writes that Christ's earnings are partly ours, so that his suffering and death were paid for us.<sup>69</sup> The correction was not a change in his position, according to Bos, but a focus on the non-separation of the reconciliatory work of Christ. Such thought process was similar to Georg Karg's and Piscator's, but Ursinus never defined his opinion clearly like Piscator did.<sup>70</sup>

As for Olevianus, the Heidelberg Catechism author sided with Piscator in some criticisms to Beza's position, but his criticisms were not as extensive as Piscator's. Olevianus explains that our justification is not *multiplex*, but *simplex*. Olevianus recognizes that Christ's godliness and holiness are necessary for the work of mediation, but it is his exinanition, so that he may be cursed, that is imputed to us for justice.<sup>71</sup> Olevianus' focus is on the cross, but not to do away with the other parts of Christ's work: "certainly before the death of the son of God no personal holiness could be imputed to us as righteousness, nor the holiness of [his] divine nature, nor [his] human holiness, nor the

---

<sup>69</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 74.

<sup>70</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 75-76.

<sup>71</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 82. "eius inanitio, qua sit maledictum, quae nobis imputatur in justitiam."

holiness of [his] whole person, nor even [his] observance to the whole Law.”<sup>72</sup> This evidence presented by Bos definitely shows Olevianus reticent and concerned about embracing Beza’s innovative distinctions. However, it does not show him to be opposed to the idea that Christ’s life of obedience can be imputed. In spite of his nuanced treatment of Ursinus and Olevianus, Bos classifies Piscator to represent the “general opinion of the Reformation” and censures the later “orthodox” view on active obedience.<sup>73</sup>

Shifting towards the other side of the spectrum, William Cunningham believes that Calvin is in favor of the imputation of active righteousness.<sup>74</sup> Calvin’s repeated statements that justification solely meant remission of sins targeted the papist position that justification comprehended not merely a change of state but also a change of character. Calvin’s assertions did not mean to deny that justification included acceptance as a distinct element from forgiveness – separable only in thought, though always united.<sup>75</sup> Cunningham supports his claim with Calvin’s comments on 1 Corinthians 1:30, where Calvin explains the Pauline terminology: “he says that he is *made unto us righteousness*, by which he means that we are on his account acceptable to God, inasmuch as he expiated our sins by his death, and his obedience is imputed to us for righteousness. For as the righteousness of faith consists in remission of sins and a

---

<sup>72</sup> “certe ante mortem filii Dei nulla sanctitas personae nobis potuit in justitiam imputari, nec sanctitas divinae naturae, nec sanctitas humana, nec sanctitas totius personae, nec observation etiam totius Legis.” Apud Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 82.

<sup>73</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 95, 105, 136.

<sup>74</sup> With respect to the doctrine of justification, Cunningham regards Calvin as having “not come short of the accuracy and precision exhibited by Beza.” William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967 – reprint of 1862), 402.

<sup>75</sup> Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, 403.

gracious acceptance, we obtain both through Christ.”<sup>76</sup> In this quotation there seems to be a distinction between expiating our sins and obedience being imputed, though one could interpret it to mean a sequence of events – the first being objective, the second subjective. However, Cunningham is correct in asserting that in this passage the righteousness imputed results in two elements: remission and acceptance. Cunningham uniquely interprets Calvin’s definition of justification as consisting “in the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness” (*Inst.* III.xi.2) not as the two benefits of justification – forgiveness and the title to eternal life – rather the imputation of Christ’s righteousness is taken as the ground of, thus preceding, remission and acceptance.<sup>77</sup> The distinction between the passive and active righteousness of Christ is not found in the writings of Calvin, but there is nothing in his writings that could lead one to assert that he would have rejected this distinction. Cunningham believes that the distinction between forgiveness and acceptance is the one that prevailed in Protestant Orthodoxy with less opposition than the distinction between Christ’s passive and active righteousness.<sup>78</sup>

Paul van Buren describes Calvin seeing the obedience of Christ in three areas of his work: His incarnation, His earthly life, and His death.<sup>79</sup> Concerning the second part of His obedience, van Buren draws disputable conclusions from Calvin’s *Commentary on Galatians* 4:4-5: “The setting is forensic: we owed obedience and could not pay it. Christ

---

<sup>76</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. John Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 1:93; *CO* 49:331.

<sup>77</sup> Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, 403-404.

<sup>78</sup> Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, 404-406. Cf. William Cunningham, *Historical Theology* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1960 – reprint of 1862), 2:45-56.

<sup>79</sup> Paul van Buren, *Christ in Our Place: The Substitutionary Character of Calvin’s Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), 27.

put Himself in the position of being able to represent us. He became a man, that He might be the righteous man in our place, putting us to one side, as it were, and taking over the responsibility of performing our work and paying our debt.”<sup>80</sup> Calvin is, actually, not clear about what constitutes the freedom from the law provided by Christ, neither does he explain in what way Christ was free from the law: was it prior to the incarnation or even as incarnate? Van Buren also draws too much out of Calvin’s *Commentary on Matthew* 4:11, by talking about “the substitutionary element of Christ’s obedience,”<sup>81</sup> something nonexistent in Calvin’s comments on the referred text. On the other hand, he correctly analyses the 1545 *Catechism of the Church of Geneva* in light of the longer discussion of the Apostle’s Creed in the *Institutes* II.xvi.5, a text van Buren quotes several times. The Catechism has: “Minister: Why do you make the transition forthwith from birth to death [referring to the Apostles’ Creed], omitting all the story of his life? Child: Because nothing is dealt with here, except what so pertains to our redemption, as in some degree to contain the substance of it.”<sup>82</sup> Van Buren observes that for Calvin “the whole of the life of Christ stands under the sign of His death, so that a summary of the work of Christ may speak only of His death, for that includes under it His life on earth.”<sup>83</sup> Van Buren doesn’t seem aware that his observation does not put Calvin on either side of the debate over imputation of active obedience. Both sides would agree that, for Calvin, Christ’s life was part of his redemptive work. Those who held merely to imputation of passive

---

<sup>80</sup> van Buren, *Christ in Our Place*, 31.

<sup>81</sup> van Buren, *Christ in Our Place*, 31-32.

<sup>82</sup> J. K. S. Reid, *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 22 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.), 98.

<sup>83</sup> van Buren, *Christ in Our Place*, 34.

obedience would say that Christ's life was part of Christ's work of obedience but that it prepared him for the redemption on the cross; the defenders of imputation of active obedience would say that the cross is a metonymy of the whole redemptive work of Christ, including his life. Thus, van Buren's portrait of Calvin ends on a more neutral note than where it started.

James T. Dennison Jr. contrasts Calvin with Piscator on the issue of imputed righteousness.<sup>84</sup> Dennison's most significant quotation from Calvin pointing the reformer towards the position of active obedience imputed is his sermon on Deuteronomy 21:22, 23. This sermon focuses on Christ's passion and death for the text so guides the preacher. However, it has one of the clearest affirmations of Christ's positive obedience to the law being imputed unto sinners. Calvin refers to the text of Galatians 3:[12-]13 and says that Paul deals with "two things." The second is the suffering brought by the curse of the law, a clear reference to verse 13. The first, however, seems to be connected to verse 12.

He [Paul] sayeth that because wee can not attaine to righteousnesse, but by fulfilling the Lawe in all pointes, and by being discharged before GOD: it behoued our Lorde Iesus Christ to bee subiect to the Lawe, to the intent that his obedience might nowe be imputed unto vs, and God accept thereof as though we brought the like obedience of our owne. When we speake of being justified before God, howe is that to be vnderstoode? Verily that we should obey the things that God commaundeth vs in his Lawe. For the righteousnesse that hee speaketh of is, that he which doeth those things shall liue thereby.<sup>85</sup>

Later, Calvin adds that we can know that we are righteous in Jesus because he

willingly submitte himself to the Lawe, and beare the yoke thereof for vs: for we knowe that he performed the will of GOD his father in all pointes to the full. And so by that meane we be taken for righteous in Iesus Christ. Why so? Because Hee was obedient. Yea and that obedience of his was not for himselfe; there was no

---

<sup>84</sup> Dennison, "Johannes Piscator and the Doctrine of Justification," 8-11.

<sup>85</sup> John Calvin, *The Sermons of M. Iohn Calvin upon the Fifth Booke of Moses called Deuteronomie*, trans. Arthur Golding (London: Henry Middleton, 1583), 763; CO 27:693.

subjection in him, neither was hee bounde to any thing: for he is altogether aboue the Lawe: therefore it followeth that he was obedient for vs.<sup>86</sup>

While explaining the second ‘thing’, Calvin again refers to a double task performed by Jesus Christ: “as he hath performed all righteousnesse, so hath he also receiued the curse to himself which lay vpon our heades”.<sup>87</sup>

Brian Vickers argues that not so much in the commentaries, but in his *Institutes* a more developed idea of positive imputation is made explicit by Calvin.<sup>88</sup> Besides Calvin’s definition of justification in III.xi.2, Vickers quotes two interesting passages that talk about the demands of the law and Christ’s fulfillment of it: “We cannot gainsay that the reward of eternal salvation awaits complete obedience to the law, as the Lord has promised.” (*Inst.* II.vii.3); “if righteousness consists in the observance of the law, who will deny that Christ merited favor for us when, by taking that burden upon himself, he reconciled us to God as if we had kept the law?” (*Inst.* II.xvii.5). This last quotation, however, needs to be looked at more carefully for Calvin deals both with the price of our redemption on the cross as well as Christ’s obedience to the law, without making distinction between these two.

R. Scott Clark is more careful in his statements. He writes: “The mere absence of the later technical terms *obedientia activa et passiva* (which did not come into use until the 1570s) should not deter us from observing the substance of the doctrine in Calvin.”<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> Calvin, *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, 763; *CO* 27:693.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 764; *CO* 27:694.

<sup>88</sup> Brian Vickers, *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Imputation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 34-37.

<sup>89</sup> R. Scott Clark, “Do This and Live: Christ’s Active Obedience as the Ground of Justification,” in *Covenant, Justification, and Pastoral Ministry: Essays by the Faculty of Westminster Seminary California*, ed. R. Scott Clark (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007), 231. Gottfried Thomasius shows Victorin Strigel (1524-

And he adds: “The question ‘what did Calvin say on active obedience?’ is anachronistic. I am not arguing that Calvin taught the later doctrine in all its details. Rather, I am arguing only that ideas that the orthodox later exploited were present seminally in Calvin.”<sup>90</sup> He supports this interpretation with Calvin’s comments on Romans 5:19 as well as *Institutes* III.xi.23, where Calvin explains Romans 5:19 with these words: “To declare that by him alone we are accounted righteous, what else is this but to lodge our righteousness in Christ’s obedience, because the obedience of Christ is reckoned to us as if it were our own?”

As for Ursinus being in favor of active obedience imputed, Clark relies heavily on his *Larger Catechism*, from which Q/A 135 seems to be the most significant:

**Q.** Why is it necessary that the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ be imputed to us in order for us to be righteous before God? **A.** Because God, who is immutably righteous and true, wants to receive us into the covenant of grace in such a way that he does not go against the covenant established in creation, that is, that he neither treat us as righteous nor give us eternal life unless his law has been perfectly satisfied, either by ourselves or, since that cannot happen, by someone in our place.<sup>91</sup>

Concerning Olevianus, Clark’s best quotation supporting the perspective that he believed in the imputation of the active obedience of Christ is in his commentary on Galatians

---

1569), the Lutheran professor of the University of Leipzig, using the technical terminology as early as 1563. These are Strigel’s words: “Scio aliquos disputare de discrimine obedientiae activae et passivae Christi. Activam obedientiam intelligent de impletione legis, de qua Christus dixit ‘non veni solver legem sed implere’; passivam intelligent ipsam passionem seu effusionem sanguinis et non volunt nos justos esse per activam, sed per passivam obedientiam. Nihil opus est hac subtili distinctione; Paulus dicit simpliciter, per unius obedientiam sumus justi. Ergo complectitur totam obedientiam Christi, a principio nativitatis usque ad resurrectionem,” in Gottfried Thomasius, *Sacra Pentecostalia Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* (Erlangae: Adolphi Ernesti Junge, 1846), 16. The notion of an “active” and a “passive” work of Christ goes at least as far back as Bernard of Clairvaux, as will be shown in the next chapter.

<sup>90</sup> Clark, “Do This and Live,” 231, footnote 6.

<sup>91</sup> Zacharias Ursinus, “The Larger Catechism,” in *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology*, ed. Lyle D. Bierma et al., Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 188.

3:13-14: “to the degree that the curse was owed for every sin of the elect, to the same degree he had to fulfill all righteousness without any complaint”.<sup>92</sup> However, as we will see, these two clauses quoted do not function as two elements of Christ’s redemptive work, but as the second being the remedy for the first; i.e. fulfillment of the law remedying the curse. Fulfillment of the law for Olevianus is not exactly the seventeenth century idea of active obedience.

Other writers evidence a similar train of thought, bringing minor observations on the topic at issue. Charles Hodge,<sup>93</sup> Herman Bavinck,<sup>94</sup> Wilhelm Niesel,<sup>95</sup> T. H. L. Parker,<sup>96</sup> Barbara Pitkin,<sup>97</sup> J. V. Fesko<sup>98</sup> and Cornelis P. Venema<sup>99</sup> see Calvin’s doctrine of justification comprising two elements: the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. G. C. Berkouwer also sees the “twofold aspect” of subsequent Reformed theology in Calvin’s emphasis on the unity of Christ’s obedience which

---

<sup>92</sup> *Apud* R. Scott Clark, *Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant: The Double Benefit of Christ*, Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology, eds. David F. Wright and Donald Macleod (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2005), 168.

<sup>93</sup> Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3:133-134.

<sup>94</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 3:380, footnote 171.

<sup>95</sup> Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth, 1956), 132-133.

<sup>96</sup> T. H. L. Parker, “Calvin’s Doctrine of Justification,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 24 (Apr 1952): 105-106.

<sup>97</sup> Barbara Pitkin, *What Pure Eyes Could See: Calvin’s Doctrine of Faith in Its Exegetical Context* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), 46.

<sup>98</sup> J. V. Fesko, “Calvin on Justification and Recent Misinterpretations of His View,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, no. 16 (2005): 90-92, 109.

<sup>99</sup> 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. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1985, 140-141; idem, “Calvin’s Understanding of the ‘Twofold Grace of God’ and Contemporary Ecumenical Discussion of the Gospel,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, no. 18 (2007):72-73.

encompassed his whole life. Following Bos, Berkouwer takes Olevianus to agree with Piscator in emphasizing justification as an *actio simplex* against the twofold obedience.<sup>100</sup>

The editors of the *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève* are almost the sole exception evidencing historical sensibility towards the development of the doctrine. When describing an early Seventeenth-Century French Reformed controversy (between Pierre du Moulin and Daniel Tilenus) over the issue of active obedience, they compare carefully it with the theology of earlier Reformers:

The quarrel is part of the work of deepening the theology of salvation taught by Calvin and other reformers of the first generation. Calvin argued, on the one hand, that Jesus Christ had no need to merit for himself, and on the other hand that it is his blood which is shed for the remission of sins ‘of many’... It was only later that other subtleties were introduced in the Reformed doctrine of justification. Beza was the first who clearly distinguished three or even four parts... Ursinus and Olevianus had instead focused on the passion and death of Jesus Christ.<sup>101</sup>

This quote introduces ambiguity in Calvin, innovative distinction in Beza,<sup>102</sup> and a particular emphasis in Ursinus and Olevianus.

Chad Van Dixhoorn also reckons with the development of the doctrine after the time of Calvin when he says that “the topic was consciously discussed and clearly defined only after the first generations of Reformers had died.”<sup>103</sup>

With this sample of secondary literature, we notice how rare is the analyst who engages the writings of Calvin, Ursinus and Olevianus without his/her bias playing an

---

<sup>100</sup> G. C. Berkouwer, *The Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 321-323.

<sup>101</sup> Gabriella Cahier, Matteo Campagnolo and Micheline Louis-Courvoisier, *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève 1610-1613* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1993), 11:xviii. The major mistake of the editors is to assert that Beza’s tripartite justification had “our faith” (*notre foi*) as the third element. This inaccuracy does not however diminish the value of their assessment on each of the four Reformers.

<sup>102</sup> Elsewhere, Matteo Campagnolo writes: “Bèze aurait le premier opéré des subdivisions dans la justification des homes par le Christ”. Campagnolo, “Deux lettres du synode national de Gap aux Églises soeurs,” 266.

<sup>103</sup> Van Dixhoorn, “Reforming the Reformation,” I.327.

important interpretative role, and how that results in a rather unbalanced judgment of the sources. Since there are few who allow for the view that the Reformers' teaching on the issue was at times inconsistent or that it lacked precise distinctions, the next chapter will argue in favor of such a view by first looking at the Medieval context and later the debates in Lutheran circles, before getting to the writings of the four Reformed theologians of the sixteenth century. These two preceding sections will provide the context with what had been asserted before (Middle Ages) and in other circles (Lutheranism) prior to the Reformed discussions of Christ's active obedience.

## CHAPTER 3

### ACTIVE OBEDIENCE IN THE MIDDLE AGES AND SIXTEENTH CENTURY

The first two sections of this chapter do not intend to be exhaustive in their survey, but merely to underscore some soteriological and Christological ideas which had already been discussed prior to the Reformed debates over active obedience. They will also attempt to trace lines of continuity with the Medievals which were inherited and reworked by the Protestant camp, both Lutherans and Reformed. The section on the Lutherans will try to show that the presence of controversy in their midst was some indication of the obscurity from the first generation of Lutheran Reformers in regards to how the merits of Christ's life applied to the Christian, just as among the Reformed.

#### **3.1. The Concept of Active Obedience in the Medieval Scholastics**

This segment will show that the concept of an active obedience of Christ was already present among the scholastics – though not as imputed to us – in embryonic form. Such demonstration results in understanding that the first and second generation Reformers did not conceive of the idea out of nothing, though they began the shift towards a full application of Christ's active obedience to our justification. Another goal of this section is to demonstrate how Beza's understanding of the holy conception of Christ being imputed to believers as a redemptive parallel to original sin is not devoid of

rudimentary precursors. While Beza's construction is new, the medieval scholastics already talked about Christ meriting salvation for us from his conception.

Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) discusses Christ's life of obedience to the law in connection to his work of satisfaction in his *Cur Deus Homo*. He understands obedience as a lifelong subjection to the law rather than the suffering that culminates in death. The parallel of Romans 5 requires that the disobedience/death factor be countered with life restored through the obedience of man, and such obedience starts at the moment of incarnation.<sup>1</sup> Though these are the words of Boso, Anselm offers no criticism. However, this obedience of Christ is merely the path of redemption, it is not meritorious by itself. Later, Anselm writes: "I think that God requires this [truth and justice] from every rational creature, and that the latter owes this to God as a matter of obedience" and "that Man [i.e. Christ] owed this obedience to God the Father, and his manhood owed it to his divinity, and the Father required this from him."<sup>2</sup> Christ's death, on the other hand, was voluntary rather than mandatory.

Though Boso understands Scripture to portray Christ's death more as an act of obedience rather than a free decision of his own will,<sup>3</sup> Anselm corrects him by making the distinction between what Christ did under obedience, a life of truth and justice, and what he endured because of obedience, persecution unto death. "Therefore God did not compel Christ to die, when there was no sin in him, but Christ himself freely underwent death, not by yielding up his life as an act of obedience, but on account of his obedience

---

<sup>1</sup> Anselm, *Why God Became Man*, in *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, ed. and trans. Eugene R. Fairweather, The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), I.3; J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* [hereafter, *PL*] vol. 158, col. 0364C.

<sup>2</sup> Anselm, *Why God Became Man*, I.9; *PL* 158, col. 0370C.

<sup>3</sup> Anselm, *Why God Became Man*, I.8; *PL* 158, col. 0370B.

in maintaining justice, because he so steadfastly persevered in it that he brought death on himself.”<sup>4</sup> Aside from the necessity of the atonement due to human sin and divine justice, Anselm portrays Christ’s death as a voluntary gift to the Father,<sup>5</sup> but his life of obedience is shown to be a mandate upon him for being a man. It cannot be meritorious for God already requires it from him: “If we say that he will give himself to obey God, so that in steadfastly maintaining justice he submits himself to his will, this will not be to give what God does not require of him as an obligation. For every rational creature owes this obedience to God.”<sup>6</sup> Such obedience, though mandated, is necessary for redemption. John McIntyre states that Anselm’s case for the sinlessness of Jesus Christ is “to show that the Atonement is not possible except on the basis of Christ’s sinlessness.”<sup>7</sup>

Peter Abelard (1079-1142), in his commentary on Romans, pointed to the importance of Christ’s life in his moral theory of atonement.<sup>8</sup> Richard Weingart brings an

---

<sup>4</sup> Anselm, *Why God Became Man*, I.9; PL 158, col. 03701A-0371B. In J. Patout Burns’ words: “Christ showed obedience in his life; and his death was the inevitable consequence of this commitment to justice in a sinful world.” J. Patout Burns, “The Concept of Satisfaction in Medieval Redemption Theory,” *Theological Studies* 36, no. 2 (Jun 1975): 288.

<sup>5</sup> Since Christ doesn’t die by necessity, for he is almighty, nor by obligation, for he is no sinner (*Why God Became Man*, II.11), his death is seen as a gift. Franks believes that for Anselm, satisfaction is not endurance of punishment but a positive gift to God, a performance done to God’s honor. “Christ gives a gift to God, in return for which God gives eternal salvation. For the purposes of his theory Anselm has to reinterpret the death of Christ as the gift of His life. It is not the death in itself, but the gift made in it, that brings about salvation, and that not directly, but through the reaction of God.” Franks, *A History of The Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, 142.

<sup>6</sup> Anselm, *Why God Became Man*, II.11; PL 158, col. 0411C.

<sup>7</sup> John McIntyre, *St. Anselm and His Critics: A Re-Interpretation of the Cur Deus Homo* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1954), 152.

<sup>8</sup> In Abelard’s exemplary theory of atonement, the passion of Christ is the supreme manifestation of love that not only delivers us from sin, but acquires for us the liberty to fulfill all things from love. On a theological locus after his exposition of Romans 3:19-26, Abelard writes: “Now it seems to us that we have been justified by the blood of Christ and reconciled to God in this way: through this unique act of grace manifested to us—in that his Son has taken upon himself our nature and preserved therein in teaching us by word and example even unto death—he has more fully bound us to himself by love; with the result that our hearts should be enkindled by such a gift of divine grace, and true charity should not now shrink from enduring anything for him.” Then, he writes that “our redemption through Christ’s suffering is that deeper

interesting quote from his comments on Romans 5:15-19 which is pertinent to the topic of active obedience:

the Apostle indicates that by the incarnation of his Son God has brought it to pass that not only mercy but also righteousness should come to the aid of sinners and that his righteousness should supplement what was deficient because of our sin. When God made his Son man, he surely set him under the law which he had given in common to all men. It is therefore fitting that as man he must love his neighbour as himself according to the divine precept and exercise the grace of love in us, both in teaching us and praying for us... And so being made man, he is constrained by the law of love for neighbour to redeem those who were under the law and yet could not be saved by the law and to supply from his own what is lacking in our merits. As he is singular in holiness, so also he might then be singular in his advantage to others for their salvation. Otherwise what great thing would his holiness merit if it were sufficient only for his salvation and not for the salvation of others?<sup>9</sup>

This view seems close to Anselm's in stipulating the obligation of Christ to obey the law of love, but on the other hand it also seems to convey merit to the obedience of his whole life, rather than merely his passion. In fact, in this passage he does not connect merit with Christ's death but with his "holiness," which Weingart takes not to mean the holiness of his person due to his divinity but the holiness of his ministry in his perfect obedience to the divine will for man's redemption.<sup>10</sup> In Abelard's theory, not only Christ's death but also his life has moral influence over man to lead him towards love. But the idea of merit in Christ's life is not explicated in any detail, as Weingart notes. It is mostly the active

---

affection in us which not only frees us from slavery to sin, but also wins for us the true liberty of sons of God, so that we do all things out of love rather than fear," and that Christ "came for the express purpose of spreading this true liberty of love amongst men." *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans* Book II, in *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, 283-284; PL 178, col. 0836A-0836C.

<sup>9</sup> Apud Richard E. Weingart, *The Logic of Divine Love: A Critical Analysis of the Soteriology of Peter Abailard* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 140-141. William Shedd's general comments on Abelard's theory of atonement seem to connect with this passage: "As the God-Man who has perfectly obeyed the divine law, Christ possesses a weight of influence with the Father which secures blessings for the sinful... Christ was perfectly holy and just himself, and it is 'just' that such a being should be heard in behalf of those for whom he became incarnate and suffered." Shedd, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, 2:288.

<sup>10</sup> Weingart, *The Logic of Divine Love*, 143.

subjection to obey the will of God even unto death that Weingart calls an “active obedience” in Abelard’s thought.<sup>11</sup> Objective redemption still converges in the cross, and Christ’s life has only an exemplary role in the fulfillment of the law.<sup>12</sup>

The mystic Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), though sometimes labeled as a representative of monastic theology in opposition to the new scholastic approach, should be included in this survey of medieval theologians for at least two reasons. First, his theology of justification has been proved to contain elements which were precursors of the protestant doctrine of justification, particularly on the issue of the imputation or reckoning of Christ’s righteousness.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, Bernard has often been quoted by Protestant writers of the seventeenth century who engaged in discussing Christ’s active obedience.<sup>14</sup> One of the most often quoted sentences mentions the unity of the active and the passive in the redemptive work of Christ: “Both in life he had passive action and in death he sustained an active passion, while salvation was accomplished on earth.”<sup>15</sup> This comes out of Bernard’s comparison with the first Adam, who left as an inheritance for us two things as a result of his flight from God: the duty of work and the consequence of

---

<sup>11</sup> Weingart, *The Logic of Divine Love*, 129-131, 144.

<sup>12</sup> Weingart, *The Logic of Divine Love*, 145-146.

<sup>13</sup> A. N. S. Lane, “Bernard of Clairvaux: A Forerunner of John Calvin?” in *Bernardus Magister*, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt (Spencer, MA: Cistercian Publications, 1992), 533-545.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Johannes Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis de Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis Coram Deo*, 56, 58; Robert Boyd, *In Epistolam Pauli Apostoli ad Ephesios Praelectiones* (Londini: Societatis Stationariorum, 1652), 796; Daniel Featley, *Sacra Nemesis* (Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, 1644), 37; Thomas Goodwin, *Christ the Mediator*, in *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1863), 5:345, 349; John Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith, through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ Explained, Confirmed, and Vindicated* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), 304; Samuel Clark, *Scripture-Justification: or a Discourse of Justification, According to the Evidence of Scripture=Light* (London: S. Bridge, 1698), 92.

<sup>15</sup> “Et in vita passivam habuit actionem, et in morte passionem activam sustinuit, dum salutem operaretur in medio terrae.” Bernardi, *Sermones de Tempore*, in *PL* 183, col. 0268D-0269A.

pain. Though this comparison between the two Adams is not an elaborate parallel of representatives, it shows how Christ fulfills two things. In his *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, Bernard mentions the importance of Christ's life of holiness for those who only remember his death. He writes: "The life of Christ became the standard for my living; his death a deliverance from death. The former instructed life, the latter destroyed death. His life was certainly laborious, while his death was precious; however both are quite necessary."<sup>16</sup> In this treatise, just as with Abelard, Christ's life has merely an instructive character in one's redemption as well as his death teaches one how to die.<sup>17</sup> Bernard even adds a third element for our salvation, which is remission of sins.<sup>18</sup>

Hugh of St. Victor (c. 1096-1141), in *De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei*, is taken by Franks to anticipate the later Protestant doctrine of Christ's satisfaction as consisting both in his active and passive obedience.<sup>19</sup> Franks bases this assertion in Hugh's distinction between two parts in satisfaction, the first one being the placating of God's wrath through his life of obedience.<sup>20</sup> But it might be more of an implication rather than what is actually said in the section mentioned by him. In fact, Hugh says that it was in

---

<sup>16</sup> "Vita Christi, Vivendi mihi regula existit: mors, a morte redemption. Illa vitam instruxit, mortem ista destruxit. Vita quidem laboriosa, sed mors pretiosa; utraque vero admodum necessaria." Bernard, *De Laude Novae Militiae*, XI.18, in *PL* 182, col. 0932D.

<sup>17</sup> Concluding from David Steinmetz's observations, Johannes Von Staupitz seems to follow a similar thought as Abelard and Bernard. Steinmetz portrays Von Staupitz teaching that Christ's active and passive obedience are both an example of how the Christian should live as well as the full revelation of God's mercy and love. David Curtis Steinmetz, *Misericordia Dei: The Theology of Johannes Von Staupitz in Its Late Medieval Setting* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 138-139, 142-143.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Bernard, *De Laude Novae Militiae*, XI.18, 26-27, in *PL* 182, col. 0933A, 0936A-0937A.

<sup>19</sup> Franks, *A History of The Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, 161.

<sup>20</sup> Franks, *A History of The Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, 160.

Christ's birth that God was justly placated to man.<sup>21</sup> He says that Christ obediently undertook punishment, but the twofold satisfaction focuses on Christ's birth and death,<sup>22</sup> rather than in his life of obedience.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), in his *Summa Theologiae*, briefly mentions a redemptive aspect of Christ's obedience to the law.

And Christ, indeed, wished to conform His conduct to the Law, first, to show His approval of the Old Law. Secondly, that by obeying the Law He might perfect it and bring it to an end in His own self, so as to show that it was ordained to Him. Thirdly, to deprive the Jews of an excuse for slandering Him. Fourthly, in order to deliver men from subjection to the Law, according to Gal. iv. 4, 5: *God sent His son... made under the Law, that He might redeem them who were under the Law.*<sup>23</sup>

Aquinas mentions Gal. 4:4-5 in his discussion of circumcision saying that Christ had to be circumcised because he needed to take the burden of the law in order to set us free from it,<sup>24</sup> but there is no further explanation.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, the point is obfuscated by the long discussion of the passion of Christ.<sup>26</sup> In article 5 of q. 49 Aquinas argues that "the gate of heaven's kingdom is thrown open to us through Christ's passion." Aquinas

---

<sup>21</sup> "In nativitate enim Christi juste placatus est Deus homini". Hugo de Sancto Victore, *De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei*, I.viii.4, in *PL* 176, col. 0308D-0309A. J. Patout Burns interprets this very passage saying that since man must repay God for the loss He suffered in the fall and satisfy for the contempt of sin, the latter is satisfied by Christ with the penalty of death while the first is repaid when God "became man in order that mankind might fulfil justice by offering the innocent Christ, who was even greater than the original man." Burns, "The Concept of Satisfaction in Medieval Redemption Theory," 291.

<sup>22</sup> "Christus ergo nascendo debitum hominis patri solvit, et moriendo reatum hominis expiavit," *PL* 176, col. 0309B.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1922), part III, q. 40, art. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, part III, q. 37, art. 1.

<sup>25</sup> William Shedd overstates his case by claiming that Aquinas is the only writer prior to the Reformation that anticipates the later distinction between active and passive righteousness of Christ. Shedd, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, 2:309-310, 342.

<sup>26</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, part III, q. 46-49.

talks about a double obligation for which Christ's passion paid the price: bondage of sin and the debt of punishment.<sup>27</sup> But there is no mention of man being obliged to obey the law and Christ being in the place of man as to the requirement of obedience. In fact, when obedience is discussed it gives way to suffering for Philippians 2:8 is discussed as suffering out of obedience and Romans 5:19 is tied to the obedience of the cross; the sacrifice of Christ's passion and death proceeds from obedience, and by his suffering and death Christ fulfilled the moral, ceremonial and judicial precepts of the Law.<sup>28</sup> Not even the topic of merit is connected to his life of obedience but to his passion.<sup>29</sup> Aquinas' emphasis on Christ's passion is merely a continuation of Peter Lombard and Alexander of Hales.<sup>30</sup>

Gabriel Biel (c. 1425-1495) is one who, according to Heiko Oberman, modifies the Anselmic tradition by stating the centrality of Christ's life rather than his death.

---

<sup>27</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, part III, q. 48, art. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, part III, q. 47, art. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, part III, q. 48, art. 1. On Romans 5:19, the *Glossa Ordinaria* inserts, as an explanatory note in between the biblical text, the word *merito* (by merit), thus making the latter part of the verse to be the following: "ita [merito] & per vnus hominis obedientiam iusti constituentur multi." However, it is not clear if *merito* is meant as an addition to Christ's obedience or an explanation of what Christ's obedience produces. Neither is there any explication of what constitutes the obedience. On the other hand, Nicholas of Lyra (1270-1349), in his *Postillae*, talks explicitly about our redemption happening "per obedientiam Christi in ligno crucis passi." Nicholas also takes the redemption from the law in Galatians 4:5 – which the *Glossa* understands to be redemption from the penalty (*à poenis*) – to happen "per sua passionem, per quam abstulit dictā obligationem." François Feuarent, Jean Dadré, Jacques de Cuilly, *Bibliorum Sacrorum cum Glossa Ordinaria iam ante quidem a Strabo Fvlgensi collecta: nunc autem novis, cum graecorum, tum latinorum patrum expositionibus locupletata: Annotatis etiam ijs, quae confuse antea citabantur, locis: Et Postilla Nicolai Lyrani: Additionibus Pauli Burgensis ad ipsum Lyranum: ac ad easdem Matthiae Toringi Replicis* (Venice: [n.p.], 1601), 6:74, 498.

<sup>30</sup> Franks believes that in the patristic theology, the death and resurrection of Christ were in the center of his redemptive work, in Anselm, the death of Christ is central, Lombard begins to lay more stress on the passion and Alexander of Hales consummates this shift; not the death in itself, but Christ's death as the culmination of His passion becomes the center of the redemptive work of Christ. Franks, *The History of The Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, 191.

However, his fulfillment of the law is still in close connection to his passion. Oberman writes:

The passion of Christ is a continual suffering that began at the moment of his birth, the flight to Egypt, and the poverty of his youth. Christ's death on the cross is only the culmination of a whole life dedicated to obedience and fulfillment of the law. Death was incidental; for what God required of his son was perseverance in righteousness and truth... In the life of Christ, especially in the incarnation but also in the passion, a love of God is revealed that has a profound impact on the *viator*. Nevertheless, one cannot profit from the work of Christ without a spontaneous love for God above everything else.<sup>31</sup>

Oberman indicates that Biel's view of Christ's life of obedience, along with his passion, contains an Abelardian accent on the work of Christ influencing the believer. However such influence will not be effected unless man adds to the merits of Christ, that is, unless man follows Christ in obedience. For example, though the active obedience of Christ serves as an explanation of the victory over the devil, the believer will only be victorious over the evil one if he imitates Christ's obedience.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, we see that some medieval scholastics did mention the importance of Christ's life for redemption, though never with a proto-Protestant understanding of Christ's work being imputed. Abelard and Biel highlighted Christ's life more than the others but not with a substitutionary characteristic, but rather with the notion of setting up an example or providing initial merits that need to be complemented with man's response of obedience.

The other aspect that sets up the context for the Reformed discussion of imputed righteousness, especially in Beza, is the scholastic teaching on Christ's redemptive merits

---

<sup>31</sup> Heiko A. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 266-267.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology*, 268-270.

from his conception. We have seen how Hugh of St. Victor touches on that, as does Peter Lombard (c. 1100-1160).<sup>33</sup> Alexander of Hales (c. 1183-1245) argues that human nature became hateful to God because of original sin, but as assumed by Christ in the unity of his Person human nature was disposed to grace.<sup>34</sup> Though Alexander uses this parallel to explain man's disposition of congruity, an idea completely rejected by the Reformers, the parallel itself shows a meritorious aspect to Christ's hypostatic union. When explaining different modes of merit, Alexander says of Christ that "from the instant of His conception all good was owed to Him by reason of the habitual plenitude of grace, which He possessed."<sup>35</sup>

Aquinas says that Christ possesses habitual grace because of the union of his soul with the Word of God.<sup>36</sup> "The ultimate reason why Christ was able to merit for us," William Lynn comments, "is to be found in His Divine Person; not, of course, in the sense that He merited according to His divine nature, but in the sense that it is because of His Divinity that the Sacred Humanity was endowed with the fullest perfection of grace and was able to produce infinite effects in the order of grace."<sup>37</sup> Aquinas thinks along

---

<sup>33</sup> "Nec solum hoc meruit Christus quando Patri obediens crucem subiit, sed etiam ab ipsa conceptione ex quo homo factus est, per charitatem et iustitiam et alias virtutes, in quarum plenitudine fuit secundum hominem conditus, sibi tantum meruit, quantum post per martyrii tolerantiam." Petrus Lombardus, *Sententiarum Libri Quatuor*, book III, dist. xviii, in *PL* 192, col. 0793.

<sup>34</sup> Franks, *A History of The Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, 181.

<sup>35</sup> "ab instanti conceptionis deberetur ei per habitum plenitudinis gratie quem habebat omne bonum" [text without the abbreviations]. Alexander de Ales, *Summa universae theologiae*, parte III, qu. 16, memb. 1 (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1481-1482). This is not to say that Christ merited nothing throughout the rest of his life. Alexander believes that what is owed by reason of a habit is made to be owed by reason of an act.

<sup>36</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, III, q. 7, art. 1, 11.

<sup>37</sup> William D. Lynn, *Christ's Redemptive Merit: The Nature of Its Causality According to St. Thomas*, *Analecta Gregoriana Series Facultatis Theologicae*, vol. 115 (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1962), 157.

lines similar to Alexander of Hales: “Christ merited from the very instant of His conception; but what He merited thereby, He merited by the subsequent actions of His life.”<sup>38</sup> Franks says that the same idea of Christ meriting from the instant of his conception can be found in Duns Scotus (c. 1266-1308) and in Gabriel Biel.<sup>39</sup> This corroborates the idea that there was a medieval tradition around the notion of Christ accomplishing redemptive merits from his conception onwards that would directly benefit us. In *Liber Sententiarum*, possibly written by Bernard of Clairvaux,<sup>40</sup> there is not only redemptive merit accruing from Christ’s birth, but there is even a tripartite structure very similar to Beza’s partition of justification:

“A triple illness oppresses the human race: at the beginning, middle, and end, that is, with birth, life, and death. Unclean birth, perverse life, and dangerous death. Christ came, and against this triple disease he brought a threefold remedy. Indeed he was born, lived, and died; and his birth purged ours, that death destroyed ours, and his life instructed ours.”<sup>41</sup>

Though Christ’s life is again pointing merely to moral instruction, the threefold structure stands out since it is made as a remedial parallel to our triple spiritual disease.

The importance of all of this discussion on Christ’s merit from conception is that it can be deduced that the Reformed in favor of the imputation of the active obedience of

---

<sup>38</sup> Aquinas, *Summa*, III, q. 34, art. 3. In the same article, Aquinas explains that through subsequent actions and sufferings Christ merits the glory of immortality, which He also merited in the first instant of His conception; not that the glory of immortality was not due to him before, but that it became due from more causes.

<sup>39</sup> Franks, *A History of The Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, 240, 262.

<sup>40</sup> *Patrologia Latina* claims the author of this work is uncertain. It is quoted by Boyd (*In Epistolam Pauli Apostoli ad Ephesios Praelectiones*, 796) as Bernard’s. Yet, since there were numerous spurious works tied to the Cistercian monk from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, it could very well be “Pseudo-Bernard”. Cf. Anthony N. S. Lane, *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux*, Studies in Reformed Theology and History, no. 1, New Series (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1996), 25-26.

<sup>41</sup> “Triplici morbo laborat genus humanum: principio, medio, et fine, id est nativitate, vita, et morte. Nativitas immunda, vita perversa, mors periculosa. Venit Christus, et contra triplicem hunc morbum attulit triplex remedium. Natus est enim, vixit, mortuus est: atque ejus nativitas purgavit nostram, mors illius destruxit nostram, et vita ejus instruxit nostram.” *Liber Sententiarum*, in *PL* 184, col. 1141D-1142A.

Christ were following the tradition when they argued that Christ did not need to merit anything for himself throughout his life. For Beza's teaching, the parallel is even closer since Beza argued that Christ's holy conception is imputed to the Christian thus restoring human nature from original sin. It is as if Beza is counting Christ's holy nature as merit for us. That is the third element of imputed righteousness, as will later be shown.

### 3.2. Luther, Melancthon, and Lutheran Orthodoxy against Georg Karg

This section does not intend to be a full-fledged history of the Lutheran understanding of Christ's active obedience up to the *Formula of Concord* (1577),<sup>42</sup> but simply to provide similar insights to what has been said of the Reformed development on the same issue. The majority of scholars seem to assert that early Lutheran Reformers such as Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon could be placed on either side of the debate over the imputation of Christ's active obedience. Authors such as J. A. Dorner,<sup>43</sup> Julius Köstlin,<sup>44</sup> Reinhold Seeberg,<sup>45</sup> Paul Althaus<sup>46</sup> and R. Scott Clark<sup>47</sup> hold that Luther

---

<sup>42</sup> A rather detailed history was written by Gottfried Thomasius, entitled *Historiae dogmatis de obedientia Christi activa*. The copy in my possession is divided in three parts and with different titles: *Natalia Sacra Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* (Erlangae: Adolphi Ernesti Junge, 1845); *Sacra Paschalia Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* (Erlangae: Adolphi Ernesti Junge, 1846); *Sacra Pentecostalia Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* (Erlangae: Adolphi Ernesti Junge, 1846).

<sup>43</sup> J. A. Dorner, *History of Protestant Theology*, trans. George Robson and Sophia Taylor (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871), 1:353-354.

<sup>44</sup> Julius Köstlin, *The Theology of Luther in its Historical Development and Inner Harmony*, trans. Charles E. Hay (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1897), 2:391-396, 407-409

<sup>45</sup> Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-Book of the History of Doctrines*, trans. Charles E. Hay (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), 2:266-268, 371.

<sup>46</sup> Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 203. Later, Althaus has a sentence that confuses the reader as to his position on Luther and imputation of Christ's active obedience. He says of Luther that "the forgiveness of sins or the nonimputation of sin is the imputation of righteousness" if we were to describe it positively (p. 227). However, this may only reflect the dubious language of Luther himself in different places of his opus.

did have an understanding of Christ's active obedience, but they do not elaborate the point. Lowell C. Green,<sup>48</sup> on the other hand, places the Luther of 1518-1519 as merely teaching what later is termed the passive righteousness of Christ imputed.<sup>49</sup> Regarding Melancthon, Albert Ritschl<sup>50</sup> understands him to have started a tradition that is continued by Ursinus and Piscator, while Lowell C. Green,<sup>51</sup> Stephen Strehle<sup>52</sup> and Brian Vickers<sup>53</sup> see the Lutheran Reformer as distinguishing between the two kinds of righteousness imputed to the believer. A more cautious read is brought by Gottfried Thomasius<sup>54</sup> and Ritschl<sup>55</sup> when they categorize Luther as a transitory figure, demonstrating rudimentary elements of the doctrine but not explaining and defining it accurately. But it is Robert Kolb who stands out as being more incisive in explaining what Martin Luther didn't say, but that later Lutherans such as Martin Chemnitz (1522-

---

<sup>47</sup> R. Scott Clark, "Iustitia Imputata Christi: Alien or Proper to Luther's Doctrine of Justification?" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 70 (2006): 269-310.

<sup>48</sup> Lowell C. Green, "Faith, Righteousness, and Justification: New Light on Their Development Under Luther and Melancthon," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 4, no. 1 (Apr 1973): 86.

<sup>49</sup> Apparently, even Green's description of Luther's mature forensic view of justification leaves out the active obedience of Christ. See Lowell C. Green, *How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel: The Doctrine of Justification in the Reformation* (Fallbrook, California: Verdict Publications, 1980), 204-205, 239-250.

<sup>50</sup> Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, 213, 248.

<sup>51</sup> Green, *How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel*, 226. Green affirms that Melancthon saw a twofold character in justification – forgiveness of sins and divine acceptance, or, the imputation of righteousness – but it was "the dogmaticians of the seventeenth century" who transformed the twofold character into successive steps.

<sup>52</sup> Strehle, "Imputatio iustitiae," 207.

<sup>53</sup> Vickers, *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness*, 32-33. Vickers qualifies his conclusion with these words: "While it may not be eminently clear that Melancthon speaks of an imputation of positive righteousness in the explicit language of the later Reformers, his insistence on forgiveness *and* imputation—not simply forgiveness *as* imputation—lends itself to the later formulations." (p.33)

<sup>54</sup> Thomasius, *Natalia Sacra Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*, 16-17.

<sup>55</sup> Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, 210-213.

1586) affirmed.<sup>56</sup> Erik Herrmann also illuminates the discussion by showing the lack of precision in Luther and Melancthon's writings concerning the obedience of Christ, and highlighting that the issue unfolded during the debates with Georg Karg (1512-1576) has its roots in the emphasis upon the *extra nos* character of justification during the Osiandric controversy.<sup>57</sup> Assessments such as Kolb's and Herrmann's become more helpful in trying to understand the development of the doctrine in sixteenth century Lutheranism.

By analyzing some of Luther's works, we can apprehend that Luther's position on the topic of Christ's active obedience was anything but consistent and clear. Köstlin refers to Luther's *The Freedom of a Christian* (1520) as having "a dogmatic presentation of the *active obedience* of Christ in our stead."<sup>58</sup> Though this work refers to God (not specified as Christ) as fulfilling what the law prescribes, it does not explain fulfilling the law as distinct from doing satisfaction; though it talks about believers having righteousness in Christ, it describes righteousness as a solution for sin and not as a positive obedience distinct from the payment of the punishment which grounds

---

<sup>56</sup> Robert Kolb, "Human Performance and the Righteousness of Faith: Martin Chemnitz's Anti-Roman Polemic in Formula of Concord III," in *By Faith Alone: Essays on Justification in Honor of Gerhard O. Forde*, ed. Joseph A. Burgess and Marc Kolden (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 132-134; cf. idem, "Not Without the Satisfaction of God's Righteousness: The Atonement and the Generation Gap between Luther and His Students," in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte: Sonderband: Die Reformation in Deutschland und Europa, Interpretation und Debatten*, ed. Hans R. Guggisberg and Gottfried G. Krodel (Gütersloh: Verlagshaus, 1993), 136-156.

<sup>57</sup> Erik Herrmann, "The Righteousness of God and the Obedience of Christ: Revisiting the Theology of Luther and His Disciples," unpublished paper (cited with permission). Herrmann's thesis concurs with Martin Chemnitz' 1561 reflection on what was the core of the controversy with Osiander. Chemnitz writes: "The question was about what is—what the heart is of—the righteousness for the sake of which we are justified in God's sight to eternal life and are liberated from death. Is it the imputation of Christ's obedience, or is it the renewal effected by the Holy Spirit? This most important issue is what the battle was all about." Martin Chemnitz, "Judgment on Certain Controversies concerning Certain Articles of the Augsburg Confession Which Have Recently Arisen and Caused Controversy," trans. J. A. O. Preus and Robert Kolb, in *Sources and Contexts of The Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 212.

<sup>58</sup> Köstlin, *The Theology of Luther in its Historical Development and Inner Harmony*, 2:392.

forgiveness of sins; at times, Luther connects merits only with Christ's suffering and resurrection.<sup>59</sup> Seeberg refers to Luther's sermon on the *Two Kinds of Righteousness* (1519), but it does not say anything about the doctrine of active obedience beyond the notion that the alien righteousness from Christ accomplished more than the original righteousness of Adam would have accomplished. Seeberg also points to Luther's *Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses* (1518) which indicate that all the merits of Christ are ours and later that all the righteousness of Christ become ours, but there is no explanation of what those merits are or what that righteousness is.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, none of these works allow one to conclude that Luther meant to exclude Christ's life of righteousness as one of the benefits we had in him. Luther's understanding of our union with Christ encompassed a multitude of blessings for believers as part of one package, but this package did not have the later distinctions between active and passive righteousness.

The only understanding that Luther had of active righteousness (*justitia activa*) as distinct from passive righteousness (*justitia passiva*) was in reference to our participation in the whole process of justification. In other words, our righteousness is merely passive, that is, received.<sup>61</sup> In his preface to the 1535 *Commentary on Galatians*, Luther writes:

---

<sup>59</sup> LW 31:347-358; WA 7:52-59.

<sup>60</sup> LW 31:190; WA 1:593.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Köstlin, *The Theology of Luther in its Historical Development and Inner Harmony*, 2:440; Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 228; Kolb, "Human Performance and the Righteousness of Faith," 130; idem, "Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness," in *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church*, ed. Timothy J. Wengert (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 38-55. The idea of *iustitia activa* is related to morals and works, which in classic protestant theology would normally be classified as under the topic of sanctification, since *iustitia passiva* must precede *iustitia activa*. The latter is yet studied in connection with the doctrine of justification when the justification of our works in Christ is considered the second part of a 'double justification'. Cf. Anthony N. S. Lane, "The Role of Scripture in Calvin's Doctrine of Justification," in *John Calvin and the Interpretation of Scripture*, Calvin Studies XI (Grand Rapids: CRC Product Services, 2006), 375-378; R. Scott Clark, "The Benefits of Christ:

the righteousness of faith, which God imputes to us through Christ without works, is neither political nor ceremonial nor legal nor work-righteousness but is quite the opposite; it is a merely passive righteousness, while all the others, listed above, are active... Without any merit or work of our own, we must first be justified by Christian righteousness, which has nothing to do with the righteousness of the Law or with earthly and active righteousness.<sup>62</sup>

Notice that “active righteousness” for Luther has a negative connotation because he is only focusing on sinners attempting to be justified by their actions. His distinction between “the active righteousness of the Law and the passive righteousness of Christ”<sup>63</sup> shows that he only discusses our participation in justification and does not address the redemptive merits of Christ’s life.

Luther’s comments on one of the key texts for understanding the active obedience of Christ, Galatians 4:4-5, confirms the evaluation above. In the first *Lectures on Galatians* (1519), Luther explains that Christ being under the law means that “He was made sin and a sinner under the Law, not by doing things contrary to the Law, as we do, but by innocently assuming on our behalf the penalties for sin that were decreed by the Law.”<sup>64</sup> The positive obedience to the law does not come up in the 1535 *Lectures on Galatians* either, where Luther explains that to be born under the law meant that Christ “did not perform one or another work of the Law or submit to it only in a political way, but that he suffered all the tyranny of the Law. For the Law exercised its full function over Christ; it frightened Him so horribly that He experienced greater anguish than any

---

Double Justification in Protestant Theology before the Westminster Assembly,” in *The Faith Once Delivered: Essays in Honor of Dr. Wayne R. Spear*, ed. Anthony T. Selvaggio (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 107-134.

<sup>62</sup> LW 26:4-5, 8; WA 40:41, 46.

<sup>63</sup> LW 26:9; WA 40:48.

<sup>64</sup> LW 27:288; WA 2:534.

man ever experienced.”<sup>65</sup> In both expositions, Christ being under the law for Luther meant being under the curse and condemnation of the law. The *Church-Postil* sermon on Galatians 4:1-7, quoted by Ritschl, progresses towards a mature understanding of active obedience when he talks about Christ being under the law in a twofold manner: in the matter of works (ceremonial and moral) and in the matter of punishment. The sermon also describes Christ as doubly innocent, for suffering the penalty he was under no obligation to suffer and for observing the law willingly, without obligation.<sup>66</sup> This sets Luther apart from the Anselmic understanding of Christ’s obligation to observe the law, but it still lacks explicit statements of Christ freeing us from both obligations to the law: observance for justification and punishment.

Melanchthon’s works, though more systematic and coherent than Luther’s, are also less than clear with regards to Christ’s active obedience. The *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (1531) brings pairs of benefits of Christ’s work such as “forgiveness of sins and reconciliation,” “the free forgiveness of sins and the righteousness of faith,” “forgiveness of sins and justification,” “of the free forgiveness of sins and of the righteousness of Christ,” proving an inconsistency of language and a lack of definition.<sup>67</sup> In his 1540 *Commentary on Romans*, there is no sense of establishing the law through Christ’s positive obedience in his comments on Romans 3:31.<sup>68</sup> On Romans

---

<sup>65</sup> *LW* 26:372; *WA* 40:567.

<sup>66</sup> John Nicholas Lenker ed. and trans., *Sermons of Martin Luther*, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983), 255-256.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, 107-132.

<sup>68</sup> Philip Melanchthon, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 104-105; *Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. 15, ed. Carolus Gottlieb Bretschneider (Halis Saxonum: C. A. Schwetschke et filium, 1848), 593-594. Hereafter cited as *CR*.

5:15, he appears to make a difference between forgiveness of sins and imputed righteousness, for he mentions other benefits of the Gospel that could not be taken as synonyms or restatements of the same thing: “the forgiveness of sins, the imputation of righteousness, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and eternal life.”<sup>69</sup> While commenting Romans 5:17-21, Melancthon gives the impression of holding to a twofold righteousness in justification when he defines grace as “remission of sins and imputation of righteousness,” but two lines down he says that God’s will was for Christ to become the sacrificial victim for us, and there is no mention of his life of obedience.<sup>70</sup>

In the 1543 *Loci Communes*, Melancthon restates “three Gospel blessings” – sins remitted, pronounced righteousness, made heirs of eternal life – but these blessings are not provided through a twofold obedience of Christ, but supplied by the “sacrifice” of God’s Son; on top of that, he believes the Gospel “does not make its promises on the condition that the Law be fulfilled,” meaning ‘fulfilled by us’, thus not connecting the Gospel with Christ’s fulfillment of the law.<sup>71</sup> He again defines grace as “the free remission of sins and the imputation of righteousness,”<sup>72</sup> but remission of sins receives more attention throughout his locus on grace and justification. In the 1555 *Loci*

---

<sup>69</sup> Melancthon, *Commentary on Romans*, 137; CR 15:628.

<sup>70</sup> Melancthon, *Commentary on Romans*, 140; CR 15:630-631.

<sup>71</sup> Philip Melancthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 81-82; CR 21:732-734. Not even the “three Gospel blessings” is reiterated consistently, since later he writes that justification “means the remission of sins, reconciliation, *or* the acceptance of a person unto eternal life” (p. 86, my emphasis). The Latin text is as follows: “Iustificatio significat remissionem peccatorum et reconciliationem seu acceptationem personae ad vitam aeternam.” [CR 21:742]. If *et* is taken as a comma, as did the English translator, then Melancthon is citing three synonymous terms rather than parts of the whole. If *et* is taken as an “and,” then Melancthon would be citing two parts of justification, the third expression being a synonym of reconciliation. Whichever of the two, Melancthon still shows inconsistent terminology.

<sup>72</sup> Melancthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, 91; CR 21:752.

*Communes*, Melanchthon adds that passages which speak of being justified by Christ's blood include "the entire obedience and merit of the Lord Christ," and later he explains that "the Mediator's entire obedience, from his Incarnation until the Resurrection, is the true justification which is pleasing to God, and is the merit for us."<sup>73</sup> This makes it entirely clear that Melanchthon wasn't against the imputation of Christ's active obedience as understood by later Protestant controversies, but it does not show the concern of elaborating a twofold righteousness in Christ to satisfy and merit according to the twofold demand of the law. Melanchthon is demonstrating merit to the life of Christ, but so were the medieval scholastics. Due to the Osiandrian controversy, Melanchthon actually presents himself as very hesitant to speak of "two or more parts of justification."<sup>74</sup> The emphasis of first and second generation Lutherans is on the unity of justification without distinctions, different from Protestant Orthodoxy that speaks of unity with distinctions.

The issue of imputation of Christ's active obedience came to the fore among the Lutherans in the controversy with Georg Karg, also known as Parsimonius.<sup>75</sup> A controversy started when he published a set of theses on justification in 1563, where he denied that the active obedience of Christ pertained to the meritorious cause of our justification. The law demanded either obedience or punishment, not both; therefore,

---

<sup>73</sup> Philip Melanchthon, *Melanchthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes 1555*, trans. Clyde L. Manschreck (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 156, 161.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. F. Bente, *Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 158; Philip Melanchthon, "Epistolarum Librum XII (1555), no. 5847" in *CR* 8:561.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Johann Döllinger, *Die Reformation: Ihre innere Entwicklung und ihre Wirkungen im Umfange des Lutherischen Bekenntnisses* (Regensburg: Georg Joseph Manz, 1848), 3:556-574, appendix p. 15-63; Georg Wilke, *Georg Karg (Parsimonius), sein Katechismus und sein doppelter Lehrstreit*, University of Erlangen dissertation (Scheinfeld: Max Ille, 1904).

Christ endured punishment for us, but he had obeyed for himself in order to offer God an immaculate sacrifice.<sup>76</sup> In 1567, he writes a few theses that he considers “all false and impious and even with blasphemy:” that God’s law obliges us both to obedience and to punishment for unless we owed both. Christ would not have fulfilled both for us; that Christ supplied a single obedience made of two parts, obedience to the law and solution to the penalty; that the righteousness of faith is not so much remission of sins with gratuitous acceptance, but the holiness and righteousness of Christ imputed to us; that Christians are not largely obliged to obedience just like they are not liable to the curse, etc.<sup>77</sup> Karg was opposed by Victorin Strigel (1524-1569),<sup>78</sup> Peter Ketzmann (1521-1570)<sup>79</sup> and Tileman Hesshusius (1527-1588) among others. In 1570, in conversation with Wittenberg theologians he recanted from his views.

Though not a major controversy among Lutherans as were some other ones, this dispute in the 1560s provided the atmosphere for development of the understanding of Christ’s obedience and his relationship to the law as our representative. This is noticeable in Martin Chemnitz’ *Examination of the Council of Trent*, written between 1566 and

---

<sup>76</sup> Thomasius, *Sacra Pentecostalia Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*, 17-18.

<sup>77</sup> “I. Lege Dei nos obligari et ad obedientiam et ad poenam. Nisi enim utrumque deberemus, Christus utrumque pro nobis non praestitisset... II. Christum praestitisse unicam obedientiam, cujus duae sunt partes: conformitas cum lege seu obedientia juxta legem, et solutio poenae. III. Justitiam fieri non esse tantum remissionem peccatorum cum acceptatione gratuita, sed etiam justitiae Christi imputationem, ita, ut simus justi imputata nobis illius sanctitate et justitia... V. Christianos non obligari amplius ad obedientiam, sicut neque maledictioni sunt obnoxii,” in Döllinger, *Die Reformation* vol. 3, 46-47 (appendix).

<sup>78</sup> Cf. K. Schornbaum, “Aus dem Briefwechsel G. Kargs,” in *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 16 (1919):79-83.

<sup>79</sup> For Ketzmann’s view on “justification by the whole obedience of the son of God, both by doing as well as by suffering” [*justificatione per integram obedientiam filii Dei, tam agendo quam patiendo*], cf. Döllinger, *Die Reformation*, 3:49-51, 61-63 (appendix).

1573.<sup>80</sup> Chemnitz understands that God's law is eternal and unchangeable. "For sins this norm requires the fullest satisfaction, and for righteousness it requires the most complete and pure fulfillment of the Law." But since we cannot render such a satisfaction and have such a righteousness in this life, God provides a way in which the Mediator saves us without dissolving the law. The Gospel reveals that "since the human race could not make satisfaction to the Law and the Law could in no way be dissolved and destroyed, God made a transfer of the Law to another person (a matter which belongs to the article of justification) who should fulfill the Law both by satisfaction and obedience for the whole human race."<sup>81</sup> If when it came to justification and the Law, Luther and Melancthon would emphasize how human performance of the sinner had nothing to do with saving righteousness, Martin Chemnitz – without departing from the tradition – advanced Lutheran understanding of justification by teaching that "the human performance of fulfilling the demands of the law, in the final analysis, did effect salvation."<sup>82</sup> Chemnitz connected Christ's human performance to the whole process.

Among the Lutherans, the issue was finalized when the *Formula of Concord* addressed it in III.14, 15:

Therefore the righteousness which by grace is reckoned to faith or to the believers is the obedience, the passion, and the resurrection of Christ when he satisfied the

---

<sup>80</sup> This dating is provided by J. A. O. Preus, *The Second Martin: The Life and Theology of Martin Chemnitz* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994), 123-126, 349.

<sup>81</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent* part I, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 498-499. "Therefore there was a transference of the Law, Heb. 7:12, to the Mediator, that is, to the Son of God. It took place in this way: He was 'made under the Law' [Gal. 4:4] and satisfied the Law for us, in two special ways, namely by removing the punishments for the sins of the whole world and by giving perfect obedience to the Law, that there might be true and perfect righteousness according to the norm of the divine will, by which the grace and mercy of God would justify believers, that is, receive them unto eternal life." Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 2:550.

<sup>82</sup> Kolb, "Human Performance and the Righteousness of Faith," 132-133.

law for us and paid for our sin. Since Christ is not only man, but God and man in one undivided person, he was as little under the law—since he is the Lord of the law—as he was obligated to suffer and die for his person. Therefore his obedience consists not only in his suffering and dying, but also in his spontaneous subjection to the law in our stead and his keeping of the law in so perfect a fashion that, reckoning it to us as righteousness, God forgives us our sins, accounts us holy and righteous, and saves us forever on account of this entire obedience which, by doing and suffering, in life and in death, Christ rendered for us to his heavenly Father.<sup>83</sup>

Both in Chemnitz as well as in the *Formula of Concord*, the level of clarity on the imputation of Christ's active obedience is much higher than in the writings of Luther and Melanchthon. Though it cannot be said that Luther and Melanchthon were against such a doctrine, its development shows the necessity of understanding them as forerunners at the most, and not as obvious stalwarts of the active obedience side of the debate. Such a view is anachronistic and fails to observe the gradual construction of the locus.

### 3.3. Representatives of the Reformed Tradition in Connection with Piscator

In the previous chapter, just a small portion of the writings by Calvin, Ursinus and Olevianus were presented in order to understand some of the arguments by secondary sources on these Reformers. This section intends to be more thorough in the presentation of their thought on imputation of Christ's active obedience, including the thought of Beza. By going beyond the evidence presented by the debaters and interpreters, whether early or contemporary, this segment hopes to demonstrate a more balanced view of each of these four Reformed theologians and thus provide the context for better understanding any possible links between Johannes Piscator and his predecessors.

The focus of this section is on individual figures rather than on confessions and catechisms for at least two reasons. First, individual theologians were appealed to more

---

<sup>83</sup> Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, 541.

often than confessions during seventeenth-century debates over active obedience. While confessional documents had authoritative status, they were succinct in their theological statements and functioned as broad proclamations of the Protestant faith prior to any controversy over active obedience. They do not settle the issue because their concise language is not accompanied by explanatory qualifications.<sup>84</sup> Secondly, confessions and catechisms were usually the voice of many pastors and teachers, and not representative of the views of individual theologians. Thus, they did not function easily as interpretative tools in a tradition that was beginning to split on the issue of active obedience. The Heidelberg Catechism, for example, was interpreted differently by the opposing parties on important questions that touched on the imputation of righteousness (Q/A 36, 60), as will be noted in chapter 6. The Synod of Dort modified article 22 of the Belgic Confession on the issue of active obedience, as was shown in chapter 1, because most delegates thought the original wording was not entirely clear on the issue.

### 3.3.a. John Calvin

Previously, it was demonstrated how interpreters diverge as to the significance of Calvin's statements regarding remission of sins being the whole of justification. Those who say these were made in the context of the controversy with the Roman Catholics are more sensitive to mid-sixteenth century polemics than those who believe that they mean Calvin was against the imputation of Christ's active obedience. In a section from the

---

<sup>84</sup> *The Second Helvetic Confession* (1566), for example, writes that "by his passion and death and everything which he did and endured for our sake by his coming in the flesh [omnibusque adeo quae a suo in carne adventu nostra causa fecit et pertulit], our Lord reconciled all the faithful to the heavenly Father" (XI.15). Though it could be argued that such language goes against Piscator's position, Piscator himself always argued that Christ's life was "for our sake," only denying it that it was "in our place." Besides, the confession attributes imputed righteousness only to "Christ's suffering and resurrection" (XV.3). Arthur C. Cochrane, *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century* (Louisville/London: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2003), 246, 256, my emphasis.

*Institutes* quoted by John Goodwin, Calvin affirms “the righteousness of faith... consists solely in the forgiveness of sins.” Later in this section, he explains what he means.

We add that this is done through forgiveness of sins; for if those whom the Lord has reconciled to himself be judged by works, they will indeed still be found sinners, though they ought, nevertheless, to be freed and cleansed from sin. It is obvious, therefore, that those whom God embraces are made righteous solely by the fact that they are purified when their spots are washed away by forgiveness of sins.<sup>85</sup>

Notice that Calvin is opposing the righteousness of works. That is the reason why justification consists solely in the forgiveness of sins. In another section not quoted by Goodwin, where Calvin is commenting on Romans 4:7, he writes:

Surely, Paul does not make the prophet bear witness to the doctrine that pardon of sins is part of righteousness, or merely a concomitant toward the justifying of man; on the contrary, he includes the whole of righteousness in free remission, declaring that man blessed whose sins are covered, whose iniquities God has forgiven, and whose transgressions God does not charge to his account. Thence, he judges and reckons his happiness because in this way he is righteous, not intrinsically but by imputation.<sup>86</sup>

Here, Calvin is defending remission of sins as the whole of righteousness against the idea that justification is also made of intrinsic righteousness. He is not opposing positive righteousness.<sup>87</sup>

As for a foundational doctrine in connection with the imputation of Christ’s active obedience, i.e. the stability of the law, Calvin has some seminal reflections on the continuity between law and gospel. He writes that “the gospel did not so supplant the

---

<sup>85</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xi.21; CO 2:551.

<sup>86</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xi.11; CO 2:542.

<sup>87</sup> Calvin’s *Commentary on Romans*, on 4:6, substantiates this idea: “Away, then, with those who teach us to redeem pardon for our sins by satisfactions; for Paul borrows an argument from this pardon to prove the gratuitous gift of righteousness... Thus fully refuted also is the romance of those who dream, that the righteousness of faith is but initial, and that the faithful afterwards retain by works the possession of that righteousness which they had first attained by no merits.” Calvin, *Comm. on Romans*, 160-161; CO 49:72.

entire law as to bring forward a different way of salvation. Rather, it confirmed and satisfied whatever the law had promised, and gave substance to the shadows.”<sup>88</sup> Calvin also says that we cannot deny that the reward of eternal life awaits complete obedience, but since observance of the law is found in none of us, God does not reject our imperfect obedience, but “supplying what is lacking to complete it, he causes us to receive the benefit of the promises of the law as if we had fulfilled their condition.”<sup>89</sup> In his *Commentary on Leviticus 18:5*, Calvin reaffirms that the promise of eternal life attached to the law is still in force, though he repeats the Scriptural emphasis that sin in us makes the promise impossible to attain; but the authority of the law gives itself support until our days, with promises and threats.<sup>90</sup> His *Commentary on Romans 3:31*, which has been presented in the previous chapter, also appears to address the obedience of Christ’s life.

On the other hand, where one would think Calvin would come up clearly on the side of active obedience imputed, his commentaries on crucial passages lack clarity. While his comments on Romans 5:19 might give the impression that he is obviously talking about active obedience, in verse 18 he ties Christ’s righteousness to sacrifice. In his comments on Romans 8:3-4, he connects fulfillment of the law with forgiveness only, and the obedience and satisfaction of the law seem tied merely to his crucifixion. His remarks on 2 Corinthians 5:21 obviously mention the righteousness of Christ without giving any hints to conclude that he was referring to what was later called Christ’s active obedience. These three passages are among the most important for later discussions of the

---

<sup>88</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, II.ix.4; *CO* 2:312.

<sup>89</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, II.vii.3-4; *CO* 2:255.

<sup>90</sup> Calvin writes that “when he [Paul] teaches that righteousness is to be sought for in the grace of Christ by faith, (Rom. 10:4) proves his statement by this argument, that none is justified who has not fulfilled what the Law commands.” John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses*, trans. Charles William Bingham (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), 204; *CO* 25:7.

doctrine of active obedience, and Calvin does not have his thought structured on the issue; Calvin's comments on other important passages, mentioned in the previous chapter (1 Corinthians 1:30; Galatians 4:4-5), are also not conclusive of his thought.

His sermons also lack consistency, and they demonstrate there is very little progress in Calvin on this issue. His sermon on Deuteronomy 6:20-25, preached in July of 1555, raises the question 'what good does it do for God to promise to accept us as righteous if we cannot fulfill the law perfectly?' And his answer is: "there is a refuge giuen vs which is to resort to the forgiuenesse of our sinnes, which is graunted vs in our Lorde Iesus Christ." Calvin continues saying that we are

iustified by vertue of the obedience which hee yielded to God his father: then GOD not onely receiueth vs to mercy, and couereth vs with the perfection that is in our Lorde Iesus Christ, as with a cloake, to the intent wee shoulde obtaine saluation: but also taketh our workes in good worth... The reason [God accepts our works] is, because Iesus Christ supplyeth our default. Then doth not our righteousness consist in the worthynesse of our owne workes: but inasmuch as they bee sanctified in the name of Gods son, & forasmuch as we be his members... we be admitted for righteous, because of the obedience which hee yielded vnto God. And that obedience is communicate vnto vs, as if it were our owne.<sup>91</sup>

Though Calvin doesn't explain in what the obedience consists, covering us with Christ's perfection seems to imply Christ's obedience to the points of the law – which suits the context where Calvin is talking about our failure to obey all points of the law.

His sermons on Galatians however, preached between November of 1557 and May of 1558, point to another direction. On Galatians 2:15-16, Calvin binds justification and Christ's obedience merely to his payment for sin:

the justification spoken of in the Scriptures refers to God covering our sins (as I have been saying) and, by virtue of his sufferings and death, cancelling them in

---

<sup>91</sup> Calvin, *The Sermons of M. Iohn Calvin upon the Fifth Booke of Moses called Deuteronomie*, 301; CO 26:493-494.

and through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ... Thus, we, being joined and united to his person and to his body, are accounted righteous, because his obedience was so perfect that it was sufficient to cleanse and remove our sins. We have now dealt with the meaning of the term 'justification'.<sup>92</sup>

There is no concept of active obedience in this sermon, for Christ's obedience is always tied to his suffering and death: "We must accept that he offered himself for us in order to redeem us from the curse under which we lived, and that he has washed us in his blood. By his obedience, he has cancelled all our transgressions so that we can be assured that God accepts and receives us as his children. This is how we can understand this passage."<sup>93</sup> His sermon on Galatians 3:11-12 also ties the imputed obedience of Christ to the abolition of offences and iniquities.<sup>94</sup>

One last example from Calvin's sermons, the one on Genesis 15:4-6,<sup>95</sup> shows how Calvin can in a single sermon lead the reader to think that he sees no active obedience in Christ's redeeming work and, at other times, he seems to be a genuine precursor of such a teaching. Calvin explains the scriptural phrase 'that faith is imputed for righteousness' to mean "that God putteth it into an allowance for us, so that thereby our sins are not imputed unto us: for the one cannot be understood without the other: and therefore the imputing of righteousness, is the cause why our sins are no more imputed unto us to judge and condemn us. For the imputing of righteousness, is in sum, mere pardon and

---

<sup>92</sup> John Calvin, *Sermons on Galatians*, trans. Kathy Childress (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1997), 179-180; CO 50:421-422.

<sup>93</sup> Calvin, *Sermons on Galatians*, 181-182; CO 50:423.

<sup>94</sup> Calvin, *Sermons on Galatians*, 272; CO 50:500-501.

<sup>95</sup> This is the first of a series of four sermons on justification based on Genesis 15:4-7. These sermons represent the mature thought of Calvin since his series on Genesis – composed of one hundred sermons – was preached after the publication of all his major theological works (between September 1559 to February 1561). Cf. Richard A. Muller, "Foreword," in John Calvin, *Sermons on Melchizedek & Abraham: Justification, Faith & Obedience*, trans. Thomas Stocker (Willow Street, PA: Old Paths Publications, 2000; originally published in 1592), viii-xxv.

absolution.”<sup>96</sup> J. V. Fesko believes that this quotation shows that Calvin believed in two elements of justification: remission of sins and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness.<sup>97</sup> However, the last sentence has that imputation of righteousness “is mere” pardon and absolution (the original French has: “vaut autant que absolution,” which means ‘is worth as much as absolution’ or, ‘is equal to absolution’) which gives the impression that he is making imputation of righteousness and pardoning of sins to be the same or, at least, one to be the payment for the other; in either case, this would not show a twofold justice, as Fesko claims, nor point to the righteous life of Christ, but his death. On the other hand, a few lines down Calvin says that God shows favor to us by accepting us “as if we had absolutely accomplished the law. And why is that? Forsooth, because Jesus Christ is righteous, and his perfect righteousness is imputed and allowed unto us.”<sup>98</sup> This line of thought seems to be a genuine precursor of the understanding of Christ’s active obedience being imputed.

### 3.3.b. Theodore Beza

Beza is a lot more clear on the issue of Christ’s positive righteousness being imputed than Calvin is. Apparently, he seems to innovate – in continuity with the medieval emphasis on Christ meriting from his conception – in what constitutes the righteousness of Christ imputed unto us. But even Beza may not have been totally consistent, particularly in regards to how many “parts” there are in justification.

---

<sup>96</sup> Calvin, *Sermons on Melchizedek & Abraham*, 104; CO 23:692.

<sup>97</sup> Fesko, “Calvin on Justification and Recent Misinterpretations of His View,” 109.

<sup>98</sup> Calvin, *Sermons on Melchizedek & Abraham*, 105; CO 23:692.

In the first edition of his Annotations (1556), which should not be confused with the *Annotationes minores*,<sup>99</sup> he explains the word “righteousness” (*dikaiosin*) in Romans 5:18 as a double righteousness:

For by the remission of sins – that is, the satisfaction of Christ imputed – we are said to be justified, that is, the payment by means of that penalty so that we are acquitted guiltless; however, by the imputed obedience of Christ we are also declared righteous, in order that from that very formula of the Law we may ask for eternal life, as we take hold of Christ by faith, [since] he fulfilled all righteousness for us.<sup>100</sup>

The ‘formula of the Law’ Beza talks about is the promise of life pronounced by the law: “Do this and you will live” (Lev. 18:5; Luke 10:28; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12). Beza is saying that Christ fulfilled the whole law in our behalf, and when such obedience is imputed we are declared righteous. Notice that Beza is not saying that the imputation of one of these two things is enough for one to be declared righteous, but that Scripture may use one of them to say that through it we are declared righteous. In his comments on Romans 8:3-4, Beza not only shows these two aspects to be parts of the whole of righteousness, but he adds a third element to it. On verse 3 he shows the idea of Christ’s holy conception taking care of our problem of original sin. Christ’s holy nature, free of sin, with which he was

---

<sup>99</sup> The *Annotationes minores* had short notes alongside the Greek text of the New Testament. On the other hand, the 1556 edition mentioned above has a different format, with longer notes below the text, and thus could be called the first edition of the *Annotationes maiores*, though it is still significantly shorter than, for example, the 1594 edition of the *Annotationes maiores*. The 1642 Cambridge edition includes both the shorter and the longer annotations.

<sup>100</sup> “Nam peccatorum remissione. i. imputata Christi satisfactione, dicimur iustificari. id est persoluta per illum poena vt insontes absolui: obedientia verò Christi imputata etiam iusti declaramur, vt ex ipsa quoque Legis formula vitam aeternam petere possimus, quum Christus quem fide possidemus, omnem iustitiam nobis impleuerit.” Theodore Beza, *Novum D.N. Iesu Christi Testamentum: Latine Iam Olim a Veteri Interprete, Nunc Denuo a Theodoro Beza Versum; Cum Eiusdem Annotationibus, in Quibus Ratio Interpretationis Redditur* (Geneva: Oliva Roberti Stephani, 1556), 184r (the pagination erroneously renders 179).

born is looked upon as the substitute for our tainted nature.<sup>101</sup> On Romans 8:4 he writes numerically of it as the third element:

For as to the remission of sins and the fulfillment of righteousness is added even this third one, that is the integrity of our nature (by which we obtain all graces through Christ apprehended by faith) in order that in all appearances Satan may drive himself back, we are considered righteous before God, even out of that absolute formula of the Law, on account of which the Apostle said above in chapter 3 verse 31, that the law is not overturned but established.<sup>102</sup>

Beza sees the three parts of Christ's imputed righteousness not only freeing us from the formula of the Law, but also shunning the accuser Satan.

The accusations of Satan towards our consciences is the context of the threefold righteousness being thoroughly explained in Beza's *Confession de la Foy Chrestienne* (1559). In the *Confession* Beza presents three temptations, the first one being whether we find in Jesus Christ all that is necessary for salvation.<sup>103</sup> This first temptation has three assaults, the first one grounded upon the multitude of our sins before the most holy God (III.10). Beza presents the remedy for this first assault:

as much as god is righteous and will not be payde double, and Jesus Christe god and man hath by one infinite obedience made satisfaction to the infinite magistye of God, it folowethe that my iniquites can no more fraye nor trouble me, my accountes and dettes being assuredly rased and wyped out by the precious blood

---

<sup>101</sup> "Ego verò non vere ar dicere Christum assumpsisse carnem, id est naturā peccato obnoxiam: sed quam ab ipso cōceptionis momento sanctificarit, quum eam idcirco sibi adaptaret vt peccatum in ea destrueret." (p. 188r) "Nā imputata nobis Christi sanctificatione, peccatum pro nihilo habetur, quanuis supersint eius reliquiae in nobis... non tamen quatenus est in nobis inchoata sanctificatio (alia enim afferenda est quum de iudicio Dei agitur) sed quatenus in Christo perfecta nobis, qui membra illius sumus, per fidem imputatur: sicut & peccatorum remissio & Legis impletio" *Novum D.N. Iesu Christi Testamentum* (1556), 189r. In the end, Beza makes clear his threefold righteousness imputed to the Christian when he says that "in the same way" (*sicut*), i.e. imputed by faith, is both the remission of sins and the fulfillment of the law.

<sup>102</sup> "Nam quum ad peccatorum remissionem & impletionem iustitiae, accessit etiam hoc tertium, id est naturae nostrae integritas (quae omnia gratis consequimur per Christum fide apprehensum) vt in omnes facies se conuertat satan, iusti sumus coram Deo, etiam ex illa absolutissima Legis formula, quamobrem etiam dixit Apostolus suprā 3.d.31, se Legem non euertere sed stabilire." *Novum D.N. Iesu Christi Testamentum* (1556), 189r.

<sup>103</sup> The second temptation is whether we have faith or not, and the third is whether we are saved or not. Cf. Theodore de Beze, *Confession de la foy chrestienne* (Geneva: Conrad Badius, 1559), III.13, 20.

of Jesus Christ which was made accursed for me, dyinge righteous for the unrighteous.<sup>104</sup>

The second assault of the first temptation is grounded upon our being unfurnished of the righteousness which God requires of us (III.11). Satan may claim that

it is not sufficient to haue liued without synne, or to haue satisfied for our sinnes, but is required furthermore that man should fulfyll the hole lawe, that is to saye, that he hath loued god perfectly and his neighbour as himself... Now what can all the righteousness of men help us against this assault? For here is spoken a perfect obedience according to the law whiche was neuer founde but in Jesus Christ only. Let us learne here again to appropriate to us by faith an other treasure and benefite of Jesus Christ, that is to say his righteousness... this perfect righteousness, which is imputed to us by faith as though it were properly our own, [so] we may be made acceptable before god as brethren and coheyers with Jesus Christ.<sup>105</sup>

The third assault is grounded upon our natural corruption, our original sin (III.12). The remedy points to the holy nature with which Christ was conceived:

for as muche as by faith we be united, incorporated, rooted, and grafyd, in Jesus Christ, by whom our nature hath bene from the first moment of his conception more fullye restored and saintified, and made more pure, then euer it was created in Adam forasmuch as Adam was made but accordinge to the Image of god, and Jesus Christ is very god, who hath taken upon him our fleshe conceyued by the vertue of the holy ghost, this sanctification of Jesus Christ is imputed to us as our owne.<sup>106</sup>

Based on the possible link established by Pareus,<sup>107</sup> and modern scholarship suggesting

Beza's *Confession* as one of the models for the *Heidelberg Catechism*,<sup>108</sup> we can suppose

---

<sup>104</sup> I am quoting the first English translation which is *A Briefe and Pithie Summe of the Christian Faith Made in Forme of a Confession*, trans. R. F. (London: Rouland Hall, 1563), 21v.

<sup>105</sup> Beza, *A briefe and pithie summe of the christian faith*, 22r-v.

<sup>106</sup> Beza, *A briefe and pithie summe of the christian faith*, 23v.

<sup>107</sup> Pareus says that the threefold righteousness of Q/A 60 and 61 of Heidelberg Catechism – “perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ” – could possibly have been taken out of Beza's *Confession* “whose it is properly knowne to be.” Cf. Pareus, “Concerning Christs active and passive justice,” 804.

<sup>108</sup> Walter Hollweg, “Die Beiden Konfessionen Theodor von Bezas: Zwei bisher unbeachtete Quellen zum Heidelberger Katechismus,” in *Neue Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Lehre des Heidelberger Katechismus* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), 86-123.

that this pastoral concern of the imputed threefold righteousness of Christ brought up by Beza is the context for the justification language of Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 60 and 61.<sup>109</sup>

Beza's book of questions and answers, *Quaestiones et responsiones* (1570 and 1576),<sup>110</sup> does not divide the righteousness of Christ imputed to Christians the same way, though his teaching here does not contradict his earlier pronouncements. Concerning the benefits we have in Christ he says that

some things are Christes owne in such wise as they cleave alwayes to himself alone, and become not oures but by imputation: of whiche sorte bee the thinges that he hath performed for our sakes, namely that by becoming subiect to the law, he fulfilled all rightuousnesse [sic], and suffered the punishments dewe for our sinnes: both whiche thinges the Apostle compriseth under the name of obedience. And some thinges doe so rest in Christe: as yet notwithstanding the force and operation of them is spred intoo us: of which sort is the singular purenesse of the manhood in Christ, garnished with all gifts without measure, which purenesse not onely becometh ours by imputation, but also is the headspring and originall of our new birth, and of all the spirituall gyftes that accompany the same.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>109</sup> In footnote 14 of Lyle Bierma's scholia ["How should Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 60 be translated?" *Calvin Theological Journal* 26, no. 1 (Apr 1991): 125-133], he draws attention to an interesting parallel in Q. 60 between the burden of conscience and subjective justification. However, it is my understanding that the parallel needs to be completed with Beza's threefold righteousness as the objective justification in the answer. The complete parallel would thus look like this:

CONSCIENCE	OBJECTIVE JUSTIFICATION	SUBJECTIVE JUSTIFICATION
I have grievously sinned against all God's commandments (transgressions)	Perfect satisfaction (passion and cross)	It is as if I had never sinned
I have never kept any of them (lack of righteousness)	Righteousness (active obedience)	It is as if I had been as perfectly obedient as Christ was
I am still inclined to all evil (original sin)	Holiness (sinless conception)	It is as if I had never been a sinner

<sup>110</sup> The first part, published in 1570, deals with topics such as justification, sanctification, predestination and providence. The second part, published in 1576, discourses on the sacraments. Cf. Olivier Fatio, "Note sur les *Quaestiones et Responsiones* de Bèze" in *Théodore de Bèze (1519-1605)*, Actes du Colloque de Genève (septembre 2005) publiés par l'Institut d'histoire de la Réformation, ed. Irena Backus (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2007), 177-183. The English translation of the first part is entitled *A booke of Christian Questions and answers* (1572) while the translation of the second part is entitled *The other parte of Christian questions and answeares which is concerning the sacraments* (1580).

<sup>111</sup> Theodore Beza, *A booke of Christian Questions and answers*, trans. Arthur Golding (London: William How, 1572), 37r-v.

Beza divides the benefits into those which we receive only by imputation (Christ's active and passive righteousness), and that which we receive by imputation and impartation ("the singular purenesse of the manhood in Christ"). So when he uses 1 Corinthians 1:30 to discourse on the things that we attain in Christ, what the text calls "justification" (or "righteousness") encompasses two parts, satisfaction for sins and full performance of all righteousness of the law,<sup>112</sup> and what the text calls "sanctification" involves the cleansing of our corrupt nature, which starts with imputation of Christ's perfect holy nature but its force and efficacy flows into us by the work of the Spirit.<sup>113</sup> If anybody raises the objection that the sanctification operated by the Spirit in us makes the imputed sanctification useless, Beza responds that the imparted sanctification has only begun in us and that in order for us to be acceptable before God "there had neede to steppe in a farre other holinesse, namely the same whyche is moste full and perfecte in Christe: at the sight of whom, our most gracious father, (who notwithstandinge is a continuall enemy to al unclennesse and filthynesse,) may holde himself appeased".<sup>114</sup> Eventually Beza unites the three parts of righteousness, but not formally.<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Beza, *A booke of Christian Questions and answers*, 40v-43r.

<sup>113</sup> Beza, *A booke of Christian Questions and answers*, 43v-45r.

<sup>114</sup> Beza, *A booke of Christian Questions and answers*, 45v.

<sup>115</sup> Christ "not only hath suffered for all those sins of ours, but also hath fully sanctified our nature in himself for us, & fulfilled all righteousness therein for us, so as wee not only bee set free by him from death, but also obtaine the rewarde of euerlasting lyfe in hym." Beza, *A booke of Christian Questions and answers*, 58v. Beza believes that eternal life, though not attainable by the worthiness of our works in themselves, is attainable by means of a legal covenant. Christ attained it for us by the covenant and gave it to us by grace. Cf. Beza, *A booke of Christian Questions and answers*, 56v. In a letter to Olevianus (epistle 35), written in 1570, Beza argues for the need of including Christ's active righteousness and also provides the legal background of attaining eternal life: "For what is more vain than to judge [as] righteous, someone who should not fulfill the law? Moreover the law of observances forbids to be done that which it prohibits, thus inserting the threat of death, [and] also truly orders that which it commands, thus inserting the promise of life. Therefore anyone in Christ not counted a sinner, will certainly have escaped death: but by which law will he aim at life thereafter, if he will not fulfill the whole righteousness of the law in Christ?" [Quid enim vanius est quam iustum arbitrari, qui lege non impleuerit? Atque lex notantum prohibet fieri quod

The theological letters written by Beza confirm his understanding of the threefold righteousness of Christ. Epistle 45, which has no addressee and no date, discusses both justification and sanctification. Concerning justification he writes:

Certainly his only begotten Son wished to become man, but without sin, that is certainly of the human nature, yet not a partaker of corruption, in order that by this manner in our nature liable to the wrath of God that perfect image of God would be restored in the second Adam, who then would consume the fruit of his sanctification, that is that [he] would both fulfill the law and pay the penalties of our sin, so that that integrity, justice and satisfaction for us are freely adopted and in him imputed by the inserted faith.<sup>116</sup>

This quote shows Christ first wishing to become man in order to restore the image of God, and then the two fruits of his sanctification: fulfilling the law and paying the penalties for our sin. Notice that the result is the imputation of “integrity, justice and satisfaction” (*integritatem, iustitiam & satisfactionem*), three words which find a parallel with the three words of Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 60 and 61 (*satisfactio, iustitia & sanctitas*). Moreover, this epistle argues that the whole earthly life of Christ from conception to ascension should be considered as one absolute obedience for us, an obedience with an active and a passive side to it.<sup>117</sup>

---

vetat, idque addita mortis interminatione, verum etiam praecipit quod iubet, idque addita vitae promissione. Ergo qui pro non peccatore cesentur in Christo, mortem quidem effugerit: sed quo iure vitam praeterea petet, nisi omnem iustitiam legis in eodem Christo impleuerit?] Theodori Bezae Vezelii, *Volumen tractationum Theologicarum* (Geneva: Eustathium Vignon, 1582), 3:248.

<sup>116</sup> “Nempe Filium suum vnigenitum voluit hominem fieri, sed absque peccato, id est humanae quidem naturae, non tamen corruptionis participem, ut hoc modo in natura nostra irae Dei obnoxia imago illa Dei perfecta restauraretur in secundo Adamo, qui deinde huius sanctificationis fructus ederet, id est qui & Legem impleret, & poenas peccati nostri lueret, ut hanc integritatem, iustitiam & satisfactionem nobis gratis adoptatis & in eum per fidem insertis imputaret” Bezae, *Volumen tractationum Theologicarum* vol. 3, 256.

<sup>117</sup> “Tota igitur Filii Dei pro nobis incarnati vita à nobis considerati debet, quae quidem duobus extremis continetur, nempe conceptione qua ad nos descendit, & ascensione qua ad Patrem ascendit: inter quae extrema collocamus singulas vitae actiones, mortem, sepulturam, resurrectionem. Haec omnia nostra sunt, quia pro nobis gesta sunt, si crediderimus. Tota igitur vita Christi ad ascensionem vsque perpetua quaedam est eaque absolutissima obedientia, quia non modò non peccavit, verum etiam totam legem absolutissimè impleuit Christus, quae obedientia nobis per fidem Christo vnitis datur, nostraque fit per imputationem.” Bezae, *Volumen tractationum Theologicarum* vol. 3, 256.

The letter written to Crato in 1584 has a set of 23 aphorisms on the topic of justification.<sup>118</sup> The topic of Christ's righteousness is dealt in a bifurcated or trifurcated manner. Aphorism 2 distinguishes between an essential righteousness in Christ and a righteousness created in the incarnation. The third aphorism divides Christ's human righteousness in two, the first being his holiness and integrity of nature resulting out of the Holy Spirit's conception, and the second righteousness is his obedience to the Father. In aphorism 4, he divides the obedience in two (active and passive) though he wishes to maintain the unity of it by saying that they are merely distinguished by reason, not in themselves.<sup>119</sup> In aphorism 20, Beza refers to the threefold righteousness which is outside of ourselves (*tria extra nos in Christo*), thus having nothing with the sanctification which is worked out in us.

Though until now Beza seems consistent in his teaching of the imputation of Christ's threefold righteousness, Johannes Piscator criticizes him for teaching a fourfold justification in his shorter annotations on Romans 8:2.<sup>120</sup> "In the annotation on verse 2 of chapter 8," writes Piscator, "you express these words: 'Before', you say, 'Paul discussed 1) about the remission of sin and 2) the imputation of the fulfillment of the Law, and thus far 3) about the beginning of sanctification in us. Moreover, now 4) he explains about the imputation of the perfect human nature of Christ. These parts were required to fully

---

<sup>118</sup> Alain Dufour, Béatrice Nicollier and Hervé Genton, *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze 1584* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2003), 25:259-268.

<sup>119</sup> "quae duo non re sed ratione different. Nam et obediendo passus est, et patiendo obedit pro nobis Christus." Dufour et. al., *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, 25:261. On footnote 7 (p. 261), the editors mistakenly state that this double obedience refers to one obedience for himself and one for us, thus making Beza differ from Calvin. Nevertheless, Beza explicitly denies that Christ fulfilled the law for himself. Cf. *A booke of Christian Questions and answers*, 42r-43r.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Alain Dufour et al., *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze 1586* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2005), 27:49-63. The letter is dated April 3, 1586.

pacify the conscience.”<sup>121</sup> Taking this quotation by itself we could deduce that Beza is not talking about justification only but what calms the conscience, and that can include the subjective evidence of sanctification (point 3). Beza’s ordering, then, would possibly be Paul’s order of topics in the Epistle to the Romans: points 1 and 2 up to chapter five, point 3 in chapter six and point 4 in chapter eight. Beza certainly knows the distinction between justification and sanctification and elsewhere he has shown that point 3 is different from the others in that it is not imputed. Surprisingly, though, Beza does not deny justification to have four parts, and he encourages Piscator to look into his larger annotations for clarity on the issue.<sup>122</sup> But his 1594 *Annotationes maiores* does not have a fourfold justification. Commenting Romans 5:17, Beza discourses on a triple righteousness in Christ: the first being his essential righteousness, the second is his holy disposition (*sanctimoniae & integritatis habitus*), and the third is his obedience unto death.<sup>123</sup> This threefold division of Christ’s righteousness is not the same as in other

---

<sup>121</sup> “Antea, inquis, disputavit Paulus 1) de remissione peccatorum et 2) praestationis Legis imputatione, atque adeo 3) de inchoata in nobis sanctificatione. Nunc autem 4) de perfecta humanae naturae Christi imputatione disserit. Quae pars ad plene pacandum conscientiam requirebatur.” Dufour, *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze* tome XXVII, 50-51. According to the editors, this is a quotation from the 1575 Genevan edition (p. 24, footnote 7). The punctuation is different and the numbers were inserted by Piscator. The 1574 London edition also has the same sentence, since both of these are editions of the *Annotationes minores*. The 1580s English translation has the following annotation on chapter 8 verse 2: “Therefore hitherto, Paul disputed of remission of sinnes, and imputation of fulfilling the Law, and also of sanctification which is begun in vs: but now he speaketh of the perfit [i.e. perfect] imputation of Christs manhode, which part was necessarily required to the full appeasing of our consciences: For our sinnes are defaced by the blood of Christ, and the guiltines of our corruption is couered with the imputation of Christs obedience: and the corruptiō it selfe (which the Apostle calleth sinfull sinne) is healed in vs by litle and litle, by the gift of sanctification, but yet lacketh besides that, an other remedie, to wit, the perfect sanctification of Christs owne flesh, which also is to vs imputed.” Theodore Beza, *The New Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ, translated out of Greeke by Theod. Beza*, trans. L. Tomson (London: Christopher Barker, 1586), 220v.

<sup>122</sup> Dufour et al., *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, 27:23; Dufour et al., *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze* 1587 (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2006), 28:29-30.

<sup>123</sup> Theodore Beza, *Theodori Bezae Annotationes maiores in Nouum Dn. Nostri Jesu Christi Testamentum* part II (Geneva: Henri Estienne, 1594), 67.

works, though it does not contradict what he has taught elsewhere. His commentary of Romans 8:2-3 mentions three parts of justification, not four.<sup>124</sup> Even Piscator, in a 1595 letter to Daniel Tossanus, points out three elements of justification in Beza's *Confession*.<sup>125</sup>

In sum, Beza presents a fairly consistent teaching on the imputation of a threefold righteousness from Christ – hence, it means a clear teaching on the imputation of Christ's active obedience – mixed with his acceptance of a fourfold justification which, in fact, sounds more like a fourfold appeasing of the conscience.

### 3.3.c. Zacharias Ursinus

Some recent writers appear to assume that Ursinus' denial of the imputation of Christ's active obedience can be precisely determined from a single primary source or from the witness of secondary sources,<sup>126</sup> but the evidence is dubious. His different works show a lack of consistency on the terminology and the theological distinctions, and the secondary sources do not provide unquestionable proof of his opposition to the imputation of active obedience.

Ursinus' covenant theology might lead one to conclude that he would be open to the idea of Christ's active obedience being imputed, but such obedience and the benefits

---

<sup>124</sup> Beza, *Theodori Bezae Annotationes maiores* part II, 89-90.

<sup>125</sup> “Jam vero ad controversia hanc de justification quod attinet: [1] nusquam tradit scriptura, sanctitatem conceptionis ac naturae humanae Christi imputari nobis ad delendum peccatum originale, [2] nusquam etiam docet, sanctam vitam Christi nobis imputari ad tollendum peccata omissionis. Denique mortem Christi [3] nusquam restringit ad expiationem peccatorum commissionis: quae sentential Domini Bezae et in confessione ipsius.” Apud Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 245. The numbers inserted in brackets merely highlight the flow of Piscator's three “nusquam”s.

<sup>126</sup> Norman Shepherd (“Justification by Works in Reformed Theology”) reaches this conclusion based on one primary source – Ursinus' *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism* – and J. Wesley White (“The Denial of the Imputation of the Active Obedience of Christ: Piscator on Justification”) concludes the same thing based on secondary sources.

thereof are discussed without fixed markers. His *Larger Catechism* (1562) reflects a covenant theology where the natural covenant is related to the covenant of grace as law and gospel are related. The natural covenant, then, promises eternal life on the condition of perfect obedience while the covenant of grace “shows us the fulfillment in Christ of the righteousness that the law requires” (Q. 36).<sup>127</sup> In Q. 135, Ursinus repeats the idea that, in order for the covenant of grace to not go against the covenant established in creation, God only considers us righteous if “his law has been perfectly satisfied.” The problem with these two quotations – which apparently support the notion of Christ’s obedience to the law in our stead<sup>128</sup> – is that those who clearly distinguished between active and passive obedience, as Beza did, would differentiate between fulfilling [*implens*] the law (active obedience) and satisfying [*satisfaciens*] the law (passive obedience). Ursinus, however, does not; his terminology is not precise. For instance, he apparently establishes a parallel between “the obedience and death of his Son” resulting in a double benefit, “righteousness and eternal life” (Q. 1; Cf. *Smaller Catechism* Q. 10), but the list of benefits is different every time – “remission of sins, righteousness, and eternal life” (Q. 38); “remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, righteousness, and eternal life” (Q. 87). Even his assessments concerning Christ’s life show a lack of distinction on the issue of imputed righteousness. When dealing with the work of the Mediator he makes no mention of Christ’s life (Q. 73, 74), but he includes all of Christ’s

---

<sup>127</sup> All the quotations from the *Larger* and *Smaller Catechisms* are from Bierma, *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism*.

<sup>128</sup> Visser writes of Ursinus’ teaching: “As we shall see, the condition of ‘perfect obedience’ which Adam *before* the fall could fulfill, has been fulfilled for the believer *after* the fall, by Christ.” Derk Visser, “The Covenant in Zacharias Ursinus,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 538. Ursinus’ commentary on Isaiah shows how no one can be obey the law perfectly for justification, except Christ. *Opera Theologica* vol. 3 (Heidelberg: Johannis Lancelloti, 1612), 48, 51.

earthly life within what the Apostle's Creed called "suffered" (Q. 79); as a third form of structuring, in the *Smaller Catechism* (1561/2) he even distinguishes between suffering and obedience (Q. 48). On top of that, when we compare parallel questions between these two catechisms we see the difference in terminology. For example, the *Smaller Catechism* says that God imputes to us "the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ" (Q. 46) while the *Larger Catechism* records God imputing only "the satisfaction of Christ" (Q. 133).

Ursinus' explication of Romans 3:31, how we establish the law by faith,<sup>129</sup> also seems to be pointing in different directions. In order that we may be saved God must be appeased based on "the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ given or imputed by God" (*Christi satisfactionem & iustitiam à Deo donatã, sivè imputatam*); Ursinus has another pair that seems to point to two of Christ's accomplishments (*iustitia Deo satisficiens, & vita aeternam promerens*). Still, the terminology does not sustain the idea of pairs because in the first, satisfaction and righteousness would be two different things, while in the second pair, the two words are used for the same thing. Besides the terminological imprecision, Ursinus presents four reasons for the law to be established by faith – the first two are the objective work of Christ *extra nos* while the last two are his subjective work *intra nos*. The first reason presents his fulfilling of the law for his own approval; in this case, fulfilling the law is a means to become a savior. The second reason connects the fulfillment (*impletione*) of the law merely with bearing the penalty of sin. So, in this theological discourse there is no sense in which the law was established because Christ obeyed it in our place.

---

<sup>129</sup> Zachariae Ursini, *Exegeseon Variorum Locorum S. Scripturae*, in *Opera Theologica* vol. 3, 708-710.

Ursinus' elaborations on law and gospel in his *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism* at times do not consider active obedience, at other times they explicitly favor the idea of Christ's obedience for us, but they are never against it.<sup>130</sup> On the contrary, there is evidence that he actually pondered on the idea of Christ's active obedience being imputed.

To exemplify the moments in which he passes over active obedience, we can refer to his comments on Q. 12, 37, and 60. On Q. 12, he writes: "The law binds all, either to obedience, or if this is not rendered, to punishment; and the performance or payment of either is perfect righteousness".<sup>131</sup> His rudimentary concept of deliverance had two parts – justification and sanctification – but no need for an active obedience from Christ:

The misery of man consists, first, in the loss of righteousness, and in inbred corruption, or sin; and secondly, in the punishment of sin. His deliverance, therefore, from this misery, requires, first, the pardon and abolishing of sin, and a restoration of the righteousness lost; and secondly, a release from all punishment and misery. As therefore, the misery of man consists of two parts – sin and death – so his deliverance consists of two parts – a deliverance from sin and death.<sup>132</sup>

Commenting on Q. 37, he writes: "The passion or suffering of Christ is placed immediately after his conception and nativity; 1. Because our entire salvation consists in his passion and death. 2. Because his whole life was one continued scene of suffering and privation."<sup>133</sup> It would seem here as if he is setting aside the importance of active obedience since Christ's life is described by what he suffered and not what he did,<sup>134</sup> but

---

<sup>130</sup> Contra Shepherd, "Justification by Works in Reformed Theology," 103-111.

<sup>131</sup> Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 77.

<sup>132</sup> Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 78.

<sup>133</sup> Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 212.

<sup>134</sup> His comment on Q. 60 portrays the fulfilling of the law only negatively, rather than positively (i.e., what he suffered rather than what he did): "The righteousness with which we are here justified before God... is

his emphasis on passion and death merely follows the Apostles' Creed's order of description, which is the object of his exposition. In one passage from his commentary on Q. 60, Ursinus only talks about imputation of Christ's passive obedience:

*Evangelical justification* is the application of evangelical righteousness; or, it is the application of the righteousness of another, which is without us in Christ; or, it is the imputation and application of that righteousness which Christ wrought out for us by his death upon the cross, and by his resurrection from the dead... it is the acquitting, or the declaring us free from sin in the judgment of God, on the ground of the righteousness of another. Justification and the forgiveness of sins are, therefore, the same.<sup>135</sup>

This is so because “*Legal righteousness* is performed, either by obedience to the law, or by punishment.”<sup>136</sup>

Though these quotations may be used to support the view that Ursinus denied the imputation of Christ's active obedience, there are other passages where he asserts Christ's life of obedience as part of his redemptive work and not merely as preparation for his sacrifice. Ursinus believed that Christ satisfied the law both by obedience and punishment.<sup>137</sup> Commenting on Q. 16, he explains what those two are:

The man Christ was perfectly righteous, or has fulfilled the law in four respects. 1. *By his own righteousness*. Christ alone performed perfect obedience, such as the law requires. 2. *By enduring punishment* sufficient for our sins. There was a necessity that this double fulfillment of the law should be in Christ: for unless his

---

the satisfaction which Christ rendered to the law in our stead; or the punishment which he endured in our behalf; and therefore the entire humiliation of Christ, from the moment of his conception to his glorification, including his assumption of humanity, his subjection to the law, his poverty, reproach, weakness, sufferings, death, &c., all of which he did willingly; yea, whatever he did and suffered to which he was not bound, as being righteous, and the Son of God, is all included in the satisfaction which he made for us, and in the righteousness which God graciously imputes to us, and all believers. This satisfaction is equivalent to the fulfilling of the law, or to the endurance of eternal punishment for sin” (p. 327). However, even this quotation shows that “the entire humiliation of Christ,” from conception to death, is included “in the righteousness which God graciously imputes to us.”

<sup>135</sup> Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 326-327.

<sup>136</sup> Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 325.

<sup>137</sup> Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 83.

righteousness had been full, and perfect, he could not have satisfied for the sins of others; and unless he had endured such punishment as has been described, he could not thereby have delivered us from everlasting punishment. The former is called the fulfilling of the law by obedience, by which he himself was conformable thereto; the latter is the fulfilling of the law by punishment, which he suffered for us, that we might not remain subject to eternal condemnation...<sup>138</sup>

Before anyone concludes that the first fulfilling of the law is for Christ and the second for us, his comments on Q. 19 show that the perfect obedience required by the law is not terminated with the gospel:

The law promises life to those who are righteous in themselves, or on the condition of righteousness, and perfect obedience. 'He that doeth them, shall live in them.' 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.' (Lev. 18:5; Matt 19:17). The gospel, on the other hand, promises life to those who are justified by faith in Christ, or on the condition of the righteousness of Christ, applied unto us by faith. The law and gospel are, however, not opposed to each other in these respects: for although the law requires us to keep the commandments if we would enter into life, yet it does not exclude us from life if another perform these things for us.<sup>139</sup>

Notice that he is talking about the keeping of commandments, which another can perform for us. This is the foundation of the notion of active obedience later developed. More so, Ursinus might even be showing his awareness of the Bezan threefold distinction in Q. 60 and endorsing it:

Christ fulfilled the law by [1] the holiness of his human nature, and by [2] his obedience, even unto [3] the death of the cross. The [1] holiness of his human nature was necessary to his [2] obedience; for it became our mediator to be [1] holy and righteous in himself, that he might be able to [2] perform obedience, and [3] make satisfaction for us. "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy," &c. (Heb. 7:26). This obedience now is our righteousness, and it is upon the ground of this that God is pleased with us. The blood of Christ is the satisfaction on account of which God receives us into his favor, and which he imputes unto us, as it is said, *the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*, both of

---

<sup>138</sup> Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 86-87.

<sup>139</sup> Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 104.

commission and omission. The shedding of his blood is the complement of his satisfaction, and is for this reason called our righteousness.<sup>140</sup>

Shepherd mistakenly affirms that all three words used in Q. 60 of the Heidelberg Catechism are employed in this passage in reference to the atonement – by atonement he means the suffering and death of Christ. The “holiness of Christ is necessary in view of the high priestly office that Christ must fulfill in offering himself as a sacrifice for sin.”<sup>141</sup> Shepherd understands the ‘holiness of Christ’ to mean his life of obedience. This conclusion is unaware of the need of Christ’s holy conception for our justification, as Beza taught. In fact, commenting on Q. 36 Shepherd shows his lack of acquaintance with Beza’s third element of imputed righteousness: “Holiness’ does not refer to the sinless law keeping of our Lord throughout the whole course of his life but refers to the suffering and death of our Lord.”<sup>142</sup> I dare say that it is neither. Q. 36 is not about active or passive obedience, as it is commonly understood, but about Christ’s holy conception being the remedy for original sin. In his commentary on this question, Ursinus asserts that Christ “was sanctified from his mother’s womb, that he might redeem and sanctify me.”<sup>143</sup> Similarly, in the above passage from the *Commentary* which is indented, “the holiness of

---

<sup>140</sup> Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 328. The numbers I’ve placed in brackets point to the threefold distinction. This interpretation of mine is an alternative way of looking at all the Latin editions which put numbers one and two to refer to the holiness and the obedience; obedience and satisfaction thus make one thing. However, this alternative perspective is not opposed to the twofold division of the editors of the Latin text, for Ursinus often looked at Christ’s whole state of humiliation (from conception to his death) as one thing. My inclusion of a third division is just to show that Ursinus seemed to be teaching something similar to Beza.

<sup>141</sup> Shepherd, “Justification by Works in Reformed Theology,” 108, footnote 4.

<sup>142</sup> Shepherd, “Justification by Works in Reformed Theology,” 108.

<sup>143</sup> Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 207. His comment on Q. 35 says that the Son of God assumed an unpolluted human nature for three reasons: that he might be a pure sacrifice, that he might sanctify others through his purity, and that we might know that what he says is truth (p. 206).

his human nature” is his holy conception, which is necessary both for Christ to live a holy life as well as to make satisfaction for sins.

What has not yet been shown is whether Ursinus taught that Christ’s positive righteousness is imputed to us. We do find evidence for it, but not in the Williard edition (based on the 1616 Latin text published in Geneva)<sup>144</sup> which is the one consulted by most English readers. Ursinus’ *Commentary* was published posthumously based on lecture notes of his students. Thus, the many editions compose versions with slightly different wording.<sup>145</sup> By examining the earlier Latin editions of his *Commentary* (Geneva: 1584; Cambridge: 1585 and 1587; London: 1586) we find a sentence in the section on Q. 60 that is not present in the seventeenth century editions (Heidelberg: 1612; Geneva: 1616; Hanover: 1634 and 1651).<sup>146</sup> The section deals with what is our righteousness, what constitutes it. It starts by saying that our righteousness is not our conformity to the law, but Christ’s satisfaction performed unto the law for us, the punishment which he suffered for us, “and even” (*atque adeo*) his whole humiliation from conception up to his death; all this humiliation and satisfaction is credited and imputed unto us. Up to here there are no major differences between the earlier and the later editions. Then, after several Bible verses are quoted, at the end of the paragraph the differences arise. Below there are representatives of both versions for comparison:

---

<sup>144</sup> Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, vi.

<sup>145</sup> Derk Visser, concerning the differences in Ursinus’ comments on the Catechism, affirms that “one can safely assume that whatever changes he introduced each year were the result of the current polemics and student disputations and therefore changes of emphasis and clarification, rather than changes in basic theology.” *Zacharias Ursinus: The Reluctant Reformer* (New York: United Church Press, 1983), 192.

<sup>146</sup> Interestingly, all the English translations of the *Commentary* which I’ve checked follow the earlier version way into the seventeenth century (Oxford: 1587, 1589, 1591, 1595, 1601; London: 1611, 1617, 1633, 1645), thus retaining this sentence even when they explain that the edition has been “conferred with the best and last Latine Edition of D. David Pareus.”

EARLIER VERSIONS	LATER VERSIONS
<p>Perfectè enim pro nobis impleuit Legem, 1. <i>Sanctitate humanae naturae</i>. 2. <i>Obedientia sua: nam factus est Patri obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis</i>. Ac prior impletio legis, nempe sanctitas humanae Christi naturae, requirebatur ad alteram, ad obedientiam scilicet ipsius. Haec autem obedientia &amp; satisfactio Christi est satisfactio nostra, &amp; 106ero106ia nostra iustitia, propter quam nos Deo placemus, propter quam apud Deum Patrem recipimur in gratiam, &amp; quae nobis imputatur. <u>Imputatur quidem nobis &amp; prior illa legis impletio, nempe humiliatio &amp; iustitia humanae Christi naturae, 106e habeamur sancti coram Deo: verùm haec sanctitas Christi nobis imputatur propter obedientiam, vel satisfactionem ipsius:</u> quia pro nobis iustitiae diuinae satisfecit, sustinendo poenas aeternas quas oportuisset nos in aeternum sustinere. Hinc est quod effusio sanguinis Christi (satisfactionis 106e pote Christi complementum) sola dicatur esse iustitia nostra. <i>Sanguis Christi purgat nos ab omni peccato, nempe non tantùm ab admissio, sed &amp; à futuro.</i><sup>147</sup></p>	<p>Christus quidem legem impleuit dupliciter: I. Sanctitate naturae humanae. 2. Obedientia usque ad mortem crucis. Utraque est perfecta legis impletio: &amp; prior quidem requirebatur propter alteram. Oportebat enim mediatorem esse per se justum &amp; sanctum, 106e posset pro nobis praestare obedientiam Patri usque ad mortem crucis, 106e satisfacere. <i>Talis enim nobis coveniebat pontifex, qui esset, &amp;c.</i> Haec 106ero obedientia est iustitia nostra, qua Deo placemus: sanguinis effusio &amp; mors est satisfactio, propter quam fide nobis imputatam à Deo in gratiam recipimur. <i>Sanguis Iesu Christi purgat nos ab omni peccato: nempe non solum admissionis, sed etiam omissionis.</i> Nam effusio sanguinis, est satisfactionis complementum: ideo sola dicitur iustitia nostra.<sup>148</sup></p>

The underlined sentences are worthy of notice. The quotation starts by showing that Christ perfectly fulfilled the law by “the holiness of his human nature” and by “his obedience” unto death. The first underlined portion is the omitted one in the later versions and it says: “That former fulfilling of the law indeed imputed unto us, namely

<sup>147</sup> Zacharias Ursinus, *Doctrinae Christianae Compendium* (Londini: Henricus Midletonus, 1586), 524-525.

<sup>148</sup> Zacharias Ursinus, *Corpus doctrinae Christianae* (Hanoviae: Estherae Rosae, 1634), 352. The only noticeable difference between this edition and the 1612 edition contained in the *Opera Theologica* vol. 1 is the addition of the word *dupliciter* (“in a twofold manner,” pointing to the two ways in which God fulfilled the law), thus meaning that the editors’ numbering was absorbed into the text.

the humiliation and righteousness of Christ's human nature, in order that we may be considered holy before God: obviously this holiness of Christ is imputed unto us for the sake of his obedience, or satisfaction." The instrumentality of this first fulfilling of the law, which Ursinus has discussed elsewhere, doesn't diminish the fact it is said to be imputed. Whether this first fulfilling of the law is taken to be Christ's holy conception as if Galatians 4:4-5 allowed for his birth "under the law" to be such a fulfilling, or it is taken to mean Christ's life of obedience to every point of the law, it still says that something other than Christ's death on the cross was imputed unto sinners. On top of this, the second underlined portion also brings a change that goes against the idea of imputation of active obedience. While the earlier versions say that the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin "not only the ones that have been committed but also those still in the future," the later versions say "not only the [sins] of commission, but the [sins] of omission." This argument that God forgives our sins of commission and also the sins of omission would later be used by those who wanted to discard a need for an imputed active obedience.

Even though we cannot take the earlier version as indubitable evidence that Ursinus taught the imputation of Christ's active obedience, since later versions (such as the 1634 and the 1651) have been regarded as the most reliable,<sup>149</sup> it is important to observe that from the 1590s onward, the editions of Ursinus' *Commentary* were revised and edited by his former student David Pareus, who we know was against the imputation

---

<sup>149</sup> Cf. T. D. Smid, "Bibliographische Opmerkingen over de Explicationes Catecheticae van Zacharias Ursinus," *Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift* 41 (1940): 241. Bierma follows Smid on this assessment. Cf. Lyle D. Bierma, "Law and Grace in Ursinus' Doctrine of the Natural Covenant: A Reappraisal," in *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment*, ed. Carl R. Trueman and R. S. Clark (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999), 101, footnote 21.

of active obedience. This is brought up not as an empty accusation of Pareus' unfaithfulness to his master's teaching, for even the 1612 Quirinus Reuter edition excludes and changes the sentences of the earlier editions mentioned above. Rather, this exemplifies the complexity in assessing the reliability of transmitting unpublished texts. On the one hand, Bos has put Pareus' loyal transmission in question by mentioning an incident where he was accused of including a new view under the name of Ursinus which was censured by authorities and removed from the publication.<sup>150</sup> On the other, Smid has stated that there is material from Pareus in Ursinus' lectures, but that over the years Pareus' was faithful in extricating what did not belong to Ursinus and in distinguishing Ursinus' ideas from his own.<sup>151</sup> However, the most reliable editions in Smid's opinions were actually finalized by Pareus' son, Philip, after his father's death. Throughout these years much of the controversy over active obedience expanded in such a way that it could have blurred the recollection of those who were trying to sift the genuine teachings of Ursinus.

The possibility of Ursinus' having taught the imputation of something other than Christ's death on the cross should be counterbalanced with some secondary sources that point in a different direction, especially the letter from Daniel Tossanus (1541-1602) to Piscator in January of 1596.<sup>152</sup> Tossanus says that in 1582 Ursinus pointed out to him Karg's theses which pleased him, rather than the subtle distinctions and diverse applications in Beza's *Confession*, though he is reticent to depart from a "consensus of so

---

<sup>150</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 77.

<sup>151</sup> Smid, "Bibliographische Opmerkingen over de Explicationes Catecheticae," 237-239.

<sup>152</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 75.

many great men” – probably meaning that Beza represented such a consensus of orthodox theology (not necessarily a consensus on the distinctions).<sup>153</sup> Assuming that Karg’s theses are his contrary positions to the imputation of Christ’s active obedience and that Beza’s distinctions are the threefold (or fourfold) righteousness of Christ in justification, all this is saying is that Ursinus preferred a more unified understanding of justification and that he didn’t feel convinced by Beza’s partitions. This is not to say that he had exegetical and theological basis to oppose the idea of the imputation of Christ’s active obedience as Piscator did. In fact, not writing on the issue that had already stirred Lutheran circles with Karg<sup>154</sup> and his struggle to depart from someone like Beza,<sup>155</sup> only confirms his first thoughts on an issue that was beginning to be formed. Ursinus has not left enough information to pinpoint his position. The issue was still being developed and Ursinus had not worked and argued his standpoint on it.

### 3.3.d. Caspar Olevianus

Olevianus’ position is not very different from that of Ursinus. We’ve seen in chapter 2 the evidence presented by Bos where Olevianus prefers justification to be seen as *simplex*, rather than the *multiplex* approach of Beza. However, his works contain no formal opposition to Christ’s active obedience being imputed.

---

<sup>153</sup> “Et sancte tibi adfirmare possum, me nihil de hac controversia scivisse, nisi anno 82, cum D. Ursinus p. m. mihi ostenderet Theses Cargii, quas dicebat sibi placuisse, & nimis subtilem visam distinctionem, aut diversam illam applicationem in Confessione Bezae: Interim (haec erant ipsissima verba) mihi religio est (inquirebat), a consensu tot magnorum virorum discedere.” Ernst Salomon Cyprian ed., *Clarorum virorum epistolae CXVII e Bibliothecae Gothanae autographis* (Leipzig: Io. Frider. Gleditsch & filium, 1714), 143.

<sup>154</sup> In Ursinus’ book about the *Book of Concord* [*De libro concordiae* (Neustadt: M. Harnisch, 1581)], where he disagrees with Lutherans on different issues, mainly on the Lord’s Supper, I couldn’t find any reference to the *Formula of Concord*’s teaching of imputation of active obedience. Apparently, it did not bother him enough to be controversial on it, to admonish the Lutherans for the course they had taken on the issue.

<sup>155</sup> I’m taking “mihi religio est” (from Tossanus’ letter) to mean “I am troubled to do it” according to Thomas Holyoake, *A Large Dictionary in three parts* (London: W. Rawlins, 1677), II.6c2r.

In his *A Firm Foundation* (1567), Olevianus shows the same kind of imprecision we see in Ursinus' *Commentary*. On the one hand, Christ's life is dealt mainly as suffering and the topic of justification is connected with Christ's passion and death thus providing forgiveness of sins. God "promises eternal life on the condition that I keep the law perfectly my whole life long," but there is no mention of Christ obeying it for us, since the righteousness the law requires which was given by God "is the perfect obedience of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, through which all sin and damnation, made manifest by the law, is pardoned and washed away."<sup>156</sup> The obedience of Christ is substitutive in character and it attains righteousness for us: "This obedience of Christ, freely and graciously bestowed upon each believer as if he himself had suffered everything and accomplished the obedience in body and soul that Christ performed for him — this obedience alone can make the believing heart completely right with God,"<sup>157</sup> and then Olevianus quotes Romans 5:19 and 2 Cor 5:21. This righteousness obtained by obedience, was "obtained for us with His suffering and death,"<sup>158</sup> thus making the gift credited to us for righteousness to be: "The obedience of the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, or the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (Rom. 5; 2 Cor. 5; Isa. 53; Col. 2; 1 Pet. 1; Heb. 10). This obedience of the death of Christ is freely granted and credited to us, so that from now on it is our own and our righteousness before God."<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup> Caspar Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation: An Aid to Interpreting the Heidelberg Catechism*, trans. and ed. Lyle D. Bierma, *Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Protestant Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 9-10.

<sup>157</sup> Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, 109.

<sup>158</sup> Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, 110.

<sup>159</sup> Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, 111-112. His exposition of The Apostles' Creed, for the reason that he was expounding the word "crucified," also focuses on the obedience of Christ's death. Cf. Caspar

Olevianus also deals with Christ's fulfillment of the law as merely preparatory for the death on the cross: "Since the One who suffered death kept the law perfectly and thus was not liable to death, I believe that such a death was a complete payment not only for the evil I have done but also for the good that I should have done but failed to do. The latter is also sin and has also been erased and paid for with the obedience of Christ's death."<sup>160</sup> Here we see the forgiveness of sins taking care of sins of commission and omission.

On the other hand, Olevianus doesn't disregard Christ's life in connection with justification. In comparison with Adam, we do see a primordial sense of active obedience coming out a bit more:

He performed such obedience for us His whole life long, and from the moment of His conception until the last drop of His blood was spilled, He bore the wrath of God for us who believe and trust in Him. And He was not only a man like the first Adam but at the same time true and eternal God. Such great obedience and suffering of the Son of God for us, I say, must have immeasurably greater power in us to pardon our sins forever (Heb. 9) and truly and efficaciously to bring us to eternal life.<sup>161</sup>

On top of that, Olevianus sees the importance of Christ's holy conception for our redemption. "This pure conception of the humanity of Christ, together with the worthiness of His divinity, gave His sacrifice such value and worth that I have no doubt that by giving His pure body in death, Christ fully paid for my original sin and whatever

---

Olevianus, *An Exposition of the Symbole of the Apostles*, trans. John Fielde (London: H. Middleton, 1581), 154-163.

<sup>160</sup> Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, 115.

<sup>161</sup> Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, 124.

part of it is still left in me.”<sup>162</sup> Much like Ursinus, he has a twofold purpose for Christ’s humanity to have been kept holy in conception:

First, in order that He would be a pure and holy sacrifice, in which our sinful conception and its fruits are punished and paid for, and we are thereby absolved of them. This is not to say that there is no more original sin in us, only that it is not imputed to us. Second, in order that by the power of His perfect holiness He might gradually sanctify our tainted bodies and souls.<sup>163</sup>

Though he is not constructing Christ’s holy conception as imputed for original sin, as Beza did, it is not merely preparatory for the cross but it provides the merits for the cross to conquer payment for original sin.

Olevianus also reflects Beza when he raises the question concerning the second accusation of our consciences and the Evil One:

A summary form of the second accusation is this: it is not sufficient to be declared righteous before God, to be told that we have done no evil or that payment has been made for that evil by the mediator. It is also the case that by virtue of creation, when God created us in His own image, we were obligated and bound to do all the good that God demands of us in his law. Therefore, we either must bring before the judgment seat of God all the good that He commands us to do or be liable to the everlasting curse of the law.<sup>164</sup>

Though we can interpret this last sentence as the ‘either obedience or punishment’ formula, there appears to be a mixture of Beza’s language with his own focus on the cross. Olevianus believes the obligation to do all the good demanded in the law still stands. The antidote to this genuine accusation is the obedience of Christ’s death, as he shows in the following question. However, such obedience is not confined to the act of the cross as was shown in the paragraph above. In short, there are elements of Beza’s

---

<sup>162</sup> Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, 118.

<sup>163</sup> Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, 50. Cf. Olevianus, *An Exposition of the Symbole of the Apostles*, 137-138.

<sup>164</sup> Olevianus, *A Firm Foundation*, 114-115.

theology without the clear Bezan parallel between the law's demand for obedience and Christ's life of obedience.

Olevianus' covenantal framework in relation to our justification — where he demonstrates an incipient notion of covenant of creation and, in continuity with other Reformers, he has a legal covenant where God promises eternal life based on perfect observance of the law<sup>165</sup> — seems to provide the foundation for an understanding of Christ's active obedience having been done substitutively.<sup>166</sup> However, Christ's fulfillment of the law is not consistently connected to his life of obedience, especially in his exegetical works. Arguably, Olevianus identified Christ's fulfillment of the law with his bearing of the curse on the cross. There is no sense of a double righteousness (a positive and a negative one), but only of an obedience which equals his curse, which is the same as fulfilling the law.

In sum, the law required perfect love to God and neighbor. Christ offering himself in his death on the cross fulfills and solves for brothers what the law requires, that is, the obedience of the son — by which our curse is transferred to him — that is equivalent to the full observation of the law which is our duty; and because we

---

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Lyle D. Bierma, *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age: The Covenant Theology of Caspar Olevianus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 112-120, 122-125; Clark, *Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant*, 162-170.

<sup>166</sup> Bierma writes: “when we take the step of faith from the legal to the gracious covenant, we are suddenly freed from that obligation by Him who fulfilled the law perfectly in our stead.” *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age*, 125. Clark goes a bit further on interpreting Olevianus: “As a corollary to his understanding of Adam's federal headship, he believed that the righteousness which is imputed to believers was not only Christ's obedientia passive, i.e. his suffering and crucifixion, but also his active obedience (obedientia activa), to the divine law... In making Christ's obedience parallel to Adam's disobedience, Olevian was placing all of Christ's life and not just his sufferings in a probationary, legal framework... Given his Reformed Christology and the distinction between the two natures, Olevian assumed that, as fully human, Christ must fulfil [sic] all righteousness. He did not conclude (in contrast to Piscator) that Christ's obedientia activa was sufficient only for himself. Rather he assumed that, given Christ's deity, his active obedience vicariously satisfied the divine wrath and was imputed to all the elect.” *Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant*, 168-170. Clark's conclusions, taken from Olevianus' commentaries on Galatians and Romans, might be more a result of inference — which is possible, but not evident — and looking at Olevianus from a standpoint of a fuller understanding of the doctrine of Christ's active obedience.

had not fulfilled it what was equivalent to all of the sufferings and penalties which we should have felt in eternity

as Romans 8:3 shows us.<sup>167</sup>

Olevianus' commentary on Galatians refers to a justification by faith out of the "obedience of Christ's passion" (*obedientiam passionis Christi*)<sup>168</sup> and states that Christ placed himself under the law to free us from the curse of the law. His whole life is part of this subjection to the law in order to be a holy and pleasing sacrifice to the Father.<sup>169</sup> In other words, in this commentary there is no sense of Christ fulfilling the law positively in order to free us from the obligation of having to obey the law as there is Christ suffering the punishment of the Law in order to free us from the penalty of the law. There is no twofold relation to the law in Olevianus unless one interprets his "yoke and curse of the Law" (*Legis iugo & maledictione*) as two different things.

His commentary on Romans follows the same emphasis on an imputed righteousness which consists of "the bloody obedience of Christ's death" (*obedientia sanguinolentae mortis Christi*).<sup>170</sup> While commenting on Romans 3:31 he says that the

<sup>167</sup> "In summa, Lex requirit perfectam dilectionem Dei & proximi: Christus se offerens in mortem crucis, praestat & soluit pro fratribus quod Lex requirebat, hoc est, illa obedientia Filij, qua nostram maledictionem in se transfert, aequipollet plenae obseruationi Legis, quam nos debebamus: & quia non praestiteramus, aequipollet omnibus cruciatibus & poenis, quas in aeternum sentire debuissimus. Ad Rom. 8 v. 3". Caspar Olevianus, *Notae Gasparis Oleuiani in Evangelia* (Herborn: Christophori Coruini, 1589), 54-55.

<sup>168</sup> Caspar Olevianus, *In Epistolam D. Pauli Apost. ad Galatas notae* (Geneva: Eustathivm Vignon, 1578), 52, comm. Gal. 3:11-12.

<sup>169</sup> "Subiectus, inquit, Legi, vt nos à Legis iugo & maledictione redimeret inde collige quàm sancta sit Lex Dei, dum ipse Filius ei subiectus est. Primum enim magna Legis sanctitas, quòd nihil in ea mandatum, cui Deus ipse in carne manifestatus non velit esse conformis. Deinde quanuis Filius sit Dominus Sabbathi, atque ita totius Legis (eadem enim est ratio) tamen ad perfectam & internam & externam sanctitatem siue obedientiam, qualem Lex requirebat, vtrò se obligat & hoc est quod Paulus hìc ait, Factus sub Legem, vt victima plena sanctitate profusa suaueolens esset coram Patre, & vim haberet nos à rigore & maledictione Legis, quibus tenebamur constricti, redimendi." Olevianus, *Ad Galatas*, 88, comm.. Gal. 4:1-5.

<sup>170</sup> Caspar Olevianus, *In Epistolam D. Pavli Apostoli ad Romanos notae* (Geneva: Evstathivm Vignon, 1579), 145, comm.. Rom. 3:24-28.

whole law is confirmed or established by faith in the blood of Christ, but on the other hand he includes Christ's life as he fulfills the moral law in four ways: by his own obedience to the law, by solving the punishment for us, by initiating in us the obedience of the law through the Spirit, and by doing or confirming his doctrine. Yet, he still talks about the demand for "either perfect obedience or punishment" (*vel perfectam obedientiam vel poenam*).<sup>171</sup> His comments on Romans 5:17-19 show his interest in distinguishing the double benefit (justification and sanctification) when he speaks about the righteousness of Christ's death imputed unto us and his life being communicated to us by his Spirit.<sup>172</sup> So, when he comments on the Pauline phrase "by the obedience of one many were justified," his concern is to counter his Roman Catholic rivals when he says the apostle is going "against those who say we make ourselves righteous by imitating the obedience of Christ" (*contra eos qui dicunt nos imitation obedientiae Christi fieri iustos*).<sup>173</sup> Olevianus does not consistently define what the righteousness of Christ consists of, or what satisfaction encompasses. Sometimes it will only refer to Christ's death, where Olevianus will follow the focus of the Pauline text, but on other times satisfaction comprehends "the whole humiliation [of Christ] from beginning to end" (*tota humiliatio ab initio usque ad finem*).<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>171</sup> Olevianus, *Ad Romanos*, 154-155.

<sup>172</sup> Olevianus, *Ad Romanos*, 222. In his comments on Romans 8:4 (p. 326) he writes: "Dupliciter in nobis impletur iustitia legis, id est, id quod lex sanctum & iustum praecipit. 1. Imputatione iustitiae Christi. 2. Renouatione, quae in hac vita est inchoata, complebitur in aeterna."

<sup>173</sup> Olevianus, *Ad Romanos*, 222.

<sup>174</sup> Olevianus, *Ad Romanos*, 322, comm. Rom. 8:3.

This lack of consistency in his language does not mean that Olevianus was neutral on the issue of imputation of Christ's active obedience, but only that the issues were so new that his position was not clear. He obviously didn't feel safe in embracing Beza's position, but Beza himself does not find reason to start a controversy over this, as he writes to Olevianus in 1570.<sup>175</sup> Nevertheless, he is not interested in opposing Beza's view both in his theological as in his exegetical works, as we will see Piscator do.

### **3.4. Reassessment of the Doctrine of Christ's Active Obedience and the Reformation**

Our goal in this chapter was to discover how much precision was there in the discussions on the topic of active obedience prior to the writings of Johannes Piscator. In view of the early and modern secondary sources assessing Reformed theologians such as Calvin, Ursinus and Olevianus as either for or against the imputation of Christ's active obedience, there was a need of surveying the discussion previous to them as well as their own works. We found that the distinction between the righteousness of Christ's life and of his death is an old one, but that the notion of the righteousness of his life being imputed to us was not present in the medieval scholastics and, apparently, neither in the first and second generation Reformers within the Lutheran and Reformed camps. The concept of Christ's life having merits for us is definitely a settled issue by the time of the Reformation; some medievals had even posed the notion of Christ meriting from his holy conception. But the Reformers, though teaching the imputation of Christ's righteousness, were not yet worried about distinguishing any parts of such righteousness, reason why their language is not consistent either on the side of active obedience imputed or against

---

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Beza, *Volumen Tractationum Theologicarum*, 3:248.

it. If, on the one hand, their affirmations that justification is only remission of sins can be explained due to the biblical language and the polemical context with the Roman Catholics, on the other hand the idea of a positive righteousness received from Christ is not yet consistently worked out. We saw that represented in the writings of Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin.

Calvin, for example, is not aware of the discussion. His writings were previous to the first controversy in Lutheran circles over the work of Georg Karg. Since the issue had not yet arisen, he does not make the distinctions. His context is one of opposing Roman Catholic writers. The same could be said of other Reformers who lived prior to the initial controversies – Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531),<sup>176</sup> Wolfgang Musculus (1497-1563)<sup>177</sup> and Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499-1562),<sup>178</sup> to cite a few. However, it is worthy of note that

---

<sup>176</sup> Contra Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 72. Zwingli's treatise on *Divine and Human Righteousness* (1523), claimed by Bos as support to his claim that Zwingli made a clear distinction between the two types of Christ's obedience, actually says that Christ fulfilled the law to teach us what God expected us to keep and also to satisfy divine righteousness. It is not clear if there is any substitutive element of Christ's obedience to the commandments in this distinction, since elsewhere in this work Zwingli asserts that what God demands of man is met by the cross. *Huldrych Zwingli Writings vol. 2: In Search of True Religion: Reformation, Pastoral and Eucharistic Writings*, trans. H. Wayne Pipkin (Allison Park: Pickwick Publications, 1984), 8, 20-21 [pages in the critical edition: 478-479, 496]. For a more careful analysis of this distinction in Zwingli cf. W. P. Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 166. Not even when Zwingli comments on the parallel between Adam and Christ in Romans 5 do we see the issue of an imputed active obedience expressed clearly. Cf. Ulrich Zwingli, *Commentary on True and False Religion*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson and Clarence Nevin Heller (Durham: The Labyrinth Press, 1981), 109-110.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. Wolfgang Musculus, *Common Places of Christian Religion*, trans. John Man (London: Henry Byneman, 1578). Musculus talks about Christ being the only man who perfectly fulfilled the law, also about Christian men fulfilling the law perfectly in Christ (not in the sense of Christ fulfilling the law for us) as we exercise love (p. 275). Forgiveness of sins and imputation of Christ's righteousness sound more like two sides of the same coin rather than two parts of justification (p. 541). For example, he writes that God "doth call the forgiueneſſe os ſinnes our iuſtificatiō, whereby he doth freely impute iuſtice unto them which do amend their life, and doth not condemne, but ſaue them" (p. 543). The emphasis on the whole section of justification is on Christ's death and on opposing any righteousness from ourselves.

<sup>178</sup> Frank A. James III believes that Vermigli sees two movements of imputation, first is the imputation of Christ's righteousness and second is the nonimputation of sins. James also notes that this double imputation brings a dual legal benefit, acquittal and the right to eternal life. Frank A. James III, "Translator's Introduction," in *Predestination and Justification, two theological loci*, vol. 8 of The Peter Martyr Library, trans. Frank A. James III, Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies 68 (Kirksville, Missouri: Truman State

Calvin was still alive when Beza began making his distinctions, but evidenced no difficulty with Beza's formulations. Therefore, this chapter did not make a case for discontinuity between Calvin and the later majority position among the Reformed. On the contrary, the evidence gathered in the previous section showed how Calvin was in no way a precursor of Piscatorian ideas, even anticipating an objection by Piscator and countering it. But, though not a forerunner of Piscator's doctrine, Calvin's inconsistency hinders the conclusion that he clearly defended the other side. Thus, the elements of the doctrine seminally present in him lose their strength in a case to place him on the side opposite to Piscator.

Beza certainly elaborates an initial understanding of a multi-part righteousness of Christ which is imputed to us for our justification, although his response to Piscator's criticism might point to Beza being in the process of organizing his thought. Ursinus and Olevianus do not seem convinced of Beza's position, but neither objects to it formally. Ursinus was apparently uncomfortable in disagreeing and could have, at one point, even taught the imputation of something other than Christ's righteousness on the cross. Olevianus is the one who has the fewest passages that could be seen as precursors of the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's active obedience, but even he will occasionally allow Christ's whole life to be part of his satisfaction.

---

University Press, 2003), xxxvi. Though James' footnote references to the above considerations are not the most clear on the distinctions within justification, there are moments in his commentary on Romans that Vermigli apparently poses a double fulfillment of the law: "the accomplishment of the lawe herein consisteth, that the sinnes which we haue committed be forgeuen vs by Christ: and the righteounes which he hath performed be imputed vnto vs". Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Most learned and fruitfull Commentaries of D. Peter Martir Vermilius Florentine, Professor of Diuinitie in the Schole of Tigure, vpon the Epistle of S. Paul to the Romanes*, trans. H. B. (London: Iohn Daye, [1568]), 195v. Nevertheless, these occasional references to two sides of justification should be looked at in view of other comments that do not support the belief on an imputed active righteousness. For example, Christ's obedience (Rom. 5:19) is his death, the fulfillment of the righteousness in us (Rom. 8:4) is the Spirit enabling us to fulfill the commandments, and the establishing of the law (3:31) is, again, the regenerate being enabled to fulfill the moral commands. Vermigli, *Most learned and fruitfull Commentaries*, 70r, 118v, 195v.

We conclude that neither Calvin, nor Ursinus, nor Olevianus can be classified as either for or against the doctrine as it was later debated. Their works have nuances that point to one side of the debate at times, and to the other side at other times. Beza seems to be the first within the Reformed who more consistently teaches the imputation of a multi-part righteousness and in Piscator we see a first rebuttal of Beza's teaching. Hence, though we may try to see continuities between Piscator and Olevianus, for example, the former is definitely the first formal opponent to the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's active obedience within the Reformed.

## PART II

### THE THEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCT OF PISCATOR'S DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE

Having concluded that earlier Reformed theologians such as Calvin, Ursinus and Olevianus were not clear concerning the relation of the merits of Christ's life of obedience to our salvation, we now turn to the first explicit opponent of the imputation of Christ's active obedience within the Reformed tradition, Johannes Piscator. That he is purposefully polemical is noticeable when one compares his commentaries on Pauline epistles with Calvin's and especially Olevianus', the latter being written just over a decade prior to those of his younger cousin. Piscator's elenctic context will move him to see more in the text and converse with it in light of new concerns that were not present in Calvin's nor Olevianus' minds.

Before analyzing Piscator's opinions on Christ's obedience to the law, the orthodoxy of Piscator needs to be asserted with respect to the doctrine of justification, which encompassed his views on Christ's active obedience. He upheld a forensic view of justification with an extrinsic notion of righteousness imputed rather than the medieval and Roman Catholic notion of infusion, he vehemently excluded our works from justification clearly distinguishing justification from sanctification, and he believed in the mere instrumentality of faith to grasp the righteousness of Christ rather than being the

root from which works of righteousness for our justification come.<sup>1</sup> In his *Libri duo de Justificatione hominis coram Deo*,<sup>2</sup> where he is opposing the thought of Jesuit Robert Bellarmine, he is in accordance with others in the Reformed tradition on many grounds. The issue of active obedience is probably the only one in the book which would stir some controversy among the Protestant Orthodox. One irony in the book is to see Piscator use an argument against Roman Catholics that those who defended active obedience imputed would use against Piscator. Bellarmine says that “it is never read in the scripture, that Christes iustice is imputed to us,” similar to the argument of silence used by Piscator against his adversaries over active obedience. Piscator’s response to Bellarmine is this: “it is not necessarie that those very wordes, *Christes iustice is imputed to us*, be read in the scripture: but that it is ynough, if those things be read, from which this sentence may by good consequence be drawn,” an answer which Piscator would not accept from those who tried to prove imputation of Christ’s active obedience through logical deduction.<sup>3</sup>

Besides being fundamentally orthodox in his views of justification, it is also important to affirm that Piscator believed that Christ was actively obedient, that he perfectly fulfilled the law. For, if Piscator did not believe so, he would be saying that Christ sinned, a heresy that was far from his teaching. What he denied was whether such obedience was in our place, imputed to us, part of the meritorious cause of justification.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. White, “The Denial of the Imputation of the Active Obedience of Christ: Piscator on Justification,” 147-154, to see him argue that Piscator was much more conservative than some modern theologians on the issue of justification.

<sup>2</sup> See the English translation, *A Learned and Profitable Treatise of Mans Iustification. Two Bookes. Opposed to the Sophismes of Robert Bellarmine, Iesuite* (London: Thomas Creede, 1599); see also Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, chapter 13 (p. 66-85).

<sup>3</sup> Piscator, *A Learned and Profitable Treatise of mans Iustification*, 110-112.

In the initial three theses of his first written expression of his systematized thought on active obedience, he described the discussion this way:

1. Teachers of the Gospel agree that man is justified (that means to be counted righteous by God, and to be absolved of his sins) by faith in Christ, that is, because of the righteousness of Christ given and imputed to him by faith: or, in order that I may speak clearly, because of the obedience of Christ, imputed to man as righteousness by faith.
2. Indeed they disagree on this [point], because some think that Christ's obedience, which is imputed to believers as righteousness, is properly the obedience of Christ's passion and death. Others, however, think that Christ's entire obedience is imputed to believers as righteousness, even the obedience of Christ's holy life, more specifically even the obedience of the incarnation and the holy conception of Christ.
3. I think, for my part, that the first position of the former [teachers] is the position that is true, plain, and harmonious with the sacred text. In regard to the last position, I am against it.<sup>4</sup>

In his last work on active obedience, he said that the state of the question was not whether the active and passive obedience of Christ differ from one another and how; on this both parties in Piscator's day agreed. The state of the question was whether the active obedience is imputed just like the passive.<sup>5</sup> Later in this work, he would explain his position against those who might misrepresent him: "I do not teach that Paul excludes righteousness or the active obedience of Christ from the entire act of our justification; but

---

<sup>4</sup> "1. Consentiant Evangelii Doctores, hominem justificari (i. pro iusto a Deo censi, et a peccatis suis absolvi) fide in Christum, i. propter justiciam Christi, ei donatam atque imputatam per fidem: seu, ut clarius dicam, propter obedientiam Christi, imputatam homini ad justiciam per fidem.

2. Dissentiunt vero in eo, quod alii statuunt, obedientiam Christi, quae credentibus ad justiciam imputatur, esse proprie obedientiam passionis et mortis Christi. Alii vero putant, totam Christi obedientiam credentibus ad justiciam imputari, ac proinde etiam obedientiam sanctae vitae Christi, imo etiam obedientiam incarnationis et sanctae conceptionis Christi.

3. Priorem illorum sententiam equidem veram, simplicem, et sacris literis consentaneam statuo: posteriorem contra." Piscator, "Theses XIII de Justificatione Homini coram Deo," in Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 242.

<sup>5</sup> "status quaestionis simpliciter est hic, Utrum obedientia Christi activa non minus, quam passiva, nobis imputetur ad justiciam." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Homini coram Deo*, 43.

this much I [do] teach, that he excludes it from the meritorious cause of justification. Meanwhile, I teach that such obedience was necessary for this, so that the passive obedience of Christ could be imputed to us for righteousness, and in this respect I do not exclude the former from the entire act of our justification.”<sup>6</sup> Piscator, moreover, understood his teaching on active obedience not as a correction of the tradition, but as a continuation of the Protestant confessional teaching as taught in the Augsburg Confession (chapter 4), the French Confession (article XVIII) and the Belgic Confession (article XXIII).<sup>7</sup>

Though minor details do appear in his more mature treatment of the doctrine in question, yet the main arguments and biblical texts used to support his view remained the same from his first reflections on the topic, in the 1580s, until a major later tome of 1618. In order to show to what extent his thought remained the same or changed, the presentation of the material will go from the earliest to the latest, with attention to the following sources:

- 1) the *Examen* dated from April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1586,<sup>8</sup> an examination of Beza’s thought on justification based on his annotations of Romans 8:2 as well as epistles 35 and 45;
- 2) the *13 Theses*,<sup>9</sup> which according to Frans Lukas Bos was probably the first written document where Piscator organizes his thoughts, written in the late 1580s;

---

<sup>6</sup> “Deinde ego non doceo, quòd Paulus justitiam sive obedientiam Christi activam à toto justificationis nostrae actu excludat: sed tantùm doceo, quòd eam excludat à causa justificationis meritoria: interim verò trado, quòd obedientia illa ad hoc fuerit necessaria, ut obedientia Christi passiva imputari nobis ad justitiam posset: atque hoc respectu à toto justificationis nostrae actu illam non excludo.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 49-50.

<sup>7</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 99-104.

<sup>8</sup> “Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae, De justificatione Hominis coram Deo, quae habetur in annotatione ad Rom. 8, v. 2” in *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze* 1586, 27:49-63.

- 3) his biblical commentaries, mainly on the Pauline epistles,<sup>10</sup> written from the late 1580s onwards;
- 4) his *Libri duo de Justificatione hominis coram Deo* written against the Roman Catholic teaching diffused by Robert Bellarmine, originally published in 1590 and translated into English in 1599;
- 5) *Epistle 68*,<sup>11</sup> written to the pastors of the French Synod in response to their rebuke of his teaching, from January 24, 1604;
- 6) his 1618 polemical response to an opponent of his day<sup>12</sup> entitled *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*.

Other works will be cited to support the conclusions present in the works above, but seldom do these other materials add significantly to the discussion.

The following two chapters do overlap in ideas, but have been separated to present Piscator's thought coming from what he believed was a clear understanding of Scripture (chapter 4) as well as from problematic theological conclusions if one held to the imputation of Christ's active obedience (chapter 5).

---

<sup>9</sup> Apud Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 242-244.

<sup>10</sup> Johannes Piscatore, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli* (Londini: Georg. Bishop, 1608, editio tertia).

<sup>11</sup> "Epistle 68 – Reverendis Amplissimis & Doctissimis viris Dominis Pastoribus Ecclesiarum Gallicarum," in *Praestantium ac eruditorum virorum epistolae ecclesiasticae et theologicae*, 121-125.

<sup>12</sup> Piscator's book was written in response to a booklet entitled *Assertio orthodoxa de causa meritoria justificationis hominis coram Deo*. Piscator does not provide the author of this booklet he is responding. One scholar suggests that it was Basel professor Ludovicus Lucius (1577-1642). Cf. Steubing, *Caspar Olevian; Johannes Piscator*, 136. Frans Bos' hypothesis, on the other hand, is that Piscator's opponent was his former student at Herborn – and now professor at the University of Groningen – Hermann Ravensperger (1586-1625). Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 136-143. Since both are merely hypotheses, we will leave this opponent unnamed throughout this discussion.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE EXEGETICAL BASIS FOR PISCATOR'S DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE

As one who commented on all the books of the Bible, Piscator does not present his opposition to the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's active obedience resulting merely from logical deductions. On the contrary, he finds that Holy Scripture is exceptionally clear on the issue, giving no grounds for the disputed doctrine. This chapter will survey, mainly from Piscator's commentaries on the Pauline epistles, three exegetical arguments that support his view. The first is the assumption that the complete Scriptural definition of justification is forgiveness of sins. The second argument is the alleged "silence" of Scripture in regards to active obedience as imputed. The third comes from his interpretation of "proof-texts" for imputation of active obedience in light of the other two arguments. All three arguments overlap to conclude that the New Testament emphasis of Christ's redemption is on the cross, and the cross alone. His polemical context will lead him to constantly explain righteousness as "acquired by the death of Christ" (*parta morte Christi*), even when the biblical text does not say so; this is one point in which he goes beyond commentators such as Calvin and Musculus, because of a different context. Even Olevianus, whom Piscator resembles on this issue, is much less emphatic and does not consistently present every text pointing to the work of the cross.

A few words about Piscator's style while commenting on a biblical text will assist in understanding the presuppositions behind his line of argumentation. Many of his commentaries were entitled *Analysis Logica* which, according to Walter J. Ong, was the "hallmark of a Ramist work."<sup>1</sup> Ong called Piscator a "semi-Ramist,"<sup>2</sup> and Howard Hotson agrees.<sup>3</sup> The *analysis*, however, was only one of four parts in Piscator's commentaries. Every chapter of a book of the Bible started with a quick overview of its content (*argumentum*), then there was a discourse of the flow of each subsection (*analysis*), followed by textual observations on particular verses (*scholia*), and finally theological comments were made on specific verses (*observationes*).<sup>4</sup> Two features of his commentaries done in Ramistic fashion are important for this study. First, his frequent

---

<sup>1</sup> Such logical analysis resulted in "concatenations of pure syllogisms," a distinct phenomenon of the sixteenth-century. Walter J. Ong, "Johannes Piscator: One Man or a Ramist Dichotomy?" *Harvard Library Bulletin* 8, no. 2 (Spring 1954): 153.

<sup>2</sup> Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 15. Ramism is a reference to the philosophical and pedagogical methodology associated with the work of Pierre de la Ramée, or Peter Ramus (1515-1572). Ramus' significance hinges on his reorganization of dialectic or logic. Piscator commented on the text of Ramus' *Dialecticae libri duo* in his *In P. Rami Dialecticam animadversiones* (1580). Due to the fact that Germany became a major center of Ramism, it sounds reasonable why Piscator would adhere to it in the midst of such intense Aristotelian tradition in the universities. Ong explains: "The German universities were relatively new, their accumulation of tradition thinner, so that the didactic drive, indigenous to the whole university movement, appears in Germany unmasked and bare" (p. 164). Besides Piscator, other notable Ramists in Germany were Johannes Althusius (1557?-1638), Amandus Polanus von Polansdorf (1561-1610), Bartholomew Keckermann (1571-1608) and Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638). Donald K. McKim, *Ramism in William Perkins' Theology*, American University Studies series VII, Theology and Religion vol. 15 (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), 148-149.

<sup>3</sup> "Far from being a strict Ramist, as he has often been described, Piscator, from the very first, was something of a 'mixt', albeit one for whom Ramism became the dominant part in the mixture; and the same applies to Herborn as a whole. It was Piscator's combination of Ramus and Aristotle which was codified in the Herborn statutes." Hotson, *Commonplace Learning: Ramism and its German Ramifications, 1543-1630*, 103.

<sup>4</sup> The observations were not present in the first edition of the Commentary on Pauline Epistles (1591), but were added in the second edition (1594) which is virtually the same as the third (1608). Hotson conflates the first two (*argumentum* and *analysis*), thus making Piscator's commentary to follow a three-part method. Hotson, *Commonplace Learning: Ramism and its German Ramifications, 1543-1630*, 118.

use of syllogisms in the *analysis* and *observationes* sections to try and show the logic of Paul's argument.<sup>5</sup> Second, his use of dichotomies to structure a given topic or the flow of an argument, demonstrated through charts as well as in prose.<sup>6</sup> Both of these characteristics seemed to provide the Ramistic commentator with a confidence that he had the appropriate tools to exposit the correct interpretation of the text.<sup>7</sup> In *Epistle 68*, for example, he writes: "I will set forth my arguments syllogistically in order that they may be judged easy and correct, and the truth may shine forth even more."<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> For syllogisms in his commentary on Romans alone, cf. Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 6, 29, 31, 43, 44, 45, 51, 58, 71, 77, 81, 85, 86, 88, 90, 91, 127, 132, 138, 157, 160, 163, 164, 165. Peter Ramus used syllogisms with a terminology adapted from Agricola and Cicero for the members of the syllogism. "The first member (major premise) is the *propositio*, the second (minor premise) is the *assumptio*, the conclusion is the *complexio*." Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, 185. Some scholars have highlighted Ramus' distrust of syllogism in comparison to Aristotle. However, Ramus only had disagreements with certain uses of syllogism in the Aristotelian tradition, such as regarding it as the only form of acquiring new knowledge or of testing the veracity of all axioms; some axiomatic truths were self-evident and not deduced. Yet, Ramus still firmly believed in the usefulness of syllogisms for the systematization and organization of arguments. Piscator will take this view of syllogism as a pedagogical tool and use it to unravel the Pauline argumentation. He also stood upon the belief that syllogisms were excellent tools to evaluate the veracity or the illogicality of certain arguments. On Ramus' criticism of Aristotelian syllogism, see Perry Miller, *The Puritans* (New York: American Book Company, 1938), 33; idem, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954), 133-138; Pierre Albert Duhamel, "The Logic and Rhetoric of Peter Ramus," *Modern Philology*, 46, no. 3 (Feb. 1949): 170; Craig Walton, "Ramus and Socrates," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 114, no. 2 (Apr. 13, 1970): 123. On Piscator's understanding of Ramistic syllogism, see Johannes Piscator, *In P. Rami Dialecticam Animadversiones* (Londini: Henricus Bynnemanus, 1581), 117-147.

<sup>6</sup> For an example of dichotomies concerning the doctrine of justification, see the first chapter of Piscator, *A Learned and Profitable Treatise of mans Iustification*. This characteristic methodology comes out of the confidence that every subject was susceptible to a "neat diagrammatic analysis in dichotomized outline form." Walter Jackson Ong, "Ramism," in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, vol. 4, ed. Philip P. Wiener (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 44. This was considered a simple memory system, thus pedagogically superior to previous methods, as well as thoroughly logical. Ong ("Ramism," 45) says that the Ramists had a tendency to trust their definition and division after division as 'laying out' the material the way it really is. Piscator's logical analyses was his attempt at "separating what [the Bible] really 'argued' from the rhetorical finery with which its logical machinery was purportedly draped."

<sup>7</sup> For the same perspective of commenting the Bible in William Perkins (1558-1602), see McKim, *Ramism in William Perkins' Theology*, 69-80.

<sup>8</sup> "argumenta mea syllogistice proponam, ut facilius rectiusque possint judicari, & veritas magis elucescat." Piscator, "Epistle 68," 123.

#### 4.1. Defining Justification as Remission of Sins

When examining what he saw as four parts in Beza's doctrine of justification, Piscator presented a simple view of justification to oppose the complex view of Beza.<sup>9</sup>

As for me, concerning the remission of sins which moves and impels God that he may justify us, which you make it the first part of justification, this I grant. Concerning the three remaining parts which you add to this, this I deny. Since the remission of sins which moves and impels God that he may justify us, this is to pronounce righteous, or to acquit.<sup>10</sup>

God reckons us righteous on account of the "righteousness acquired by the death of Christ" (*justiciam morte Christi partam*), and to have sins forgiven, to be acquitted, is the exact same thing as to be justified. Piscator supports this claim by arguing from Romans 8:1, 33-34, as well as Proverbs 17:15, that justification and condemnation are terms used as opposites. Piscator's reasoning is that if one is condemned by sins committed, once those sins are paid for, then the person is transferred to the opposite state, being justified. He also quotes Romans 3:24-26 as well as Romans 4:5-8, and comments: "Look how the Apostle takes these two for the same thing, righteousness imputed and sins forgiven, or the non-imputation of sins. Therefore should we view the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to us to be anything other than his obedience of death, by which he atoned for our sins?"<sup>11</sup> This rhetorical question is followed by texts such as Romans 5:9 and 1 John

<sup>9</sup> "totam tuam de justificatione nostri sententiam complexus videris. Mihi vero primum illud non probatur, quod partes constituis justificationis, quae tamen actio est simplex." Piscator, "Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae," 51.

<sup>10</sup> "Equidem de remissione peccatorum quae Deum movet atque impellit ut nos justificet, quam tu primam justificationis partem constituis, hoc concedo. De tribus partibus vero reliquis quas huic addis, idipsum nego. Etenim remissio peccatorum Deum movet atque impellit ut nos justificet, hoc est justos pronunciet, seu absolvat." Piscator, "Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae," 52.

<sup>11</sup> "En quomodo Apostolus pro eodem accipiat haec duo, imputari justiciam et remitti peccata, seu non imputari peccata. Non est igitur quod existimemus justiciam Christi quae nobis imputatur quicquam aliud

1:7 which focus on the blood of Christ to provide us with justification from all types of sins.

Justification from all types of sins is better explained in the *13 Theses*, where he is opposing the parallels which Beza had drawn between Christ's righteousness and our sins. Those people, Piscator explains in theses 5 and 6, who do not hold to the simplicity of the sacrifice of Christ

they reckon as opposites diverse kinds of Christ's righteousness to diverse kinds of sins, applying diverse remedies to just as many diverse illnesses: of course, for original sin the holiness of the human nature of Christ in conception is introduced; for the sins of omission, the holy life of Christ, in which he fulfilled whatever God commanded in his law; for the sins of commission the passion and death of Christ, which paid their penalty.

But (because I should say it peacefully to them) they deviate from the truth and simplicity of the Scriptures with their elegant analogies of symmetric kind. For, if the blood of Christ, as John testifies [I John 1:7], cleanses us from every sin, then it cleanses us not only from sins of commission – that is, those we have perpetrated, which the law prohibits – but also from the sins of omission – that is, those we omitted and did not do – which God commands to be done in the law; more so, [we are purified] even from original sin, that from which sprung all the rest. Likewise, if without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, as Paul testifies to the Hebrews [Heb. 9:22], then [there is no remission] either of original sin, or of actual [sins], whether they may be of commission or omission. In sum, the blood of Jesus Christ is like a panacea for the curing of all our diseases.<sup>12</sup>

---

esse quam obedientiam mortis ejus, qua expiavit nostra peccata?" Piscator, "Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae," 52.

<sup>12</sup> "diversis peccati speciebus diversas Justitiae Christi species, tanquam diversis morbis, diversa remedia applicanda, atque opponenda censent: nempe peccato originali sanctitatem naturae humanae Christi in conceptione ei inditam: peccatis omissionis, sanctam vitam Christi, qua praestitit, quaecumque Deus in lege sua imperavit: peccatis vero commissionis passionem et mortem Christi, qua poenam eorum persolvit.

At (quod pace illorum dixerim) aberrant illi haec elegantis analogiae seu proportionis specie, a veritate et simplicitate scripturarum. Nam, si sanguis Christi, ut Joannes testatur, nos purgat ab omni peccato: Ergo purgat nos non solum a peccatis commissionis, i. quibus perpetravimus, quae lex vetat: sed etiam a peccatis omissionis, i. quibus omisimus, nec fecimus ea, quae Deus facienda in lege imperat: imo etiam a peccato originali, quod caeterorum omnium scaturigo est. Item, si absque sanguinis effusione nulla sit peccatorum remissio, ut Paulus testatur ad Hebraeos: ergo nec originalis peccati, nec actualium, sive illa sint

Apparently, the distinction between sins of commission and sins of omission do not come from Beza, but they are Piscator's interpretation of the Bezan emphasis on the twofold requirement of the law: not to do what the law prohibits and to do what the law commands.<sup>13</sup> Piscator interpreted the transgression of these two requirements as two different types of actual sin and then concluded that the blood of Christ forgives us from all sin, not only actual but even original. Piscator's argument does make sense within his line of thought, but the difference between sins of omission – which both parties within the debate agree are forgiven by Christ's satisfaction – and the necessity of a righteousness that gains the reward of life, would be explained more clearly in later Reformed discussions.

The twelfth of the *13 Theses* reinforces the assertion that Scriptural language uses 'imputation of righteousness' and 'forgiveness of sins' as synonymous.

Although Scripture nowhere says that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, nevertheless it can be said, provided that it is understood in the correct manner – that is, so that the sense of those words may agree to those things that are given in Scripture concerning the righteousness imputed to us – of course if it is understood that the righteousness acquired for us by the death of Christ is imputed to us, which is nothing other than the remission of sins, it is evident because it is proven from the coherence of the ideas, in Romans 4:5, 6, 7... So, according to Paul, these two phrases are equivalent in the same chapter of Romans (4:2-3): to be justified and to have righteousness imputed. In this way, Christ took these two [phrases] as equivalent in Luke (8:13-14): God being favorable to a sinner (which is nothing other than to forgive his sins) and to justify the sinner. Also in Paul's

---

commissionis, sive omissionis. Denique sanguis Jesu Christi esse velut panaces ad sanandum omnes nostros morbos." Apud Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 242-243.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Beza's epistle 35 to Caspar Olevianus in Bez, *Volumen tractationum Theologicarum*, 3:247-248; the same text is found in Alain Dufour et al., *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze 1570* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1983), 11:46-48.

discourse in Acts (13:38-39), these two were taken as equivalent: to have sins remitted and to be justified.<sup>14</sup>

All the passages from Scripture cited by Piscator, according to him, use parallel language; they use expressions such as “righteousness imputed,” “forgiveness of sins” and “to be justified” interchangeably. One who opposed Piscator raised the text in Acts 13 to say that one could speak of justification strictly speaking – where it would refer to absolution from sins – but justification could also be understood broadly, as in this passage. According to this unnamed opponent, “from all things” in verse 39 was not referring to sins, nor was it vain repetition, but pointed to the demands of the law from which we are also justified. Piscator rejects the notion that the word ‘justification’ is attributed a double meaning in Scripture, a strict and a broad one; he says it lacks proof.<sup>15</sup> He argued that Scripture could use different terms to mean the same thing.

The explanation of the “coherence of the ideas” (*cohaerentia sententiarum*) in Romans 4 is refined in his commentary on Romans. In the *analysis* section, Piscator observes that the argument in verses 4 to 6 is an enthymeme where Paul goes from the effect (blessedness) to the cause (righteousness).<sup>16</sup> In his *observatio* on verses 4 to 12 of

---

<sup>14</sup> “Etsi scriptura nusquam dicit, imputari nobis justiciam Christi: tamen id dici potest, dum modo recte intelligatur, i. ita ut sensus verborum istorum consentaneus sit iis, quae de Justitia nobis imputata in scriptura donantur: nempe si intelligatur, imputari nobis justiciam morte Christi partam, quae nihil aliud est, quam peccatorum remissio, id quod manifeste liquet ex cohaerentia sententiarum, Rom. 4 v. 5, 6, 7... Sic aequipollent apud Paulum hae duae phrases: Justificari et Justiciam imputari eodem capite 4. ad Rom. V. 2 et 3. Sic Christus pro aequipollentibus accipit haec duo: Deum peccatori esse propitium (quod nihil aliud eset, quam remittere ei peccata) et peccatorem justificare Luc. 18 v. 13 et 14. Sic pro aequipollentibus accipiuntur haec duo: Remitti peccata et Justificari in oratione Pauli Act. 13 v. 38, 39.” Apud Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 244.

<sup>15</sup> “quòd vocabulo Justificationis, quum scriptura loquitur de justificatione hominis coram Deo, tribuitur significatio duplex, stricta & latior: eget probatione.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 5.

<sup>16</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 43.

this chapter, Piscator notes that there are “equivalent sentences concerning imputative righteousness” (*phrases aequipollentes de justitia imputativa*) such as “faith imputed for righteousness” in verses 3, 5, 9, and “righteousness imputed”– obviously by faith – in verses 6 and 11. These are synonymous with “forgiven iniquities, covered sins, sins not imputed” from verses 7 and 8. Piscator’s reasoning is that the comparison of verses 6 and 7 allows for the conclusion of equivalence, for when Paul quotes Psalm 32 it is as if he were saying: “blessed are those to whom righteousness is imputed” (*beati quibus imputata est justitia*). Then Piscator concludes the equivalence of sentences with a typical Ramistic syllogism:

The equivalence of those sentences must be diligently noted, because it confirms the proposition of a demonstrative syllogism, by which it is demonstrated that the thing which is imputed to us for righteousness is only the satisfaction or the obedience of Christ suffering hellish torments for us. Moreover the syllogism of which we speak is this:

That by which our sins are atoned, and the remission of sins obtained from God for us, is the very righteousness which is imputed to us by God.  
 But only the obedience of Christ’s suffering for us is that by which our sins are atoned, and the remission of sins obtained from God for us.  
 Therefore, only the obedience of Christ’s suffering for us is that which is imputed by God to us for righteousness.<sup>17</sup>

He concludes saying this syllogism can be confirmed by many texts from Scripture, but this is not the place to list them all.

---

<sup>17</sup> “Haec phrasium illarum aequipollentia ideò diligenter est notanda, quia facit ad confirmandam propositionem syllogismi demonstrativi, quo demonstratur, Rem illam quae nobis ad justitiam imputatur, esse solam satisfactionem seu obedientiam Christi patientis pro nobis cruciatus infernales. Syllogismus autem quem dicimus, est hic:

Id quo peccata nostra sunt expiata, nobisq; remissio illorum à Deo impetrata, est idipsum quod nobis ad justitiam à Deo imputatur.

At sola obedientia patientis pro nobis Christi, est id quo peccata nostra expiata sunt, nobisque remissio illorum à Deo impetrata.

Ergo sola obedientia patientis pro nobis Christi, est id quod nobis ad justitiam à Deo imputatur.”

Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 51.

In his book against Bellarmine, Piscator repeats the idea that forgiveness of sins is the full definition of justification and the equivalence between forgiveness of sins and imputation of righteousness.<sup>18</sup> Within the polemics against papists, such teaching is countering the notion that forgiveness of sins is only part of justification, and that there also needs to be observation of the law (works) coming from inward renewing. Nevertheless, it is not useful to conclude that “in reacting against Rome’s infused righteousness, Piscator overreacted against historic Protestantism’s imputed righteousness.”<sup>19</sup> Besides being a subjective conclusion, which could or could not be true of Piscator, it does not match the reaction of many other Protestants who opposed Rome’s teaching of infused righteousness but still upheld the imputation of Christ’s active obedience. On top of that, defenders of active obedience imputed did not see a problem in defining justification as remission of sins. George Walker spoke of remission of sins understood in a “large sense” and in a “strict sense,”<sup>20</sup> and Beza considers it a suitable and correct definition of justification.<sup>21</sup> Lastly, Piscator’s arguments based on Romans 4 arose first in response to Beza before they appeared in his writing against Robert Bellarmine.

---

<sup>18</sup> Piscator, *A Learned and Profitable Treatise of mans Iustification*, 13-28, 100-109, 114.

<sup>19</sup> Dennison, “Johannes Piscator and the Doctrine of Justification,” 10.

<sup>20</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme*, 338-340.

<sup>21</sup> “Neque verò id obstat quominus nostra iustificatio remissione peccatorum aptè & rectè definiatur, sicut pleniùs demonstrarum me spero, si opus erit.” Beza, *Volumen tractationum Theologicarum* vol. 3, 248.

The definition of justification as remission of sins, which is the same as imputed righteousness, is reasserted in his letter to the French Reformed Synod<sup>22</sup> as well as in his polemical *Apologia* without any significant changes.<sup>23</sup> In the latter work, he denies that one may prove out of Romans 8:32 that remission of sins is a synecdoche pointing to the whole of justification.<sup>24</sup> In Piscator's view, one cannot infer from the word "all" that the holy life of Christ was imputed to us for righteousness without doing violence to the Apostle's word.<sup>25</sup> He argued that "such synecdoche cannot be used in the proposition, unless first it were demonstrated that the two parts of justification, about which there is controversy, is taught in Scripture."<sup>26</sup> The argument of synecdoche, tied to passages such as Romans 4, would become prevalent among seventeenth century debates. This linguistic device was more nuanced and convincing than the attempt to prove that Scripture has a broad and a strict meaning for justification.

One unique observation he makes in the *Apologia* is that he defends himself against interpreting righteousness in Romans 4:6 as "the passive righteousness of Christ" (*justitia Christi passiva*), but views it as "the righteousness of man by which he is held as

---

<sup>22</sup> Piscator, "Epistle 68," 123.

<sup>23</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 4, 63. Also cf. Gataker, *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis*, 10-11.

<sup>24</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 54.

<sup>25</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 72.

<sup>26</sup> "synecdoche ista non postest in proposito adhiberi, nisi prius fuerit demonstratum, duas illas justificationis partes, de quibus controversia est, in scriptura tradi." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 74.

righteous before God” (*justitia hominis quâ is pro justo à Deo habetur*).<sup>27</sup> Here he seems to be playing semantics since, ultimately, he does believe the former.

#### 4.2. The “Silence” of Scripture in Regards to Active Obedience as Imputed

A second argument in Piscator’s point of view is that nowhere does Scripture talk about the obedience of Christ’s life as a meritorious cause of justification. In some of his writings the argument is more nuanced than others. There are times in which he states that certain texts do not refer to Christ’s obedience of life at all and there are other occasions in which he strongly affirms to believe in Christ’s life of obedience but that Scripture doesn’t present it as imputed. His initial discourses on the issue of active obedience don’t focus on the “silence” of Scripture argument, but rather on the biblical stress on the blood of Christ as well as the equivalence of remission of sins and righteousness imputed. In his later reflections, after going over texts of Scripture and reassuring himself of his position, he gains confidence to say that Christ’s active obedience is unspoken of in Scripture.

In his *observatio* on Romans 4:25,<sup>28</sup> Piscator writes a long reflection showing how Scripture always speaks about the death of Christ atoning for our sins, but never of the obedience of his life earning eternal life for us. He argues that since

---

<sup>27</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 48.

<sup>28</sup> Apparently, Romans 4:25 was a disputed proof-text in the first controversies over active obedience, though it did fade away in later debates. We do know that when the French Synod of Reformed Churches sent the letter to Piscator disagreeing with his teaching, this verse was one of the three Scriptural passages (the other two being Romans 5:19 and Philippians 2:8) presented by their emissary (*legatus*). Cf. “Epistle 68 – Reverendis Amplissimis & Doctissimis viris Dominis Pastoribus Ecclesiarum Gallicarum,” 121-125. We also see it being used by Piscator’s opponent just prior to 1618. Cf. Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De*

no sins are remitted by God for us unless they are atoned for, therefore it must not be reckoned [that] original sin was remitted for us on account of the holy conception of Christ; the same for what are called sins of omission, remitted for us on account of the holy life of Christ, [as if it were] indeed necessary that sin be atoned for by those actions of Christ, which it is not, obviously, since all our sins have been atoned only through the death of Christ. To confirm this thought, besides this text the Scriptures provide many other testimonies from which several [can] be brought forth here without any difficulty<sup>29</sup>

and the texts transcribed by Piscator are: Mat. 20:28; 26:28; Luk 22:20; Joh 1:29; Act 20:28; Rom 3:24-25; 5:9; 8:3; Gal 3:13; Tit 2:14; Heb 2:14-15; 9:12, 14, 22, 26; 10:10; 1 Pet 1:19; 2:24; 3:18; 1 Joh 1:7; 2:2.

It is important to observe that Piscator's strict definition of justification causes him to refute an argument that was not common among his opponents. As the explanation which follows might clarify, it could have some confusion on Piscator's part and some lack of clarity on Beza's part. In his *Confession*, Beza said that Christ takes all our "miseries" (*miseres*) upon himself and provides us with "remedies" (*remedes*), the first of them being "the multitude of our sinnes" (*la multitude de nos pechez*) which was remedied with "the precious blood of Jesus Christ" (*le sang de Iesus Christ*), the second "assault" (*assaut*) refers to being "unfurnished of the rightnes which god requireth of vs" (*desgarnis de la iustice que Dieu requiert de nous*) corrected by Jesus' "perfect obedience according to the law" (*obeissance entiere selon la Loy*), and the third misery is

---

*Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 32. For a rebuttal of Piscator's observation on Rom. 4:25, see Andrew Willet, *Hexapla: that is, A Six-Fold Commentarie vpon the most Diuine Epistle of the holy Apostle S. Paul to the Romanes* (Cambridge: Cantrell Legge, 1620), 232-233.

<sup>29</sup> "nulla peccata nobis à Deo remittantur, nisi sint expiata: non est igitur putandum, peccatum originis remitti nobis propter sanctam Christi conceptionem: item peccata quae vocantur omissionis, remitti nobis propter sanctam Christi vitam, oportet enim ista peccata per illas Christi actiones esse expiata: id quod non est: quippe quum omnia nostra peccata expiata sint per solam mortem Christi. Ad quam sententiam confirmandam, praeter hunc locum alia plurima Scripturae testimonia faciunt: è quibus nonnulla huc annotare haud pigebit." Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 53.

our “naturall corruption or originall synne” (*souillure naturelle, ou peche originel*), a root problem fixed with the imputation of Christ’s holiness from his holy conception. These three “assaults” are part of one temptation against our “unworthynes” (*indignite*).<sup>30</sup>

Notice that the first and the third are explicitly called ‘sins.’ The second is considered a ‘misery,’ it is part of our ‘unworthiness,’ it is the object of Satan’s ‘temptation’ against our conscience – all negative words – but it is never called sin.<sup>31</sup> In fact, in other writings already surveyed in chapter 3, Beza explicates that the imputation of Christ’s obedience to the law is not to cover sins but to entitle us to the Law’s promise of eternal life.

However, Piscator interpreted all three elements of our ‘unworthiness’ as sins, and he called the absence of righteousness ‘sins of omission.’ Since Piscator believes justification is solely forgiveness of sins, he sees all sin to be forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ and he provides the biblical support for that. Beza would not have disagreed that Christ’s atoning blood remits us from all sin, but his soteriological framework was much broader since it included the constant demand for perfect conduct from the law (resolved by the second remedy) as well as the need to be renewed into Christ’s image (initiated by the third remedy). On the other hand, Piscator preferred a much more *simplex* version of Christ’s remedy since it corresponded to a simple version of sin. He criticized Beza for distinguishing the corruption of our nature (original sin) from sins

---

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Beza, *A briefe and pithie summe of the christian faith*, iv.9-12 (p. 18-24); for the original French, see Beze, *Confession de la foy chrestienne*, 33-42.

<sup>31</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux (or Pseudo-Bernard; see chapter 3) speaks of a “triple illness” (*triplici morbo*): “Unclean birth, perverse life, and dangerous death” (*Nativitas immunda, vita perversa, mors periculosa*). *Liber Sententiarum*, in *PL* 184, col. 1141D-1142A. While Bernard’s second illness receives a sinful adjective (*perversa*), Beza addresses it as an obligation brought upon us by the law that even the prelapsarian Adam had.

committed. The lamb of God who removes the sin of the world, according to Piscator, removes the source of all sin, thus dealing with the problem of sin completely.<sup>32</sup>

Piscator's reasoning is that the abundance of texts quoted by him settles the dispute. Later in his commentary, when he is discussing Paul's treatment of justification in Romans, he writes that the apostle

in this entire discourse about the justification of man before God, nowhere does he mention the holy life of Christ as the thing by which we are justified, or if you will that it is imputed to us for righteousness by God, but everywhere he mentions the blood of Christ... This very thing Scripture also teaches elsewhere: just as we have abundantly shown above in the Observation upon verse 25 of chapter four.<sup>33</sup>

In *Epistle 68* he also uses "nowhere" (*nusquam*) and "everywhere" (*ubique*) when explaining Romans 5:19: "In so far as it may mean only the other (of course the obedience of Christ's death), from this I prove, elsewhere, as often as it speaks about the meritorious cause of the remission of sins, nowhere does it indicate the obedience of life, but everywhere the obedience of death."<sup>34</sup> Piscator is dogmatic concerning the silence of Scripture: "without a doubt, the righteousness of the person or [the righteousness] of the

---

<sup>32</sup> "Si ab omni, ergo etiam a corruptionis nostrae reatu atque adeo ab ipso originali peccato, et quidem de hoc nominatim intelligendum videtur dictum Jo. Baptistae qui Jesum digito demonstrans 'Ecce, inquit, agnus ille Dei qui tollit peccatum (a) martivan) mundi.' Joh. 1, v. 29. Etsi enim Jo. Baptista non negat Jesum tanquam agnum immaculatum victimam fore, qua expientur omnia totius mundi credentium peccata, id quod diserte Joannes Apostolus adfirmat, tamen peccatum illud primum tanquam caeterorum omnium fontem potissimum nominat. Non est igitur quod putemus reatum nostrae corruptionis tegi imputatione obedientiae Christi, nempe ejus, qua praestitit Legem. At dum sic loqueris, corruptionem nostrae naturae e medio nostrorum peccatorum eximis." Piscator, "Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae," 54.

<sup>33</sup> "in hac tota disputatione de justificatione hominis coram Deo, nusquam commemorat sanctam vitam Christi, tanquam eam rem per quam justificemur, quaeve nobis ad justitiam à Deo imputetur: sed ubique commemorat sanguinem Christi... Quod ipsum alibi quoque Scriptura tradit: sicut abuadè ostendimus supra in Observatione ex vers. 25. capituli quarti." Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 66.

<sup>34</sup> "Quod autem intelligat alteram tantum, videlicet obedientiam mortis Christi, ex eo probò, quod alibi, quoties de causa meritoria remissionis peccatorum loquitur, nusquam obedientiam vitae indicat, sed ubique obedientiam mortis." Piscator, "Epistle 68," 123.

life of Christ as imputed to us cannot be shown from the Scriptures.”<sup>35</sup> The assessment that certain teachings concerning Christ’s active obedience are nowhere (*nusquam*) found in Scripture is repeated several times in the *Apologia*.<sup>36</sup>

Piscator continues his *observatio* on Romans 4:25 raising a possible objection by those who challenged him with Romans 5:10 teaching that Christ’s life does have a participation in our salvation, and he responds:

But it is clear the Apostle talks about the glorious life of Christ to which he was raised from the dead – which is not to prefer the other [interpretation], that Christ acquired salvation for us by his death – to uphold [salvation] by his power or virtue as eternal. Further on, from this place this must also be observed: just as through the obedience of Christ’s suffering for us, remission of sins and freedom from eternal death have been acquired for us (just as it was said a little while before that the things which have been mentioned are abundantly witnessed), so even through the same obedience eternal life was acquired for us. Then, from the very same thing it is proven that where remission of sins is (as Luther in his Catechism correctly teaches)<sup>37</sup> there is also life and salvation; moreover [it is] true from the very same words of not a few passages.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> “nimirum imputetur nobis iusticia personae aut vitae Christi, id quod e scripturis ostendi non potest.” Apud Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 244.

<sup>36</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 6, 11, 39, 46, 81; also cf. Gataker, *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis*, 7, 8.

<sup>37</sup> I have looked at both of Luther’s Catechisms, particularly his exposition of the third article of the Creed which talks about forgiveness of sins and life everlasting, but I haven’t found any one sentence that matches Piscator’s idea. Nevertheless, the idea that “where there is remission of sins there is also life” could be applied to Luther’s discussion of the third article of the Creed in his *Larger Catechism* where he argues that those blessings cannot be attained outside of the community of saints, or the Christian church (see Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, 417-418). If that is the passage where Piscator is getting his idea from, then he is taking Luther out of context.

<sup>38</sup> “At planum est Apostolum loqui de vita Christi gloriosa ad quam resurrexit ex morte: neque aliud velle, quàm Christum salutem nobis morte sua partam, virtute seu potentia sua in aeternum tueri. Porrò hoc loco illud quoque observandum: sicut per obedientiam Christi patientis pro nobis, parta nobis est remissio peccatorum & liberatio à morte aeterna (sicut dicta paulo antè commemorata abundè testantur) ita etiam per eandem obedientiam partam nobis esse vitam aeternam. Id quod tum ex re ipsa liquet: nam ubi est remissio peccatorum (sicut rectè Lutherus in sua Catechesis tradit) ibi etiam est vita ac salus: tum verò ex ipsis verbis nonnullorum dictorum.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 54. Piscator raises a possible textual reason why Romans 5:10 was mistakenly held to refer to a present blessing. He says that Beza’s 1567 edition of the New Testament had the word “now,” a mistake which was corrected in the 1588

The passages he brings up are: Gal 3:13-14 which connects the curse of the law with the blessing to Abraham which includes eternal life; Heb 2:9-10 which puts together God leading his sons to glory through the death of his only begotten son;<sup>39</sup> Heb 10:19 where the right to enter the holy of holies, i.e. heaven, which is the right of eternal life acquired for us, is ascribed to the blood of Christ; 1 Pet 3:18 where the passion of Christ is what introduces us in heaven for the enjoyment of eternal life. “Therefore, the possession of eternal life is not directed from part, as if the effect were ascribed to the obedience of Christ which he offers to the Father by holy living according to the Law.”<sup>40</sup>

Here, Piscator’s argument of the silence of Scripture targets another angle. Not only does he attack active obedience imputed, but he says that Scripture attributes the gift of eternal life to Christ’s passion.<sup>41</sup> In his treatise against Bellarmine he makes the case that the imputation of Christ’s satisfaction not only forgives sin but also brings eternal life:

---

edition of the New Testament. Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 40-41.

<sup>39</sup> In the *Apologia*, Piscator says that through the same meritorious cause Christ abolished death (Heb 2:14) and produced life (Heb 2:10): “per quam causam meritoriam Christus mortem abolevit, per eandem etiam vitam in lucem produxit.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 35.

<sup>40</sup> “Quare non rectè à nonnullis possessio vitae aeternae, tanquam effectum adscribitur obedientiae Christi quam Patri praestitit sanctè vivendo secundum Legem.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 55.

<sup>41</sup> In his exposition of the Apostles’ Creed, Piscator regards the expiation of sins and eternal life as two of the four fruits of Christ’s passion (*fructus passionum Christi*) – the other two fruits being the procuring of the Holy Spirit and the freedom from ceremonial law. Cf. Johannes Piscator, *Expositio Capitvum Catecheseos Religionis Christianae* (Londini: Richardus Field, 1603), 35-41. In Gataker’s work, Piscator refers to Hebrews 9:15 showing that the fruit of Christ’s death is remission of sins and from it proceeds the inheritance of eternal life. Gataker, *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis*, 16, 29.

For remission of sinnes doth not onely deliuer from paine, to wit, eternall death; but also bringeth glorie or eternall life. The reason of which thing is this, that remission of sinnes, wherein mans iustification consisteth, is remission of all sinnes: and therefore not onely of sinnes of committing, but also of sinnes of omitting: whereby it commeth, that he to whome God forgiueth sinnes, is so accounted of, as if he had not only committed nothing which God hath forbidden in his law: but also, omitted nothing of that which he hath commanded: and therefore, as if he had perfectly fulfilled the law of God. Now where the perfect fulfilling of the law is, there also is life; according to that, *The man that doeth these thinges shall liue in them.*<sup>42</sup>

His logical deduction results, again, from his equivalence between fulfilling the law and not omitting duties. The equivalence is not mistaken, but it does not consider Adam at the beginning of his ‘testing’ stage where he had not yet fulfilled the law, but had not omitted any of his duties either – this would be consistently unfolded in later Reformed theology. Another later distinction that Piscator does not contemplate is to differentiate between the payment of sins of omission and the duty to fulfill the law in order to be regarded righteous and worthy of a reward.

Piscator saw freedom from eternal death and the gift of eternal life as the same thing. In his *Examen* of Beza, Piscator refers to Daniel 9:24 whereby the righteousness of Christ imputed to us “is not understood to be the righteousness inherent in Christ from his holy life, or his perfect observance of the law, but the obedience of death by which he satisfied for our sins and brought eternal righteousness.”<sup>43</sup> When an opponent tried to argue that Daniel 9:24 taught that the Messiah had worked a twofold redemption by erasing sins and bringing eternal righteousness, Piscator intelligently responded that if

---

<sup>42</sup> Piscator, *A Learned and Profitable Treatise of mans Iustification*, 106-107.

<sup>43</sup> “non intelligi iusticiam Christo inhaerentem ex sancta ipsius vita, seu perfecta observatione legis, sed obedientiam mortis qua satisfecit in nostris peccatis qua iusticiam sempiternam... adduxit.” Piscator, “*Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae*,” 52-53.

one is going to extract a double meritorious cause of justification from this verse, according to the text one should make it six – a reference to the six grammatical clauses in the passage.<sup>44</sup> Piscator, thus, did not accept distinct causes to the freedom from death and the gift of life.

What Piscator allowed, however, was that Christ's righteousness was multifaceted. He indicated that Christ had a habitual holiness (from his holy conception) as well as a life of obedience to the law, and he even believed that both were connected to our redemption, though indirectly. In the 8<sup>th</sup> of his *13 Theses*, he even gives them a causal character:

Someone will say: Therefore do you exclude the holiness of Christ's nature as well as the holiness of Christ's life, from our justification? I answer: I exclude them as parts opposed to certain kinds of sins (so to speak). But I do not exclude them as causes, without which the passion and death of Christ could not be imputed to us for righteousness. In fact, I return to that point before those more sublime causes all the way to the holiness of the divine nature of Christ.<sup>45</sup>

That the holiness of Christ's divine nature is just a cause as the other two facets of the holiness of his human nature is not a recurrent argument in his future works, but it demonstrates in which sense he took them to be causes. Just like the divine holiness of Christ could not be thought as imputed, for that would be Osiandric, neither could the

---

<sup>44</sup> "At si dicamus, verbis illis Gabrielis indicari causas justificationis meritorias diversas, ac proinde duas: pari ratione dicendum erit, justificationis causas meritorias esse sex: quia praeter illa duo commemorantur ibidem quatuor illa." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Homini coram Deo*, 34.

<sup>45</sup> "inquiet aliquis: Tunc igitur sanctitatem naturae Christi, itemque sanctitatem vitae Christi a justificatione nostri excludis? Respondeo: Excludo ut partes certis peccati speciebus (ut dictum est) oppositas. At non excludo, ut causas, sine quibus passio et mors Christi non potuisset nobis ad justiciam imputari. Imo praeter illas causas adhuc sublimiorem regresso, usque sanctitatem naturae divinae Christi." Piscator, "Theses XIII de Justificatione Homini coram Deo," in Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 243.

other two aspects of Christ's human holiness. However, they all have some participation in our justification.

Mainly out of Hebrews 7:26, Piscator sees Christ's human holiness as a pre-requisite for his priesthood.<sup>46</sup> In his *scholia* on this verse, Piscator writes that “[t]his holiness was prefigured in the Law through this: that it was necessary for the High-Priest to be pure from all fault of the body, (Lev. 21:18ff),” and through such holiness Christ entered heaven as if it were the sanctuary.<sup>47</sup> In the *observatio*, he expands:

The reason why it was necessary that Christ be holy, that is, both conceived and always lived in a holy way, was so that he might be the suitable high-priest for us. As a matter of fact, it was necessary for whoever ought to reconcile God to us and restore us in his grace that he be in the favor of God and also has not ever exhibited any sin. To be sure, it is also not true [that] for God who is holy, that Christ should have undertaken to intercede for us unless he had been holy, which indeed was the reason why it was necessary that the Levitical high-priest first had to offer [a sacrifice] for his own sins as well as for the sins of the people, for unless the very first had the character (*habitus*) of holiness, he could not have sacrificed and interceded for the people.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> That is how he can maintain that such obedience was ‘for us’ (*propter nos*): “Christum legi se subiecisse sponte proter nos: nimirum ut per illius observationem evaderet idoneus ad fungendum pro nobis officio sacerdotis” and he follows with the quotation of Hebrews 7:26. Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 19.

<sup>47</sup> “Haec sanctitas praefigurata fuit in Lege per hoc, quòd Pontificem oportuit purum esse ab omni corporis vitio, Levit. 21. V. 18. & deinceps.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 749.

<sup>48</sup> “Causa cur Christum oportuit esse sanctum, id est, & sanctè conceptum esse, & sanctè semper vixisse, fuit: ut esset idoneus pontifex pro nobis. Etenim qui Deum nobis reconciliare, nosque in gratiâ ejus restituere debebat, eum necesse erat ipsum esse in gratia Dei, ac proinde nullo unquam peccato eum ostendisse. Nec verò ad Deum qui sanctus est, aditum Christus habuisset ad interpellandum pro nobis, nisi & ipse sanctus fuisset. quae etiam causa fuit cur pontificem Leuiticum oportuit priùs pro suis ipsius peccatis offerre, quàm pro peccatis populi, nisi enim ipse priùs pro sancto fuisset habitus, non potuisset pro peccatoribus sacrificare atque intercedere.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 751.

From this we observe that Piscator knows there are other kinds of righteousness in Christ and he includes those two parts<sup>49</sup> in the Savior's redemptive journey. Piscator sees them as necessary for the twofold function of Christ's priesthood: sacrifice and intercession.<sup>50</sup>

In the *13 Theses*, where he regards both the holiness of Christ's divine and human nature participating in satisfaction for sins, he details how each facet of Christ's holiness qualifies his blood:

For in order that the blood of Christ might be precious enough, it was necessary that it was the blood of the son of God as it is understood from the words of Paul in Acts 20, where he says: "God purchased the Church for himself with his own blood." Likewise in order that the victim would be holy [and] pleasing to God, it was necessary that the human nature of Christ was holy as it is understood from the words of Peter, where he says (1 Peter 1:18, 19): "We are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and uncontaminated." Besides, in order that our High-Priest would have access to God and could placate him, it was necessary that his life was holy: For such a High-Priest was fitting for us, as Paul testified to the Hebrews (Hebrews 7:26).<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, it needs to be stated that such interpretation of Hebrews 7:26 – that Christ's holiness, whether incipient or external, was preparatory for his priesthood – was not exclusive of those who denied the imputation of Christ's active obedience. Beza stressed

---

<sup>49</sup> Piscator responds more faithfully to Beza's partition than Wendelin does, for the latter understands that "*obedientia activa*" includes both "*justitia & sanctitas inhaerens*." Wendelini, *Christianae theologiae libri duo*, 421. On the other hand, Wendelin was in agreement with Piscator in not denying the redemptive connection of the two other parts of Christ's righteousness of Bezan doctrine, only their function (prerequisite rather than substitutive).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, X.viii (p. 54-55).

<sup>51</sup> "Nam ut sanguis Christi esset satis preciosus: oportuit eum esse sanguinem filii Dei: ut intelligitur ex verbis Pauli Act. 20, ubi ait: Deum acquisivisse sibi Ecclesiam proprio sanguine. Item ut victima esset sancta Deoque placens, oportuit humanam naturam Christi esse sanctam: ut intelligitur ex verbis Petri, ubi ait (1. Petr. 1<sup>18,19</sup>): Nos esse redemptos precioso sanguine Christi, tanquam agni immaculati et incontaminati. Praeterea ut summus noster sacerdos aditum ad Deum haberet, eique placere posset: oportuit vitam ejus esse sanctam: Talis enim nos decebat Pontifex ut Paulus ad Hebraeos testatur (Hebr. 7<sup>26</sup>)."  
Piscator, "Theses XIII de Justificatione Hominis coram Deo," in Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 243.

the required purity needed for a priest that was exclusive of Christ.<sup>52</sup> Johannes Wollebius and John Owen (1616-1683), who held to the imputation of Christ's active obedience, also recognized the intermediary function of Christ's holiness in this verse, though Wollebius linked it to the holiness of his suffering<sup>53</sup> while Owen preferred to see it as the holiness of Christ's nature.<sup>54</sup> So, both poles of the debate over active obedience agree that Christ's inherent holiness is necessary for Christ's mediatorial role as a priest. They do disagree, however, whether this is the only function of his holiness as a Mediator.

Another point of disagreement is the relationship between Christ's obedience and his human nature. In typical Anselmian fashion, Piscator sees the two obediences quite distinctly in Hebrews 10, one of them being obligatory and the other voluntary. "And indeed Christ had the obedience of life in common with us, in so far as he was obliged to

---

<sup>52</sup> "Aliud argumentum, Innocentia & puritas summa in Pontifice requiritur, quae ipsum à peccatoribus segreget, pro quibus oblationem facit. Atqui Leuitici Pontifices tales non inueniuntur, vt qui pro suis ipsorum peccatis primùm offerent: sed vnus Christus talis est, ideòque verus & vnicus Pontifex." Beza, *Iesv Christi D. N. Novvm Testamentvm* (1574), 355.

<sup>53</sup> "if he had not suffered holily and innocently, we could not have a perfect High-Priest, *Heb. 7.26.*" Wollebius, *The Abridgement of Christian Divinitie*, 115. Elsewhere in the book, Wollebius recognized the need for Christ's purity of nature in order to be our priest, but not in connection to the verse in discussion: "it was needful that Christ should be born without sin, that we might have a holy High-Priest, *Heb. 7.17*" (p. 95).

<sup>54</sup> "It is therefore the *holy purity of the nature of Christ* that is intended in this expression. His life and actions are expressed in the ensuing epithets. His nature was pure and holy, absolutely free from any spot or taint of our original defilement. Hence, as he was conceived in the womb, and as he came from the womb, he was that τὸ ἅγιον, "holy thing" of God, Luke 1:35. All others since the fall have a polluted nature, and are originally unholy. But his conception being miraculous, by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost, and his nature not derived unto him by natural generation, (the only means of the propagation of original defilement,) and, in the first instant of its being, filled with all habitual seeds of grace, he was ὁσιος, "holy." And such a high priest became us as was so. Had he had a nature touched with sin, he had not been met either to be a priest or sacrifice. This holiness of nature was needful unto him who was to answer for the unholiness of our nature, and to take it away. *Unholy sinners* do stand in need of a *holy priest* and a *holy sacrifice.*" John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1862), 22:553-554.

it as true man; as for the obedience of death met for the elect,” it was a voluntary sponsorship.<sup>55</sup>

Further on, each obedience makes for our justification before God, but in a distinct and diverse manner. The obedience of the life of Christ makes for our justification, in so far as it is the necessary requisite for this in order that Christ may be the pure and holy Priest, that for us he could have an access of offering to God, and the holy victim, which would be accepted by God. And the holiness of Christ as was required in our High Priest,<sup>56</sup>

and Piscator points to passages that talk about the preciousness of Christ’s blood (1 Pet 1:19; Acts 20:28). “And thus the obedience of the life of Christ (that is which he performed according to the holy law by his life) from our justification is not excluded; but it is included in a convenient place, as the necessary requisite for this in order that Christ may be able to earn justification for us by obedience.”<sup>57</sup> It is important to highlight that Piscator’s restriction of Christ’s obedience to the law as for Christ only and his explanation of each obedience having one specific end is not entirely consistent with other observations on Christ’s work. When talking about the suffering of Christ, he says

---

<sup>55</sup> “Etenim obedientiam vitae habuit Christus nobiscum communem, quatenus obligatus ad eam erat ut verus homo: ad obedientiam verò mortis pro electis obeundae, ipse solus obligatus fuit, idque per voluntariam sponsonem.” Piscator, “Epistle 68,” 122-123. In Gataker’s work, there is also a clear defense from Piscator concerning the obligatory obedience of Christ: “Christus, q̄a homo, & creatura rationalis, obligatus fuerit pro se ipso ad Legi obediendum; manifestum est ex eo, q̄od omnis creatura rationalis Deo ad obedientiam obligata est; ac proinde etiam omnis homo: idque jure creationis. Nec Scriptura Christum ab hâc obligatione excipit; imò expressè dicit, Christum nobis similem factum esse per omnia excepto peccato. Heb. 2.17. & 4.15.” Gataker, *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis*, 19.

<sup>56</sup> “Porro utraque haec obedientia ad justificationem nostri coram Deo facit, sed distinctè diversisque modis. Obedientia vitae Christi ad justificationem nostri facit, tanquam necessarium requisitum ad hoc ut Christus esset purus & sanctus Sacerdos, qui pro nobis sese oblaturus aditum ad Deum haberet, & sancta victima, quae Deo accepta esse posset. Et sanctitatem in Christo ut in summo nostro sacerdote requisitam fuisse.” Piscator, “Epistle 68,” 123.

<sup>57</sup> “Atque sic obedientia vitae Christi (id est quam praestitit legi sancte secundum eam vivendo) à Justificatione nostri non excluditur; sed ei includitur conveniente loco, tanquam requisitum necessarium ad hoc ut Christus nobis justificationem per obedientiam posset mereri.” Piscator, “Epistle 68,” 123.

that it can both be an example as well as satisfy for our sins; and he notes: “since out of one action [meaning the obedience employed in suffering] there can be several different ends.”<sup>58</sup> There is no methodological consistency to claim the presence of diverse ends for passive obedience and not for active. Piscator simply denies the claim of some Reformed who believed that Christ obeyed the law for himself and also for others.

### 4.3. Analysis of “Proof-Texts” for Imputation of Active Obedience

#### 4.3.a. Romans 5:12-21.

This pericope, especially verse 19, is arguably the most important Scriptural text in the debate. As early as his *Examen* written to Beza, when dealing with the imputation of Christ’s fulfillment of the law, he writes to Beza: “you suppose Paul to argue [it] from chap. 5, verse 11 until the end of that chapter,” and specifically about verse 19, Piscator tries to draw Beza’s words: “You’ll say, look, the Apostle clearly mentions the obedience through which we were made righteous.”<sup>59</sup> Hence, virtually every time Piscator addresses the issue of active obedience, he interprets this verse within his theological viewpoint.<sup>60</sup> His most complete treatment comes from his Commentary, which follows.

When Piscator refers to the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, he explains it as that which was acquired by the death of Christ (*justitia Christi (id est, parta morte*

<sup>58</sup> “quum unius actionis (consideratur enim hinc obedientia in passione adhibita) plures possint esse fines diversi.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Homini coram Deo*, 39.

<sup>59</sup> “de hac putas disputare Paulum cap. 5, v. 11 usque ad illius capituli finem... En inquit obedientiam Apostolus diserte nominat, per quam justi constituamur.” Piscator, “*Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae*,” 53, 55.

<sup>60</sup> Piscator, “*Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae*,” 53, 55; idem, *A Learned and Profitable Treatise of mans Iustification*, 49; idem, “*Epistle 68*,” 123.

*Christi) quae credentibus imputatur*). This expression is repeated at least five times in his commentary of this pericope,<sup>61</sup> while Olevianus says it once.<sup>62</sup> This reflects not only the conclusions Piscator has reached up to this section of Romans, but also prepares the reader to interpret the latter part of chapter 5 as pointing to the death of Jesus Christ. He says the latter part of Romans 5 compares Christ and Adam with dissimilarities (for example, verses 15 to 17) and similarities (verses 18 and 19). On verse 18, Piscator's Latin translation renders "by the righteousness of one" (*per unius iustitiam*), thus not even raising the possibility of translation 'by one act of righteousness' – pointing to the cross as the sole act of righteousness –, as some latter commentators would do. He identifies the word "righteousness" (δικαιωμα) with the word "justification" (δικαιοσυνη) of the previous verse, both pointing not to Christ's essential righteousness neither to his inherent righteousness, but to his passive obedience. When his explanation arrives at verse 19, he has already prepared the reader for his interpretation of Paul's 'by the obedience of one':

That is, by that (which ought to be most well known by all Christians) obedience of that one, certainly of Christ: by which evidently Christ became obedient to the father offering him his own body as an expiatory victim for us (Heb. 10:9-10). Some expound this with regard to the obedience of the life of Christ, which some call it active while others call it passive. But that explanation does not agree with the remaining words of Paul in this discourse.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 58 (once), 59 (once), 65 (once), 66 (twice).

<sup>62</sup> "nobis imputet suam iustitiam morte sua nobis acquisitam." Olevianus, *In Epistolam D. Pavli Apostoli ad Romanos notae*, 222.

<sup>63</sup> "Id est, per illam (quae omnibus Christianis notissima debet esse) obedientiam illius unius, nempe Christi: qua scilicet Christus patri obediens factus fuit offerendo illi suum corpus in victimam expiatoriam pro nobis, Hebr. 10. vers. 9. & 10. Alii hoc exponunt de obedientia vitae Christi, quam nominant nonnulli activam: sicut alteram, passivam. Sed illa expositio non consentit, cum reliquis Pauli verbis in hac disputatione." Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 66.

Piscator, thus, concludes that to interpret ‘obedience’ as Christ’s fulfillment to the law does not fit the context of this verse. On top of that, he had previously concluded that such interpretation did not agree with the witness of other passages:

But if one understands it in this way, it might go against him, as it is clear from what has been said. Therefore this verse must be expounded so that it should agree with the rest of what the Apostle has said and with his whole doctrine. Clearly, so that we may say he understands that obedience by which [Christ] obeyed the father by suffering for us hellish sufferings.<sup>64</sup>

Piscator views the alternative interpretation as clearly going beyond not only the pericope, but even the rest of Scripture. In the next chapter we will detail how Piscator thought this interpretation also contradicted theological orthodoxy.

Piscator closes this section with the following observation:

It must be noted that the apostle attaches to that righteousness by which we are justified before God, eternal life, as a necessary consequence and effect. For he says in verse 17, “*how much more will those who receive that overflowing grace and gift of righteousness reign in life.*” And in verse 18 he calls it “*the justification of life.*” And in verse 21 he says, *grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.*” Moreover, that righteousness is nothing other than remission of sins, as it is evident from chapter 4 above, from collating verses six and seven. Moreover it is certain that remission of sins acquired for us is only the obedience of the suffering Christ, which we abundantly showed above (4:25). Therefore it is necessary that life also be acquired for us solely by that obedience. Therefore, err those who think that life is acquired for us through the holy life of Christ, which not a few call active obedience, just as they call the other passive obedience.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> “At si sic intelligeret, ipse sibi adversaretur: ut patet ex dictis. quare dictum hoc exponendum est ita vt cum reliquis ejusdem Apostoli dictis & perpetua ipsius doctrina consentiat: videlicet ut dicamus eum intelligere obedientiam illam quo patri obedivit patiendo pro nobis cruciatus infernales.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 54.

<sup>65</sup> “Notandum, Apostolum justitiae illi qua justificamur coram Deo, adjungere vitam aeternam, tanquam necessarium consequens & effectum. ait enim v. 17. *Multo magis ii qui redundantem illam gratiam & domum justitiae accipiunt, in vitâ regnabunt.* Et v. 18. nominat *justificationem vitae.* Et v. 21. ait, *gratiam regnare per justificationem in vitam aeternam.* Justitia autem illa nihil aliud est quàm remissio peccatorum: ut patet ex cap.4. suprâ, ex collatione versiculi sexti & septimi. Certum est autem, remissionem peccatorum partam nobis esse solâ obedientiâ patientis Christi: id quod suprâ copiosè à nobis est ostendum cap.4 vers.25. Quare necesse est, vitam quoque nobis sola illâ obedientiâ partam esse. Errant igitur qui putant,

Since he has interpreted the ‘righteousness’ of Romans 5:12-21 to be *parta morte Christi*, he concludes that the pericope ties eternal life to the single righteousness which is nothing other than remission of sins.

#### 4.3.b. Romans 8:1-4.

This is the text which Beza used to expound the doctrine of Christ’s habitual holiness as a solution for original sin, an interpretation with which Piscator disagreed entirely. With the debate in mind, he starts his *analysis* repeating “*justitiam Christi (id est, partam mortem Christi)*,”<sup>66</sup> his foundational premise so ingrained in his argumentation. In the first verse Paul displays two things, first that they who believe in Christ are justified, second that the same eagerly pursue after holy living. With the following two verses Paul shows the reverse order, the latter in verse 2 and the former in verse 3, both coming from the efficient cause.<sup>67</sup> The reader must be attentive to see what Piscator regards as justification and what he calls sanctification in the passage, for that is where he differs from Beza and others. Piscator says the Apostle “calls the pursuit of holiness the *law of the Spirit*, that which proceeded from the Holy Spirit; he would command holy actions in accordance with the law.”<sup>68</sup> For Piscator, verse 2 is clearly about our sanctification. It is also called the ‘Spirit of life’, Piscator explains, “for the Holy Spirit in the elect is the author and causer first of faith, then of holiness, and finally

---

vitā nobis esse partam per sanctam vitam Christi, quam nonnulli vocant obedientiam activam: sicut alteram illam nominant obedientiam passivam.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 68-69.

<sup>66</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 84.

<sup>67</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 92.

<sup>68</sup> “studium sanctitatis vocat *legem Spiritus*, eò quòd à Spiritu sancto profectum; sanctas actiones instar legis imperet.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 84-85.

of life and salvation [*salutis*].”<sup>69</sup> This order may suggest that eternal life is the result of holy living meriting it, in pure Roman Catholic fashion. However, it is more likely that it refers simply to an order of appropriation, where life and well-being (*salutis*) is attained, not merited, only at the end of life.<sup>70</sup>

Other elements of verse 2 are connected to our sanctification. This is how Piscator explains the expression ‘the Law of the life-giving Spirit who is in Christ Jesus’: “that is, the Holy Spirit, who vivifies hearts and who resides in Christ as the head, and thereupon flows into us as his members, He is the image of the law commanding and dictating to us what we ought to do.”<sup>71</sup> In other words, the stress is on the influence of the Spirit on the church, not in Christ. Piscator also believes that when the verse says ‘the law of the spirit of life freed me through Christ Jesus’, it points to the regenerating Spirit having been obtained for us through Christ’s death (*videlicet per mortem illius*).<sup>72</sup> Again, the basis of Spirit’s sanctifying work is solely Christ’s death.<sup>73</sup> Both of these aspects differed from Beza’s exposition of a law “in Christ” separate from us – a reference to Christ’s personal

---

<sup>69</sup> “nam spiritus sanctus in electis autor atque effector est primùm fidei, deinde sanctitatis, postremò vitæ ac salutis.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 85.

<sup>70</sup> Piscator’s exposition of the conversation between Jesus and the rich young ruler, in Matthew, shows how much aversion Piscator has for the Roman Catholic idea of meriting eternal life. When commenting verse 17, Piscator does not oppose any Protestant notion of Christ’s obedience to the law in connection with this verse, but targets Bellarmine. He warns that we should avoid wasting these words to establish the papist dogma that we can earn eternal life through the observance of God’s commandments. Johannes Piscator, *Analysis Logica Evangelii Secundum Mathæum* (London: R. F., 1594), 289-290.

<sup>71</sup> “id est, Spiritus sanctus, qui corda vivificans, quique in Christo tanquam capite residens, atque inde in nos tanquam membra influens, instar legis est imperantis nobis & dictantis quid agere debeamus.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 93.

<sup>72</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 93.

<sup>73</sup> When commenting 1 Cor. 1:2, on Christians being ‘holy in Christ’, he again deals with sanctification as worked by God through Christ’s blood and his Spirit. Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 197. The basis for our sanctification is always Christ’s satisfaction, never his inherent righteousness.

holiness – which becomes ours by imputation, not renewal; for Beza, verse 2 was mainly about justification as a basis for our sanctification.<sup>74</sup>

When commenting on verse 3, Piscator finally deals with law as an external moral pattern, rather than the inner pursuit of verse 2, but his view of Christ's holiness functions differently from Beza. That God condemned sin in the flesh of his own Son is the antitheses to the law. "The Law cannot confer righteousness to man, but God can and in fact did to all believers. Just as he expounds the case of the opposite sentence, that is, that the Law cannot confer righteousness to man, because it was rendered inefficient through the flesh, that is, through the vitiated nature of man."<sup>75</sup> God did that by sending his Son who took up our flesh, though pure. But the taking up of flesh is not redemptive in itself, as the flow of the commentary demonstrates. Piscator says that the sinners who are in Christ are regarded as innocent through his death, and God annuls their sin towards his law, so that it cannot harm them thereafter.<sup>76</sup> In his *observatio* of verse 3, he presents a triple requirement for Christ to be our mediator so that his sacrifice could atone for our

---

<sup>74</sup> "Distinguit igitur Legem Spiritus vitae quae est in ipso Christo Jesu, ab ea quae in nobis est ab eo effecta: id est, perfectam naturae nostrae in Christo Sanctificationem, ab ea quae in nobis est duntaxat inchoata. Nam illa quidem nobis imputata, cum perfecta sit, nos liberavit... Explicandum est igitur istud de tertia & reliqua Justificationis nostrae gratuita parte, quae consistit in sanctificatione ipsa Jesu Christi nobis communicata." Beza, *Jesu Domini Nostri Novum Testamentum* (1642), 419.

<sup>75</sup> "Lex non potuit homini conferre justitiam: at Deus potuit, atque etiam fecit erga omnes credentes. Simul etiam sententiae oppositae causam exponit, videlicet Legem non potuisse homini conferre justitiam, quia fuit inefficax reddita per carnem, i.e. per vitiatam hominis naturam." Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 85.

<sup>76</sup> "quòd ipsum in Christum peccavit, afferens illi mortem, quum tamen esset innocens: ac proinde Deus ademit peccato suum jus erga credentes, ut non possit eis posthac nocere." Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 94.

sins: first that he be true God, second that he true man, third that he be holy man [*homo sanctus*] so he could be holy priest [*sanctus sacerdos*] and holy victim [*sancta victima*].<sup>77</sup>

Concerning verse 4, Piscator again denies the sinner's twofold debt towards the law.

For the Law demands from us either perfect obedience or penalty. However, we could not present perfect obedience: but we paid the penalty in Christ: that is to say, he paid it for us. Therefore we satisfied the Law in Christ and to the same degree the Law cannot condemn us, it is held that we are justified. And this is what is said above, chap. 3, last verse, *the Law was established by faith*.<sup>78</sup> Having explained this sentence, it goes back to the doctrine of sanctification, displayed in the last part of the first verse and demonstrated in verse 2. Now, he sets it forth once more affirming that the justified or believers pursue a holy life.<sup>79</sup>

The idea of 'pursuing' holiness, so emphasized by Piscator, comes from the verbs *incedunt* (v. 1) and *incedimus* (v. 4) which can be translated as "walk, advance,

---

<sup>77</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 103-104. This is Piscator's repetition of the idea which he had already expressed in his *Aphorismes of Christian Religion* (p. 53): "Again, he must be very God, that the propitiatory sacrifice (which was his blood shed for the elect) might be a ransom & sufficient price for our sinnes [Acts 20:28; 1 John 1:7]: againe he must be very man to satisfie the iustice of God [Romans 5:12f]: againe a person sanctified of God, that he might be a holy Priest [Hebrews 7:26], and a holy sacrificer (sic; the Latin original renders "victima") [1 Peter 1:19]." In another work, after establishing why Christ had to be both God and man, Piscator restates the same reason why he had to be a holy man: "Homo verò sanctus esse debuit, ut esset Sacerdos sanctus, & victima sancta." Johannes Piscator, *Theses Theologicae De Christo ΘΕΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΟ* (Herborn: Christophorus Corvinus, 1607), xxix.

<sup>78</sup> Though this comment on Romans 3:31 is closely connected to the doctrine of justification, his fuller explanation of this verse actually presents three ways in which the Gospel established the Law: Christ fulfilled the ceremonies of the law, Christ received the curse for transgressing the law, the obedience of Christians towards the law proceeds from justification by faith. Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 41. The first reason is connected to history of redemption and the third concerns sanctification, thus extrapolating beyond Paul's topic of justification. In his debate with Lucius, Piscator apparently shifted his view of this verse to say that it pointed to Paul's theology being in consonance with the incipient teachings on justification by faith in Moses and the Prophets. Gataker, *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis*, 42.

<sup>79</sup> "Lex enim à nobis postulat aut perfectam obedientiam aut poenam. Nos autem obedientiam perfectam non praestitimus: at poenam luimus in Christo: is enim pro nobis luit. Ergo Legi satisfacimus in Christo ac proinde Lex non potest nos condemnare, sed tenetur nos justificare. Et hoc est quod dixit suprà c. 3. v. ult. *Legem per fidem stabiliri*. Hac sententiâ expositâ, redit ad doctrinam de sanctificatione, propositam in posteriore membro versus primi, & demonstratâ versu 2. Illam nunc denuò proponit, affirmans, justificatos seu credentes sanctitati vitae studere." Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 85.

approach.” According to him, the whole pericope is ultimately about our pursuit of holiness produced by the Spirit based on the merits of Christ’s death. With regards to justification, however, the either/or towards the law means that if man has fulfilled one of the obligations posed by the law, it is as if he has done the other: “those who believe in Christ may be said to be justified through the Law insofar as in Christ they paid the penalty, which they deserved through their own disobedience to the Law; likewise it is as if they had presented perfect obedience to the Law.”<sup>80</sup> This confirms that he understands the first part of the verse to refer to justification, but not to an active righteousness.

In the *Apologia*, he comments this passage allowing for some sense in which men can be justified by the law, but it does not include a positive fulfillment of the law. He sees the biblical text asserting that man is not able to be justified by the law because of the weakness of the flesh.

But, nevertheless, justification of the law is fulfilled in the believers insofar as Christ offered to God the sacrifice for their sins, by which the sins were atoned for and forgiven of those for whom he obtained from God and, thus, caused that God may impute the perfect obedience to the law, that is, he may consider them for those who fulfilled the perfect obedience to the law.<sup>81</sup>

This is the sense in which, in Piscator’s theology, the law is satisfied either by obedience or payment.

---

<sup>80</sup> “qui in Christum credunt, per Legem justificantur hactenus, quatenus in Christo luerunt poenam, quam suâ erga Legem inobedientiâ sunt commeriti: quod perinde est ac si perfectam Legi obedientiam praestitissent.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 104.

<sup>81</sup> “Et tamen in credentibus justificatio legis impletur, quatenus Christus pro ipsorum peccatis sacrificium Deo obtulit, quo illa expiavit, remissionemque illorum eis à Deo impetravit: atque ita effecit ut Deus eis perfectam legis obedientiam imputet: id est, eos habeat pro illis, qui perfectam legi obedientiam praestiterint.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 70.

### 4.3.c. Philippians 2:8-9.

This was another Scriptural passage that was brought as a proof-text presented by the delegate from the French Reformed Churches, to which Piscator responded:

From this place it does not follow that both [kinds] of the obedience of Christ are imputed to us for righteousness. Neither does the Apostle here consider anything about justification, nor about the obedience of Christ, or even about the meritorious cause of justification (about which there is controversy now); but he only exhorts to modesty, or the abasement of the soul, th tapeinofrosuvnh, by the example of Christ as it is clear from verses 3-5.<sup>82</sup>

In this polemical epistle Piscator tries to disregard this passage as a proof-text by appealing to the moral exhortation present in its context, in his commentary he sees no problem in talking about Christ's humiliation and he claims that the Pauline teaching is that it happened "through obedience in tolerating various afflictions, and finally in his very death," an emphasis for which he claims to have the support of the orthodox Calvin and Musculus. But neither Calvin, much less Musculus, supports Piscator's interpretation of the passage to refer to afflictions throughout life, but mainly his death.<sup>83</sup> More

---

<sup>82</sup> "At hinc non sequitur obedientiam Christi utramque nobis ad justitiam imputari. Nec Apostolus ibi de justificatione quicquam agit, ac proinde nec de obedientia Christi, tanquam justificationis causa meritoria, de qua nunc controvertitur; sed tantum hortatur ad modestiam, seu animi demissionem, th tapeinofrosuvnh, idque exemplo Christi: ut patet ex *vers.* 3,4,5." Piscator, "Epistle 68," 123.

<sup>83</sup> "ipsam humiliationem declarat per obedientiam in tolerandis variis afflictionibus, ac tandem ipsâ morte." Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 495. Calvin makes no reference to what this obedience covers (lifelong afflictions or fulfillment of commands), but only emphasizes an obedience that goes as far as endure death. *Comm. Phil. 2:8; CO 52:27*. Such description does not favor Piscator nor goes against his position. Musculus provides even less support to Piscator's claims, for the former makes a point to separate obedience from death, and nowhere in his commentary equates obedience with enduring suffering. On the contrary, Musculus talks about the obedience through out Christ's life, which was a perfect obedience. "Obserua uerò quòd non simpliciter dicit, Humiliauit semetipsum usque ad mortem: sed, Humiliauit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem. Sic unâ cum singulari humilitate Christi, singularem etiâ illius obedientiam cõmendat... Non dicit autem, Factus obediens ad moriendum: sed, Factus obediens usque ad mortem. Obedientia Christi non in morte tantum, sed & in omni uita carnis ipsius declarata est: Non ueni, inquit, ut faciam uoluntatem meam, sed uoluntatem eius qui misit me. Et: Qui me misit, mecum est, & non relinquit me solum, quia ego quae placata sunt ei facio semper. Perfectio autem illius in eo exprimitur, quòd non in quibusdam, & ex parte tantum, sed in omnibus, etiâ ad mortem usque

forthrightly against Piscator's interpretation, Beza makes sure to emphasize that 'unto death' should not be equaled with 'in death', but the moment of conception should be regarded as the starting point of this obedience.<sup>84</sup> Even Olevianus regards this text as capturing Christ's whole humiliation, from the beginning of his life until the end,<sup>85</sup> and considers the addition 'even death on the cross' to refer to the degree of submission in Christ's obedience,<sup>86</sup> not as defining what the obedience was.

Piscator's Christology, which usually is quite in accordance with the Reformed tradition, on this passage noticeably diverges from earlier writers such as Calvin on what Christ conquered as described in verse 9. Piscator agrees with the interpretation of the "old doctors of the church" (*veteres Ecclesiae doctores*) that this verse says that Christ merited eternal life or celestial beatitude not only for us, but even for himself (*Christum non solum nobis, sed etiam sibi vitam eternam seu beatitudinem illam coelestem*

---

patri obediens fuit." Wolfgang Musculus, *In Divi Pavli Epistolas ad Philippenses, Colossenses, Thessalonicenses Ambas, & Primam ad Timotheum, Commentarii* (Basel: Officina Herungiana, 1565), 41. On the other hand, one cannot deduce from Musculus' exposition that he is defending imputation of Christ's active obedience for his focus in on the example of Christ we should follow, in accordance with the exhortation of the passage (p. 42). Even his commentary on Philippians 3:9 (p. 81-83) doesn't seem to distinguish a righteousness of his life from his work of satisfaction on the cross.

<sup>84</sup> Beza writes: "*Usque ad mortem, μεχρι θανατου*. Non dixit Apostolus εφωv θανατω, *in morte*, quod tamen verissimum est, sed ita indicavit ab ipso incarnationis momento coepisse obedientiam Christi, cujus periodus terminata est morte crucis." *Jesu Domini Nostri Novum Testamentum* (1642), 595.

<sup>85</sup> "vt tota humiliatio ab initio usque ad finem comprehendatur. ad Phil.2" Olevianus, *In Epistolam D. Pavli Apostoli ad Romanos notae*, 322.

<sup>86</sup> Caspar Olevianus, *In Epistolas D. Pavli Apostoli ad Philippenses & Colossenses, Notae* (Geneva: Evstathivm Vignon, 1585), 19. Olevianus does not, in this commentary, define what the obedience includes: only the suffering of Christ or his obedience to the precepts also.

*promeruisse*).<sup>87</sup> The distinction between what Christ merited for us and what he merited for himself follows:

This, nevertheless, is different: that through the obedience of his death for them, and certainly [through that] alone, first he merited the remission of all sins, next, the giving of the Holy Spirit, then finally eternal life; and this first as far as the beginning in this life, evidently that taste of God's favor, then as far as the full fruition in heaven after this life; indeed for himself personally there was no need to merit for either the remission of sins (because he had no sin), or the giving of the Holy Spirit (because by him he was anointed from the womb); but, nevertheless, he merited for himself that celestial beatitude and glory, and this by his total obedience presented to the Father, just as the Apostle teaches in this passage.<sup>88</sup>

That Christ had to earn anything for himself was against Calvin's position. The fact that Christ gave away the fruit of his holiness to others, a reference to John 17:19, is a demonstration that he acquired nothing for himself. Calvin disagreed with the Medievals on Philippians 2:9 saying that Paul does not discuss the reason for exaltation but merely its order (after humiliation).<sup>89</sup>

#### 4.3.d. "Do This and You Will Live"

A group of important passages often come up in discussions of Christ's active obedience being reckoned ours. These are the passages that refer to the promise of life based on a perfect obedience to the law (Lev. 18:5; Matt. 19:17; Luke 10:28; Rom. 10:5;

---

<sup>87</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 497.

<sup>88</sup> "Hoc tamen interest: quòd illis per obedientiam suae mortis, & quidem solius, promeritus est primò omnium remissionem peccatorum, deinde verò donationem Spiritus sancti, tum denique vitam aeternam; eamque tum quoad principium in hac vita, videlicet gustum illum favoris Dei, tum quoad plenam fruitionem post hanc vitam in coelo: sibi verò ipsi non opus habuit promereri vel remissionem peccatorum, quia peccata nulla habuit; vel donationem Spiritus sancti, quia unctus illo fuit inde ab utero: sed tamen promeritus sibi est beatitudinem illam celestem & gloriam, idque totâ obedientiâ suâ quam Patri praestitit: sicut hoc loco Apostolus docet." Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 498.

<sup>89</sup> See *Institutes* II.xvii.6; for a similar rejection of the papist interpretation of verse 9, cf. Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 29-31.

Gal 3:12). On Leviticus 18:5, he not only stated our inability for perfect obedience, but also Christ's uniqueness in such a task. "Those who wish to be justified through the Law and earn eternal life, it is necessary that they perform the Law perfectly, or to fulfill perfect obedience to it. Such a thing no man, except Christ alone, could or can do."<sup>90</sup>

Though Christ's uniqueness is asserted, it is not regarded as redemptive because, as was mentioned before, Christ as a man has the obligation of fulfilling the law for himself.

At the beginning of his commentary of Romans 10, the Ramist professor sees Paul talking about two kinds of righteousness, one of the Law, the other of faith (*duplici justitia, altera Legis, altera fidei*). Commenting on verse 3 he says that the righteous of God, the righteousness of faith, is the one acquired by Christ's death (*justitiam Dei, justitiam fidei, id est, justitiam partam morte Christi*), just as he had repeatedly asserted while commenting on chapter 5. The righteousness of the Jews is the righteousness of the Law because it attempts to work out the precepts of the law.<sup>91</sup> On verse 4, Paul shows that the Jews, attempting their own righteousness, ignore the end or scope of the Law (*Legis finem seu scopum*) and consequently the righteousness of God. It is said that Christ is the end of the Law because the Law was given by God to convict us of sin and makes us subject to the curse, and Christ atones for our sins and frees us from the curse through

---

<sup>90</sup> "Qui per Legem justificari vitamque aeternam adipisci volunt, eos necesse est Legem perfectè facere, seu perfectam ei obedientiam praestare. Id quod nemo hominum, solo Christo excepto, praestare potuit aut potest." Johannes Piscator, *Johannis Piscatoris Comentarii in Omnes Libros Veteris Testamenti* (Herborn: n.p., 1646), 1:287.

<sup>91</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 124.

his death; such righteousness is imputed to us.<sup>92</sup> Thus, Piscator lays an implicit syllogism that verse 5 leads one to conclude:

“To obey the precept of the Law is impossible for man.  
 Yet, the righteousness of the Law is born out of obedience to the precepts.  
 Therefore, the righteousness of the Law is impossible to man.”<sup>93</sup>

Because of this reasoning he may conclude, in his *Apologia*, that the context of Romans 10:4 “never mentions the active righteousness or obedience of Christ, by which he would have fulfilled the law for the believers,” but what is taught is an imputed righteousness acquired by Christ’s death and given evidence through his resurrection and ascension to heaven.<sup>94</sup>

The same conclusion would be repeated elsewhere, that man cannot obey the precepts of the law perfectly,<sup>95</sup> with which Piscator’s opponents would agree. However,

---

<sup>92</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 124-125.

<sup>93</sup> “Praestare praecepta Legis, est homini impossibile.  
 Atqui iustitia Legis nascitur ex praeceptorum praestatione.  
 Ergo iustitia Legis, est homini impossibilis.”

Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 125. Olevianus also reiterates the impossibility of justification through the law, and shows caution in affirming any kind of justification through the law (even if performed by Christ), because he is opposing the papist notion of justification partly by works and partly by grace. Cf. Olevianus, *In Epistolam D. Pavli Apostoli ad Romanos notae*, 491-494.

<sup>94</sup> “nulla mentio iustitiae sive obedientiae Christi activae, quâ legem impleverit pro credentibus: sed in summa docetur, iustitiam illam Dei seu fidei (id est, quae credenti à Deo imputatur) partam esse morte Christi, & testatam redditam per resurrectionem atque ascensionem ejusdem in caelum.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis coram Deo*, 52-53.

<sup>95</sup> On Galatians 3, Piscator’s analysis is that verses 10-12 provide a syllogism which shows the impossibility of obtaining righteousness – consequently life – through the law:

“Iustitia & vita est ex fide.  
 Lex autem non est ex fide.  
 Ex Lege igitur non est iustitia, nec vita.”

Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 410. In consonance with Piscator, Olevianus explains the justification by faith as happening through the obedience of Christ’s passion in this passage: “fide iustificari dicitur is, qui Legis siue operum iustitiam in se non inuenit, sed extra se obedientiam passionis Christi sibi donatam fide amplectitur qua indutus, iustus est coram Deo.” Olevianus, *In Epistolam D. Pauli Apost. ad Galatas notae*, 52-53. On Philippians 3:9, Piscator makes similar comments as in

for Piscator, humanity's problematic relationship to the law is repaired by Christ's death – not his life –, thus gaining eternal life for believers. On Luke 10:28, he writes: “Those who wish to pursue eternal life from the Law, one ought to supply perfect obedience to it. Since no one could supply that, it is necessary that we search for eternal life elsewhere, of course in Christ, who acquired that for us through his death, as it is witnessed in the Gospel.”<sup>96</sup> Since in Piscator's idea of the law either obedience or punishment brings us justification, he obviously concludes that Christ's vicarious suffering suffices in our search for eternal life.

#### 4.3.e. Other Passages

Galatians 4:4-5 is not one of the major passages which Beza uses to develop his understanding of Christ's active obedience.<sup>97</sup> However, later Reformed theology insists on this passage as one of the most important for the doctrine of Christ's active obedience. Thus, it is important to look at what Piscator says about it. In his response to Beza, Piscator raises the text and provides the following interpretation of it:

the Apostle certainly does not talk about the obedience which is owed to the Law, for from this Christ did not redeem us. But he talks about that obedience which the exalted Christ, by decree and mandate of the Father, being innocent subjects himself to the curse of the Law, harmful for us, obviously made curse for us so

---

Romans 10:4-5 where the righteousness of the Law and the righteousness of the Gospel, or faith, are contrasted. Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 502.

<sup>96</sup> “Qui vitam aeternam ex Lege consequi vult, eum oportet perfectam illi praestare obedientiam. Quam quum nemo prestare possit: necesse est ut vitam aeternam alibi quaeramus, nempe in Christo: qui illam nobis suâ morte acquisivit: ut Evangelium testatur.” Johannes Piscator, *Analysis Logica Evangelii Secundum Lucam* (London: n.p., 1596), 209.

<sup>97</sup> In his *Annotationes* on these verses, both minor and major versions, he says that Christ was under “that whole Legal economy” (*totam illam Legalem oeconomiam*), but he only addresses Christ's subjection to the ceremonial rituals. Beza, *Jesu Domini Nostri Novum Testamentum* (1642), 559-560.

that he might redeem us from the curse of the Law, just as the Apostle testifies in chapter 3:13.<sup>98</sup>

This was not the interpretation of Musculus, who did see Christ's subjection to the law as encompassing his obedience to the precepts as well as Christ's subjection being not for himself but for us.<sup>99</sup> Olevianus, on the other hand, did have a similar interpretation to Piscator's, as can be seen in the previous chapter. However, Olevianus does not have the strong Anselmian idea that Christ could not have redeemed us from the obedience to the law, because Christ was bound to obey it as a man.

In his commentary, Piscator expands the idea of "Christ being made under the law" to include submission to the ceremonial law (such as circumcision) as well as to the curse of the law. The redemption, then, occurring through the effusion of his blood on the cross, was redemption from the curse of the law (Gal 3:13) and from the ceremonial law in so much as it had been fulfilled (John 1:17; Col 2:14; Eph 2:15).<sup>100</sup> Since Galatians 4 poses Christ's submission to the law as freeing us from it, and Piscator does not accept that Christ's obedience to the commands was substitutive, he has to conclude that the

---

<sup>98</sup> "certe Apostolus non loquitur de obedientia quae debetur Legi, ab hac enim Christus nos non redemit. Sed loquitur de ea obedientia qua Christus excitatus decreto et mandato Patris innocens se subiecit execrationi Legis, pro nobis nocentibus, factus nimirum execratio pro nobis ut nos ab execratione Legis redimeret, quomodo idem Apostolus testatur ejusdem cap. 3, v. 13." Piscator, "Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae," 55-56.

<sup>99</sup> "Deinde sub lege esse, debitorem est esse faciendae legi, ad obediendum illius praeceptis, ac subeundum transgressionis poenas... Licet enim haudquaquam propter se subijci debuerit legi, subiectus tamen fuit propter alios, quos redimere debebat." Wolfgang Musculus, *In Epistolas Apostoli Pauli, ad Galatas & Ephesios, Commentarij* (Basel: Officina Heruagiana, 1561), 132. However, again, one should not conclude that Musculus has a full-fledged understanding of Christ's substitutive notion of his life of obedience, for when he comments on what Christ's redeemed us from by being under the law, he only mentions the curse of the law and does not go into our positive duty towards the law (p. 133).

<sup>100</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 423, 426.

passage is about receiving the curse and fulfilling the ceremonies, not active obedience.<sup>101</sup>

2 Corinthians 5:21 is another important passage for later discussions of active obedience. Piscator believes the verse declares three things about the work of the mediator: 1) it points to the innocency of the mediator by pronouncing he knew no sin; 2) it reminds us how he is made to suffer for us by saying he became sin; 3) it expounds the end and effect of Christ's passion, which is, that we might be made righteous of God.<sup>102</sup> So the third point of his *analysis* makes the latter part of the verse be the effect of the first part. In the *scholia*, he defines the last clause of the verse as "to be righteous before God, evidently by the righteousness imputed to us by God which has been acquired by the sacrifice of Christ."<sup>103</sup> In the *observationes*, he writes:

Our reconciliation with God, or (what is pruned back to the same thing) our justification before God, consists in the remission of sins because of Christ, to the extent that God obviously does not impute our falls to us (as the apostle says here), but, on the contrary, imputes to us the obedience of Christ which he fulfilled himself by paying the penalty of our falls.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup> Anthony Burgess' response to Piscator is that this passage in Galatians cannot be referring to the curse of the law, for "law" needs to have the same sense as that which the Jews desired (Gal. 4:21), and they certainly did not desire to be under the curse of the law. It cannot be only ceremonial either because if Christ is the end of the law (Rom. 10:3), then Christ would only be righteous in this sense to the Jews, for the believing Gentile was not bound to the ceremonial law. Burgess, thus, concludes that the context of Galatians 4 points to those who were seeking justification by the works of any law, where then Paul exhorts them to look to Christ as both obeying and suffering for them. Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 362-364.

<sup>102</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 349.

<sup>103</sup> "justi coram Deo, imputatâ scilicet nobis à Deo justitiâ partâ sacrificio Christi." Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 351.

<sup>104</sup> "Reconciliatio nostri cum Deo, seu (quod in idem recidit) justificatio nostri coram Deo, consistit in remissione peccatorum propter Christum: quatenus nimirum Deus non imputat nobis lapsus nostros (ut hic loquitur Apostolus) sed contrâ imputat nobis obedientiam Christi quam is ipsi praestitit luendo lapsuum nostrorum poenam." Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 353.

Another text raised as if it referred to Christ's holy life is John 17:19. "But," Piscator wrote, "it is clear from the whole of that speech and from the very circumstance of the time, that Christ speaks of his sanctification as the expiatory victim for all of those given by the Father to him, that is, the Elect."<sup>105</sup> On Hebrews 5:8-9, Piscator observes:

Since Christ through the obedience of his passion was made the author of eternal salvation for us, it is a logical consequence that such obedience is the very thing that is imputed to us for righteousness before God. As a matter of fact, by that [obedience] we are saved from sins and eternal death, the very same [obedience] by which we are justified before God.<sup>106</sup>

For Piscator, this verse is solely about the obedience of his passion.

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet (Matt. 22:1-14) is particularly interesting because of the garments which enable one to be in the presence of the Holy God. When Piscator is interpreting the parable in the *analysis* section, he says that the wedding is that celestial beatitude when we will be one with Christ after this life. "The wedding garment is truly holiness, which is twofold: the first is the holiness of the sacrifice of Christ

---

<sup>105</sup> "Sed planum est ex toto illo sermone & ex ipsa temporis circumstantia, Christum illic loqui de sanctificatione sui in victimam expiatoriam pro omnibus ipsi à Patre datis, hoc est, Electis." Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 54.

<sup>106</sup> "Quum Christus per obedientiam passionis suae factus sit nobis author salutis aeternae: consequens est, obedientiam hanc esse eam ipsam rem quae nobis ad justitiam coram Deo imputatur. Etenim qua re servati sumus à peccatis & morte aeterna, eadem re coram Deo justificamur." Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 734. Though John Owen would not comply with Piscator's "logical consequence," he agrees with Piscator that the 'obedience' of these two verses is connected to Christ's death: "This obedience in Christ was twofold: 1) *General*, in the whole course of his holy life in this world... Wherefore the whole course of the life of Christ was a course of obedience unto God; whereon he so often professed that he kept the commands and did the will of him that sent him, thereby 'fulfilling all righteousness'. But yet this is not the obedience here peculiarly intended, although no part of it can be absolutely excluded from the present consideration; for whereas this obedience hath respect unto suffering, he 'learned it from the things which he suffered,' his whole life was a life of suffering... 2) But yet, moreover, there was a *peculiar obedience* of Christ, which is intended here in an especial manner. This was his obedience in dying, and in all things that tended immediately thereunto. 'He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;' for this commandment had he of his Father, that he should lay down his life, and therefore he did it in a way of obedience. And this especial obedience to the command of God for suffering and dying the apostle here respects." *The Works of John Owen*, 21:523.

imputed by faith, the second is the holiness in the soul effected by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit that shows itself through a holy life.”<sup>107</sup> In the *observatio* he repeats the idea of a twofold holiness, of Christ’s sacrifice imputed and our inherent righteousness.<sup>108</sup> Believing that Christ’s righteousness covers our sin provides no evidence whether one understands that to be the imputation of Christ’s active obedience or not.<sup>109</sup>

It can be seen that, in general, Piscator does not find the support of his Reformed predecessors when he interprets Scripture not to teach the imputation of Christ’s active obedience. Besides being in constant opposition to Beza’s reading of several Biblical passages, he does not have Calvin and Musculus on his side when he claims them, and even Olevianus, who also has a focus on the cross when it comes to justification, does not provide the same polemical read of the New Testament as Piscator does. The next chapter will provide even more evidence which substantiates the opinion that Piscator became the first explicit opponent of the imputation of Christ’s active obedience among the Reformed camp.

---

<sup>107</sup> “Vestis nuptialis est vera sanctitas: quem est duplex; una, sanctitas sacrificii Christi per fidem imputata, altera sanctitas in animo effecta per sanctificationem Spiritus S. quae sese ostendit per sanctam vitam.” Johannes Piscator, *Analysis Logica Evangelii Secundum Matthaeum* (London: R. F., 1594), 335.

<sup>108</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Evangelii Secundum Matthaeum*, 346. Calvin goes in a similar direction: “As to the *wedding garment*, is it faith, or is it a holy life? This is a useless controversy; for faith cannot be separated from good works, nor do good works proceed from any other source than from faith. But Christ intended only to state, that the Lord calls us on the express condition of our being renewed by the Spirit after his image; and that, in order to our remaining permanently in his house, we must *put off the old man with his pollutions*, (Colossians 3:9; Ephesians 4:22) and lead a new life, that the *garment* may correspond to so honorable a calling.” John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 2:174; CO 45:401. Beza’s *Annotations* bring nothing on the meaning of the garments.

<sup>109</sup> In his debate with the Lutheran Balthasar Mentzer, a decade later, he interprets this text in much the same way. He admits the wedding garment consists of more than just the forgiveness of sins, but also of holiness of life. However, justification remains a result of the forgiveness of sins while the holiness aspect is performed by us. Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 131.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING PISCATOR'S DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE

Though reflections upon the biblical text will also come up in this chapter, it focuses on elements of Piscator's theology that influence or are harmonized to fit his understanding of Christ's active obedience. It also deals with contradictions in the realm of theology which are gathered by Piscator to strengthen his argument against the imputation of Christ's fulfillment of the law. Syllogisms also come up rather frequently in this chapter, not to show the logical sequence of Paul's thought as in the previous chapter, but to deduce the logical impossibilities that result from his opponents' position. Of course, this Ramistic device should be understood simply as a method, like the rest of the scholastic tools of the era,<sup>1</sup> which was used by theologians of different traditions and different convictions. One should not attribute Piscator's understanding of Christ's active obedience to his Ramist methodology. One cannot argue, for example, that his Ramistic dichotomies are to blame for his separation of the parts of righteousness, never understanding them as a whole; or, that his dichotomies led to a divided sense of

---

<sup>1</sup> "Method" is used in the broader sense, denoting the procedure by which any science is investigated, and not in the strict Ramistic understanding of one section of "judgment" (*iudicium*) – which itself was just a section of dialectic. Cf. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, 225-269; Walton, "Ramus and Socrates," 124-127. For discussion of scholastic method in relation to and distinction from theological and philosophical content, see Willem J. van Asselt and Eef Dekker, *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*, Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 11-65.

covenant where no possible connection between the covenants could exist. Piscator's Ramism is a methodology in the service of expounding his theology, not a set of convictions that shape his dogmatic system.

### 5.1. Theology of the Legal Covenant

Piscator's concept of a legal covenant has been briefly explored by some,<sup>2</sup> but this section intends to go further than previous analyses in stressing important connections with justification and Christ's work. It will attempt to show that though his notion of a legal covenant was quite in harmony with the latest development of covenant theology of his day, his full separation between the legal and the gracious was reflected in the way Christ acquired our justification. His federal theology did not necessarily shape his views on Christ's active obedience, but it created a soteriological framework in which Christ's obedience of the law did not need to be the fulfillment of a covenantal stipulation.

In his *Aphorismes* on Calvin's *Institutes*, originally written in 1589, Piscator synthesizes and adapts Calvin's view of the covenant saying that Scripture presents two covenants between God and his people, one Legal and the other of Grace (*Legale & Gratuitum*).<sup>3</sup>

The couenant Legall, is that wherein God in elder ages promised the Israelites all manner of blessings corporall, and also life euerlasting, vnder condition of yielding perfect obedience to Gods law by their owne strength, and contrarily, he threatened diuerse curses, and eternall death to all such as did breake any one

---

<sup>2</sup> Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 228-229; R. Sherman Isbell, "The Origin of the Concept of the Covenant of Works," Th. M. Thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1976, 32-35.

<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, the translator to English adds explanatory words: "The couenant Legall, or of workes; and the couenant Euangelicall or of grace." Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, IX.v (p. 40). The language of an Evangelical covenant is common in Piscator, but, apparently, 'covenant of works' is a terminology not used by him.

Commandment of the law. The ratification and confirmation of this covenant is described. Exod.24.<sup>4</sup>

When Piscator moves on to describe the Covenant of Grace, he makes no connection with the Legal Covenant. Such a distinction between the two covenants is not extracted from Calvin's chapters on the Old and New Testaments in the *Institutes* which stresses the continuity of a single covenant, i.e. the covenant of grace.<sup>5</sup> In fact, in a previous chapter Calvin even defends a certain continuity between law and gospel<sup>6</sup> which is not present in Piscator's *Aphorismes*. The meritorious cause of the covenant of grace being the death of the mediator<sup>7</sup> is not a notion which comes from Calvin either. The Legal/Gracious distinction, in regards to covenant, is more likely an adaptation from Calvin's other works<sup>8</sup> or was taken from Olevianus,<sup>9</sup> rather than directly from Calvin's *Institutes*. However, even Olevianus – in his summary of Calvin's *Institutes* – is quite

---

<sup>4</sup> Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, IX.vi (p. 40-41).

<sup>5</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, II.x-xi. This is not to say that Calvin had no view of a legal pre-lapsarian covenant. Cf. Peter A. Lillback, *The Binding of God: Calvin's Role in the Development of Covenant Theology*, Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids/Carlisle: Baker/Paternoster, 2001), 276-304.

<sup>6</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, II.ix.4.

<sup>7</sup> Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, IX.xii (p. 42-43).

<sup>8</sup> Calvin's comments on Galatians 4:24, for example, refer to a legal and an evangelical covenant. Cf. *CO* 50:237.

<sup>9</sup> For a summary of Olevianus' view of the *foedus legale*, cf. Bierma, *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age*, 122-125. Some scholars argue that the origin of a legal pre-lapsarian covenant lies in Ursinus. Robert Letham, "The Foedus Operum: Some Factors Accounting For Its Development," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 14, no. 4 (1983): 463-464; David A. Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth-Century Reformation Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 99-114; David N. J. Poole, *The History of the Covenant Concept from the Bible to Johannes Cloppenburg's De Foedere Dei* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University, 1992), 127-138. Other scholars refute this notion that Ursinus is the progenitor of the 'covenant of works' concept. Visser, "The Covenant in Zacharias Ursinus," 531-544; Bierma, "Law and Grace in Ursinus' Doctrine of the Natural Covenant," 96-110. Lillback believes that in Ursinus we find "the first clearly articulated statement of the covenant of works," but he argues for much more continuity with earlier Reformers such as John Calvin than the first group of scholars. Peter Allan Lillback, "Ursinus' Development of the Covenant of Creation: A Debt to Melancthon or Calvin?" *Westminster Theological Journal* 43, no. 2 (Spr. 1981): 247-288.

faithful to Calvin in stressing the continuity of the covenant of grace as well as the continuity between law and gospel in regards to the manner of acquiring salvation.<sup>10</sup>

However, Piscator's distinction between the two covenants fits within the Reformed tradition of his day. Though he did not render Hosea 6:7 as referring to Adam, as a considerable part of the tradition had done,<sup>11</sup> he sees the prelapsarian dispensation containing some kind of covenant where, had Adam been faithful, the image of God in Adam would have disseminated to his descendants.<sup>12</sup> When commenting on Genesis 3:22-23, Piscator says that our first parents were deprived of the tree of life because they broke a covenant:

just as the tree of life was within the reach of our first parents all this time, so long as they stood firm to the covenant, persisting of course in obedience to the command of God. By this law, the tree had been given to them as sacrament of eternal life, if they would persist in obedience. However, after they violated this covenant, to them a restriction was added to that sacrament, and they were expelled from paradise.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> For his summary of Calvin's *Institutes* II.x-xi, see Caspar Olevianus, *Institutionis Christianae religionis epitome* (Herbonae: Christophorus Coruinus, 1586), 193-212. Here, Olevianus follows Calvin closely in speaking of the Old and New administrations of the Covenant of Grace. With regards to the continuity between Law and Gospel in the manner of salvation, Olevianus repeats Calvin verbatim: "Sed non ita successit Euangelium toti Legi, vt diuersam rationem salutis adferret: quin potius sanciret ratumque esse probaret quicquid illa promiserat, & corpus vmbis adiungeret." Olevianus, *Institutionis Christianae religionis epitome*, 192. Compare with *CO* 2:312.

<sup>11</sup> Piscator believed this verse was a general reference to 'man'. Johannes Piscator, *In Duodecim Prophetas Quos Nominant Minores* (Herbonae Nassoviorum, 1615), 35. On the interpretation of this verse from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century, cf. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 2:436-441.

<sup>12</sup> In his *Exegesis Catechesis Heidelbergensis*, under Q. 7, he writes: "Acceperat enim Adam primum noster parens a Deo imaginem ipsius tanquam foedum, ut scilicet si fideliter dominum suum coleret, propageret illam in filios suos: si vero per fide ab illo ad hostem ipsius diabolum deficeret, amitteret illam et sibi et posterius suis." Apud Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 228. Piscator's *Aphorismi* does not show Adam under a legal covenant, as Letham claims it, but only connects the legal covenant with the mosaic dispensation. Contra Letham, "The Foedus Operum: Some Factors Accounting For Its Development," 458, 463.

<sup>13</sup> "sicut arbor vitae tamdiu pertinebat ad primos parentes, quamdiu illi stabant pactis, persistentes videlicet in obedientia erga mandatum Dei. hac enim lege arbor illa in sacramentum vitae aeternae eis data erat, si persisterent in obedientia: Hoc igitur pactum postquam violarunt, jure illis sacramentum istud ademtum fuit, ipsique è paradiso ejecti." Johannes Piscator, *Johannis Piscatoris Commentariorum in Omnes Libros*

In the early seventeenth century, when this commentary was first written, Piscator already understood Adam's trial period and the promise of eternal life as condition, or law, within a covenant. The Mosaic dispensation continues the Legal covenant, where the stipulation and the promise are repeated, as his comments on Exodus 19:5-8 demonstrate:

The Legal Covenant which God established with the Israelite people, from God's part consists first in a stipulation of perfect obedience toward the Law and then a promise of special grace with regard to glorifying the people, and from the people's part it consists of the promise of perfect obedience. In addition it is known, that the Israelites did not observe that covenant, and thus God established another covenant, obviously Evangelical, with his elect people in which he promised free remission of their sins and renovation of their hearts through the Holy Spirit (Jer. 31:31-34).<sup>14</sup>

Once the Legal covenant is broken, Piscator understands that there is a covenant of Grace which runs parallel to the Legal covenant throughout history. He does not describe the *fedus legale* as annihilated but sees its continuation even in the New Testament. In his *observatio* on Hebrews 8:6-13, Piscator repeats the notion of two covenants, one Legal and the other Evangelical (*unum Legale, alterum Euangelicum*), and describes the former reasserted by Jesus and Paul:

This covenant God stipulated with the sons of Israel in the desert of Sinai, when he had recently led them out of Egypt, and that was named the old covenant. Although by that name it is sometimes understood the covenant of grace insofar as it was the covenant with Abraham. Further on, Moses describes the agreement of the Legal covenant in Exodus 19 and 24. Moreover, the blessings and the curses comprehended by that covenant are recited in Leviticus 18:5 where the Lord speaks these words to the people: *If you observe my statutes and my judgments, the human who does them, he will live in them*. Paul repeats that sentence in Galatians 3:12. And Christ considers the same in Matthew 19:17

---

*Veteris Testamenti tomus primus: Quo continetur Pentateuchus Mosaica* (Herbornae Nassoviorum, 1643), 29.

<sup>14</sup> "Fedus Legale quod pepigit Deus cum populo Israelitico, constat ex parte Dei tum stipulatione perfectae obedientiae erga Legem, tum promissione gratiae specialis de populo glorificando: ex parte verò populi constat obedientiae perfectae promissione. Ubi praeterea sciendum, Israëlitae fedus illud non observasse: ac proinde Deum aliud fedus, nempe Evangelicum, cum populo suo electo pepigisse: in quo promittit gratuitam remissionem peccatorum, & renovationem cordium per Spiritum sanctum, Jerem.31.v.31.32.33.& 34." Piscator, *Johannis Piscatoris Commentariorum in... Pentateuchus Mosaica*, 197.

when he was interrogated by somebody what good he ought to do so that he may have eternal life, he responded: *If you wish to enter life, keep the commandments*; or, as Lukè records: *Do this*, (that is, love God from all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself) *and you will live* (Luke 10:28). Indeed, the legal threat of eternal death is recorded in Deuteronomy 27:26. *Cursed is he who does not obey the words of this Law by doing them*; Paul repeats that sentence, and it is interpreted as about eternal death, Galatians 3:10.<sup>15</sup>

His teaching on the two covenants in other places is basically the same.<sup>16</sup> His consistent description of the Legal covenant allows us to distinguish the features of his theology that were in perfect harmony with the Reformed tradition of his day: the distinction between the two covenants, the prelapsarian dispensation as having a covenant, the stipulations and promises of the Legal covenant, as well as its continuation even after being broken by our first parents.

Nevertheless, a point in which his covenant concept was in dissonance with the federal theology of his day and later generations was concerning the connection between the two covenants. While other Reformed theologians would also see both covenants as parallel roads for humanity which do not converge, just as Piscator would, yet the

---

<sup>15</sup> “Hoc fedus pepigit Deus cum filiis Israëli in deserto Sinai, quum eos recens eduxisset ex Aegypto: atque illud nominatur vetus fedus. Quanquam illo nomine interdum intelligitur fedus gratiae, quatenus cum Abrahamo pactum fuit. Porro federis Legalis pactionem describit Moses Exod.19.& 24. Benedictiones autem & maledictiones illo federe comprehensae, recitantur Levit.26.Deut.27& 28. Vitae autem aeternae promissio Legalis extat Levit.18.v. 5.ubi Dominus populum alloquitur his verbis: *Si observabitis statuta mea & iudicia mea: homo qui fecerit ea, vivet in eis*. Quam sententiam Paulus repetit Gal.3. v.12. Et Christus ad eandem respiciens Matth.19.v.17. quum interrogatus esset à quodam, quid boni sibi faciendum sit ut habeat vitam aeternā, respondit: *Si vis ad vitam ingredi, serva mandata*; vel, ut Lucas commemorat: *Hoc fac*, (id est, dilige Deum ex toto corde, & proximum sicut teipsum) & *vives*:Luc.10.v.28. Mortis verò aeternae comminatio Legalis extat Deut.27.v.26.*Maledictus qui non praestiterit verba Legis hujus, faciendo ea*: quam sententiam repetit Paulus, & de morte aeterna interpretatur, Gal.3.v.10.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 757.

<sup>16</sup> In his preface to his commentary on Ezekiel, Piscator says that God’s word can be summarized in two topics, law and gospel (*Verbi divini summa genera duo sunt, Lex & Evangelium*). The Law is described as the same covenant (*fedus*) with Adam and Eve in paradise as well as in the Mosaic period. Cf. Johannes Piscator, *In Prophetam Ezechielem Commentarius* (Herbonae Nassoviorum, 1614), 2v-3v. In the parable of workers in the vineyard, in Matthew 20, where the owner of the vineyard deals differently with the first and the last workers, Piscator sees in such dissimilarity a parallel with the twofold covenant of God with his people. Piscator, *Analysis Logica Evangelii Secundum Matthaeum*, 315-316. His analysis on Galatians 4:21-31 repeat the same basic tenets of the *pactio Legalis* and the *pactio Euangelica*. Cf. Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 421-422.

Herborn teacher disallowed any connection at all between the two. He does not show Christ fulfilling the Legal covenant so that we might have the covenant of Grace established with us. Those who are in the Evangelical covenant are said to be freed from rendering perfect obedience to the law,<sup>17</sup> but Piscator does not explain why such obligation becomes void. Obedience only comes up in regards to the Evangelical covenant: “the Legal covenant requires merits and gives birth to faith in merits... On the contrary, the Evangelical covenant does not require merits and neither does it give birth to faith in merits, but it requires obedience and gives birth to faith in the promised grace of God.”<sup>18</sup> In fact, in his observation on Genesis 17:2, obedience is portrayed as a condition in the covenant of Grace: “God in the covenant of grace promises us remission of sins and eternal life with the condition of faith and piety.”<sup>19</sup> But the condition of “perfect” obedience in the Legal covenant was not met.

To conjecture that Ramist distinctions in Piscator made him separate both covenants without any connection between them is to miss entirely the fact that other Ramist writers such as Robert Rollock (1555?-1599) did see Christ fulfilling the covenant of works even with his active obedience.<sup>20</sup> By associating Piscator with Rollock in an article where the major thesis is that Ramist methodology was crucial in the development

---

<sup>17</sup> “sentiunt enim se iis destitutos esse ad perfectam Legi obedientiam praestandam.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 422.

<sup>18</sup> “fedus Legale requirit merita: & gignit fiduciam in meritis... Contrà, fedus Evangelicum non requirit merita, ac proinde nec gignit fiduciam in meritis: sed requirit obedientiam, & gignit fiduciam in gratia Dei promittentis.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Evangelii Secundum Matthaeum*, 316.

<sup>19</sup> “Deus in federe gratiae nobis promittit remissionem peccatorum & vitam aeternam cum conditione fidei & pietatis.” Piscator, *Johannis Piscatoris Commentariorum in... Pentateuchus Mosaica*, 72.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Robert Rollock, *Select Works of Robert Rollock*, ed. William M. Gunn (Edinburgh: Woodrow Society, 1849), 1:52-55. For a summary of Rollock’s views on justification which is made of two parts, “peccatorum remissio” and “justitiae imputatio,” see his “Tractatus De Ivstificatione” appended to Roberto Rolloco, *Analysis Logica in Epistolam Ad Hebraeos* (Edinburgh: Robertvs Charteris, 1605), 236-253.

of the concept of *foedus operum*, Letham actually weakens his argument,<sup>21</sup> for methodology, here, is not a factor which determines the direction one sees the two covenants.

## 5.2. The Human Being's Relationship to the Law

Though this topic is in close connection to the Legal covenant, this section will explore the obligations of the human being towards the law. It will demonstrate that the law, for Piscator, only has a pedagogical or theological use (first use of the law) in regards to justification,<sup>22</sup> but it does not stand as an obligation where its fulfillment is necessary for one to be regarded righteous.

In his examination of Beza's doctrine of justification, Piscator is bothered by a twofold relationship to the law expressed by Beza in a letter to Olevianus. Here follows what Beza wrote to Olevianus in February of 1570:

For what is more vain than to judge [as] righteous someone who did not fulfill the law? Moreover, the law of observances forbids to be done what it prohibits, by the insertion of the threat of death, [and] also truly orders that which it commands, by the insertion of the promise of life. Therefore anyone who in Christ is not counted as a sinner, will indeed have escaped death: but by what right will someone ask

---

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Letham, "The Foedus Operum: Some Factors Accounting For Its Development," 464-467.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, II.vii.6-9; Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 320. Piscator uses the term 'pedagogical' only in reference to the ceremonial law: "Haec Lex [ceremonialis] fuit Israëlitis instar paedagogi." Johannes Piscator, *Theses Theologicae De Lege Dei* (Hebom: Christophorus Corvinus, 1607), xxxiii. Cf. Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, VIII.xvi; Gataker, *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis*, 43. But the traditional understanding of the pedagogical use is certainly present in Piscator's description of the moral law: "Porrò magna utilitas est Legis moralis. Monet enim nos de nostra ingenti miseria; testando, nos esse depravatos; & urget nos ad gratiam Dei implorandam; atque ita ad doctrinam Evangelii nos praeparat." Piscator, *Theses Theologicae De Lege Dei*, x.

for life thereafter, if he should not fulfill the whole righteousness of the law in the same Christ?<sup>23</sup>

Piscator's response is a denial of that twofold relationship established by Beza:

In epistle 35 you say: "For what is more vain than to judge as righteous, someone who did not fulfill the law?" But I say Evangelical righteousness is to be prudently distinguished from Legal righteousness, the righteousness with which we are counted righteous before God and even justified or absolved by the same, is not the Legal righteousness, therefore neither does God justify us, because either we fulfilled the Law or Christ fulfilled it for us. But there is an Evangelical righteousness, which is the one God gives us through the Gospel, obviously the remission of sins acquired with the blood of Christ. Therefore we ask God for life not on the basis of the fulfillment of the Law or the obedience supplied to the Law but on the basis of adoption, which Christ acquired through his death for us... In addition, life was not given to us by the Law (whether fulfilled by us or by another for us), with clear words the Apostle teaches in Galatians 3:18 saying "For if the inheritance is from the Law then it is not from the promise. But God gave the inheritance to Abraham by the promise." Therefore provided that the curse on the cross was accomplished for us by the death of Christ, we are redeemed not only from the curse of the Law, but we have even obtained the blessing from the promise made to Abraham and his seed, as the Apostle expressly teaches in the same chapter, verses 13 and 14 as well as in verses 8 and 9.<sup>24</sup>

Two things should be noted out of Piscator's argument. First, he regards the earning of eternal life in a filial relationship rather than forensic. He says that eternal life comes as a

---

<sup>23</sup> "Quid enim vanius est quam iustum arbitrari, qui lege non impleuerit? Atque lex notantum prohibet fieri quod vetat, idque addita mortis interminatione, verum etiam praecipit quod iubet, idque addita vitae promissione. Ergo qui pro non peccatore cesentur in Christo, mortem quidem effugerit: sed quo iure vitam praeterea petet, nisi omnem iustitiam legis in eodem Christo impleuerit?" Beza, "Epistola XXXV – Caspari Oleviano," in Theodori Bezae Vezelli, *Volumen tractationum Theologicarum*, 3:248.

<sup>24</sup> "In 35 igitur epistola 'Quid vanius est, inquis, quam iustum arbitrari qui Legem non impleverit?' At, inquam, iusticia Evangelii a iusticia Legis, prudenter discernenda est, Iusticia qua nos iusti censemur a Deo ac proinde ab eodem justificamur seu absolvimur, non est iusticia Legis, neque enim Deus ideo nos justificat, quod Legem vel ipsi nos impleverimus, vel Christus pro nobis impleverit. Sed est iusticia Evangelii, id est quam Deus nobis per Evangelium donat, nempe remissio peccatorum sanguine Christi parta. Vitam igitur petimus a Deo non jure impletae Legis seu obedientiae Legi praestitae sed jure adoptionis, quam Christus sua morte nobis peperit... Praeterea vitam nobis non dari ex Lege (sive a nobis ipsis sive ab alio pro nobis praestita), claris verbis docet Apostolus, Gal. 3, v. 18. 'Nam si ex Lege, inquit, haereditas est, jam non ex promissione. At Abrahae per promissionem donavit Deus haereditatem'. Quapropter morte Christi dum pro nobis factus est in cruce maledictio, non solum redempti sumus a maledictione Legis, sed etiam benedictionem ex promissione Abrahae ac semini ejus facta, consequuti sumus, ut expresse docet Apostolus eodem cap., v. 13 et 14. Item v. 8 et 9." Piscator, "Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae," 59-60.

result of our adoption, not from being right with the law. Life is merely an inheritance, not a reward.<sup>25</sup> The second point that needs to be highlighted is that Piscator distinguishes evangelical and legal righteousness ontologically, and not only in the manner of appropriation. He not only believes that evangelical righteousness is received by grace while legal righteousness is acquired by our works, which was a common belief among Reformed theologians. He regards the path to life through obedience of the law as closed for us even if we are in Christ. The Gospel is not about Christ doing legally that which we could not do. Though these are not Piscator's words, the Gospel appears to supplant the Legal framework with a new form of attaining righteousness (not only of receiving it); the Legal form of attaining life, through perfect obedience, is now defunct.

This second point is the manner one should read Piscator's syllogisms on fulfilling the law in his commentary on Romans. In the *analysis* of Romans 3:20 Piscator lays out three syllogisms which reinforces that the legal path to righteousness is closed.

We are justified either by faith or by the works of the Law.  
 However, we are not justified by the works of the Law.  
 Therefore, we are justified by faith.

By whichever means we are justified, by the same means we are proven to be righteous.

Yet, we are not proven as righteous by the Law.  
 Therefore, we are not justified by the Law.

By whichever means we are found guilty of sin, by the same means we are not proven righteous.

Yet, we are found guilty as sinners by the Law.  
 Therefore, we are not proven to be righteous by the Law.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> The connection between eternal life and the doctrine of adoption would later be made by Thomas Gataker and others in the Westminster Assembly who opposed to the imputation of Christ's active obedience, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

<sup>26</sup> "Aut fide justificamur, aut operibus Legis.  
 Non autem justificamur operibus Legis.  
 Justificamur ergo fide.

Quare justificamur, eâdem justi esse demonstratur:

Basing his arguments on Romans 4:14-15, Piscator develops similar syllogisms interpreting Paul to say that the promise of grace cannot be subject to the condition of fulfilling the Law.<sup>27</sup> Neither set of syllogisms differs from the usual sixteenth century Protestant interpretation of Paul's view of human efforts; that is, we cannot be justified by the Law in and of ourselves, a common point of agreement between Piscator and his opponents. If the opponent were Roman Catholic, these syllogisms could be used by any Protestant, no matter what his stance on Christ's active obedience. Nonetheless, as was shown in the previous paragraph, the Legal path of salvation cannot be achieved even if Christ is our mediator. Piscator apparently believes that God changed the manner in which one is justified, or the Legal structure was never meant to actually give life, just function pedagogically to lead to Christ.

This issue of the human being's relationship to the law, particularly the pedagogical function of the Law in God's redemptive economy, is unfolded rather thoroughly in his *Apologia*. When confronted with the argument that the rejection of active obedience imputed might render the will of God revealed by the law ineffective and weaken the law – thus making Piscator's doctrine of justification be against Romans 3:31 –, Piscator first responds with the already known argument that Christ's fulfillment of the law was not in vain but enabled him to be our sponsor.<sup>28</sup> On top of that, his

---

Atqui Lege non demonstratur justi.  
Lege igitur non justificamur.

Quare convincimur peccati, eâ non demonstramur justi.  
Atqui Lege convincimur peccati.  
Lege igitur non demonstramur justi.”  
Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 31.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 45.

<sup>28</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 10-11.

counterargument indicates that his doctrine does not weaken the law or destroy its end:

“The end of the law is not either that we be justified by our own fulfillment of it or Christ’s fulfillment for us – Scripture teaches neither of these,” he argues steadfastly, “but the end of the law is Christ (Rom. 10:4), that is, for this reason God brought the law, so that through it [we would be] convicted of sin and of [our] impotence to fulfill the law (Rom. 3:20; 8:3) and would search for righteousness through faith in Christ” which obviously is his death atoning for our transgressions and freeing us from the curse of the law.<sup>29</sup> Further on, Piscator seeks a support in the context of Romans 3 for his answer. He thinks the law was not given with the end that the human person may be justified by the works of the law, but instead with the other end mentioned by Paul before (Rom 3:28).<sup>30</sup> So the law is established by faith in Christ’s atoning death.<sup>31</sup> With this argument, Piscator doesn’t see his doctrine changing the manner of salvation as proposed by the law. He actually talks about the authoritative inviolability of the law (*sanctissimam atque inviolabilem esse legis auctoritatem*), but such inviolability is only associated with the need for Christ to die for us. Consequently, the fact that the writer he is opposing in this treatise raises Romans 7:10 to argue that the law was ordained to life does not pose a

---

<sup>29</sup> “Finis enim legis non est, ut vel nos per propriam ejus impletionem justificemur, vel per impletionem Christi pro nobis: neutrum horum scriptura docet: sed finis legis est Christus: Rom.10v.4. hoc est, Deus ideo legem tulit, ut per illam de peccato & impotentia implendi eam convicti, (Rom.3.v.20. & cap. 8.v.3.) justitiam per fidem quaeramus in Christo: quippe qui transgressionem nostras morte suâ expiavit, atque ita nos à maledictione legis redemit.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoria justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 12.

<sup>30</sup> Piscator’s interpretation of this verse in Gataker’s work gathers support from the beginning of chapter 4 rather than from verse 28 of chapter 3. Cf. Gataker, *D. Joannis Piscatoris Herbonensis et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis*, 42.

<sup>31</sup> “lex non est lata in hunc finem, ut homo per opera illius justificetur: sed ob alium finem paulò antè à me indicatum. Quem ipsum finem etiam hîc innuit, quum ait, *Imò legem stabilimus*. Nempe per fidem. At quomodo? Quia scilicet per fidem statuimus nostras transgressionem expiatis esse morte Christi, atque ita nos à legis maledictione esse redemptos.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoria justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 13.

problem to him. Piscator agrees that the obedience to commandments is a way which may lead to life – and he quotes the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:17 and Luke 10:28 – but the fact that they do not, because of our sinfulness, does not raise the necessity that Christ do it for us. After all, the law wasn't given with such a purpose. The pedagogical function, which was mentioned above, was its purpose.<sup>32</sup> Piscator is comfortable in affirming that even Pareus' exposition of Romans 3:31, raised by Piscator's opponent as an objection, does not go against his.<sup>33</sup>

Another argument raised against Piscator is that Christ's active righteousness had to be not only for himself but also for us as presented to God, because we will never obtain perfect righteousness in this life. So, either the law perishes in respect to us or it is necessary that Christ actively obeys for us, concludes the argument. Piscator agrees that the law cannot be fulfilled perfectly in us in this life, but it does not follow that the end of

---

<sup>32</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 15, 16, 18. Piscator doesn't use the word 'pedagogical' to describe his understanding of the purpose of the law. When he comments on Galatians 3:23-25, he only understands the text to refer to the ceremonial law, reason why he speaks of the "economy of the Law" (*oeconomia Legalis*). Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 412, 418. But the word 'pedagogical' seems to fit within his explanation of the purpose of the moral law and its promise of life.

<sup>33</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 31-32. The author of the theses Piscator is countering in the *Apologia* raises Pareus' name because he claims that Pareus sustains that the covenant of the law was established in Christ. I have not found such assertion in Pareus' commentary on this verse. What he does say is that there are three ways in which we by faith establish the law in Christ and in us. The first voice of the law was 'When you eat of this, you will surely die'. So when Christ dies for us (*pro nobis*), we establish the law by faith because Christ suffered the law's curse. The third way we establish the law is by heeding to its exhortation to love God by our personal obedience. Both the first and third way are also present in Piscator's commentary on this verse. However the second way we establish the law, according to Pareus, is not found in Piscator's comments. Pareus says the second voice of the law is 'Whoever does this, you will surely live.' This is his comment: "Hanc etiam fide stabilimus, quia credimus, nos iustificari gratis sine praestatione legis, quantum quidem ad nos, sed non quantum ad Christum, qui vt pro nobis satisfaceret, legem, perfecta obedientia implere necesse habuit. Secundo igitur fide legem stabilimus, quia in Christo legis obedientiam perfectè impleuimus." David Pareus, *In divinam ad Romanos S. Pauli apostoli epistolam commentarius* (Frankfurt: n.p., 1608), col. 311-312. It is not hard to see how both Piscator and his opponent in the *Apologia* saw Pareus as an ally. For on the one hand, Pareus is willing to go much further than Piscator when in the last sentence he says that "in Christ we fulfilled perfect obedience to the law." On the other hand, Piscator would understand this sentence in light of the previous one where Pareus teaches that Christ's perfect obedience was necessary to perform so that he could satisfy for us.

the law will perish whether in respect to us or to Christ. “For the law was not given for this end, that we should justify ourselves by its perfect fulfillment; nor was it given for this end, that Christ may fulfill it for us by living in a holy manner in accordance to it. Nor indeed has Christ promised anywhere in Scripture that he wished to fulfill the law for us by his holy living.”<sup>34</sup> As Piscator explained before, and continues to do so in the book, the end of the law was Christ and as the law awoke us to our sins it led us to believe in Christ’s passive obedience to have our sins forgiven.<sup>35</sup> Piscator doesn’t believe we enter eternal life because of our own obedience or Christ’s obedience to the law. Instead, we will enter eternal life because our imperfect obedience is not imputed to us, just as the other sins are not imputed, and on account of Christ’s passive obedience all our sins are erased.<sup>36</sup>

As we investigate how Piscator understands the human being’s relationship to the law, it becomes apparent that he has a different understanding of “establishing” the law. The law is established if its purpose is fulfilled, and since he sees the purpose of the law in justification as leading one to Christ, the law is not made void in his understanding of Christ’s work. For Piscator, the law is not established in the sense that its status is maintained and it still requires perfect obedience from every individual. He continues to

---

<sup>34</sup> “Lex enim non est lata in hunc finem, ut nos per illius perfectam impletionem justificemur: neque etiam lata est in hunc finem, ut Christus illam pro nobis, sanctè secundum illam vivendo, impleat. Nec verò Christus uspiam in scriptura spondisse traditur, quòd legem pro nobis sanctè vivendo implere velit.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 46.

<sup>35</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 51.

<sup>36</sup> “in vitam aeternam intrabimus, quotquot in Christum credimus: quia imperfectio nostrae obedientiae nobis à Deo non imputatur, sicut & reliqua peccata: idque propter obedientiam passivam Christi, quâ deleta sunt peccata nostra omnia.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 47.

believe the Law stands as the standard for one to be considered righteous. But one is righteous if he/she is forgiven of all his/her sins, whether of omission or commission.<sup>37</sup>

### 5.3. Theological Contradictions

Contradictions are regularly brought forth by Piscator to undergird his conclusion that Christ's active obedience cannot be imputed to us. They appear as part of his reasoning from his first reflections on the issue and throughout his writings, but the contradictions gained a greater audience during his day as part of his five arguments. This set of five arguments against the imputation of Christ's active righteousness first appears in Epistle 68, which was Piscator's response to the Synod of Reformed Churches in France, written in 1604. The five arguments are picked up by Piscator's opponents. Since the author of *Assertio orthodoxa* raises and counters them in his theses, Piscator spends a third of his *Apologia* providing a response to his opponent's criticisms.<sup>38</sup>

Three out of these five arguments are the matter of this section. The first and fifth arguments have already been covered in the previous chapter because they consist of tying imputation of righteousness to remission of sins as well as the shedding of blood. The three arguments in the middle are objections based on theological impossibilities. With these three, Piscator shows that the imputation of Christ's active obedience would challenge indisputable beliefs of the Christian faith, thus creating a contradiction if both were held. The ideas behind the three theological impossibilities appear in Piscator's

---

<sup>37</sup> In Gataker's book, Piscator says that our justification does not depend upon the promise of the law, but rather upon the promise of the Gospel, which is the remission of sins and eternal life to those who believe in Christ on account of his obedience of death. Gataker, *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis*, 18, 41.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 60-98.

1586 response to Beza, but they are hardly recognizable as three distinct arguments.<sup>39</sup>

They are somewhat better organized in thesis 10 of his *13 Theses*:

[1] If the holiness of Christ's human nature is imputed to us for remission of original sin as well as the holiness of Christ's life for the remission of our sins of omission, and even the sins of commission following from it, therefore it was not necessary for Christ to die for the achievement of the remission of sins. But, Christ's death was necessary for us, as Scripture abundantly witnesses. [2] Next, if God imputed to us the holiness of the human nature and of the life of Christ, the former to remove original sin and the latter to remove actual sin, it would have been unjust, because Christ for the sake of our sins (obviously he had already paid [them] for us) paid with death. [3] Besides, if Christ lived in a holy way for us, it follows that there remains no holy living for us. Just as it follows that there remains no tasting of eternal death for us, which Christ himself tasted for us.<sup>40</sup>

### 5.3.a. Challenging the Validity of the Cross

The first theological inconsistency created by the imputation of Christ's active obedience concerns the validity of the Christ's work on the cross. One cannot hold to the imputation of Christ's active obedience providing us with righteousness and still regard the cross as necessary for our righteousness. For Piscator, if one becomes righteous by Christ's life then there is no use for his death. He lays the following question to Beza: "Since this opinion overthrows the merit of Christ's death, to what end was it necessary for Christ to die for us, the righteous?"<sup>41</sup> In his comments on Romans 5:19 he also claims that "if the obedience of Christ's life was truly imputed to us for righteousness, it was not

<sup>39</sup> Piscator, "Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae," 54.

<sup>40</sup> "Si imputatur nobis sanctitas naturae humanae Christi ad remissionem peccati originalis: itemque sanctitas vitae Christi ad remissionem peccatorum omissionis: et ex consequenti etiam peccatorum comissionis: ergo nihil opus fuit Christum mori ad remissionem peccatorum nobis impetrandum. At Christus pro nobis mori opus fuisse, scriptura abunde testatur. Deinde si Deus imputaret nobis sanctitatem naturae humanae et vitae Christi, illam ad tollendum peccatum originali, hanc ad tollendum peccata actualia: injustus fuisset, cum Christum propter nostra peccata (quippe pro nobis is jam persolverat) mulctavit morte. Praeterea si Christus pro nobis sancte vixit: sequitur nobis non esse sancte vivendum. Sicut sequitur, nobis non esse mortem aeternum gustandum: qua Christus eam pro nobis gustavit." Apud Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 243. In the translation above, I've inserted the numbers in brackets to clarify where each of the arguments is.

<sup>41</sup> "Evertit etiam haec sententia meritum mortis Christi, quorsum enim opus fuit Christum mori pro nobis justis?" Piscator, "Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae," 54.

necessary for Christ to die for us.” But, since that cannot be, he concludes: “Therefore, we are not made righteous by Christ’s holy life. Likewise, Christ died so that he might obtain the righteousness of God for us (2 Cor. 5:21). Therefore he could not have obtained that before death, that is, by living in a holy manner.”<sup>42</sup> The argument becomes elaborate in this syllogism of *Epistle 68*:

If our sins were atoned for through the obedience of Christ’s life, they were atoned for either perfectly and for all [our sins] or imperfectly for only some of them. But neither of these is true. The first cannot be true because it follows that Christ died in vain; obviously, if he died so that he would atone for our sins, then there was certainly no need to atone for them, if they had already been atoned for through the obedience of his life. The second cannot be true because Christ rendered perfect obedience to the law of God; therefore if he rendered that for the atoning of our sins, it is necessary that through it he atoned for all of those [sins], and [did so] perfectly. Henceforth it is understood that our sins were not atoned for by the obedience of Christ’s life and thus it was not imputed to us for righteousness.<sup>43</sup>

Out of these comments from different writings, we note two types of logical *reductio* from Piscator that lead him to conclude that imputation of active obedience makes the cross worthless, unnecessary. The first comes from the assumption that righteousness consists solely in the atoning for sins, covered in the previous chapter. Since Piscator understands righteousness in this strict manner, he considers the whole of righteousness to be given by active obedience, thus creating no need for the cross. The imputation of one excludes the need for the other. “Since indeed both may be complete,

---

<sup>42</sup> “sanè si obedientia vitae Christi nobis ad justitiam imputaretur, non fuisset opus Christum pro nobis mori... Ergo non sumus justi effecti per sanctam vitam Christi. Item Christus mortuus est ut justitiam illam Dei nobis acquireret, 2 Cor.5.v.ult. Non igitur acquisiverat illam ante mortem, sanctè scilicet vivendo.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 66, 67.

<sup>43</sup> “Si peccata nostra expiata sunt per obedientiam vitae Christi, expiata sunt aut omnia & perfectè, aut quaedam tantum & imperfectè. At neutrum horum vere dici potest. Non prius: quia sequeretur Christum frustra esse mortuum; quippe cum mortuus sit ut expiaret nostra peccata, quae utique expiare non habuisset necesse, si jam per obedientiam vitae fuerunt expiata. Non posterius; quia Christus obedientiam legi Dei praestitit perfectam; quare si illam praestitit ad expiandum nostra peccata, necesse est ut per eam illa expiarit omnia, & perfectè. Hinc jam intelligitur, peccata nostra non esse expiata per obedientiam vitae Christi; ac proinde nobis illam ad justitiam non imputari.” Piscator, “Epistle 68,” 124.

to whichever you would attribute the meritorious cause of justification you remove the necessity of the other;” which means that “if we obtain perfect righteousness through the imputation of Christ’s passive obedience, we certainly do not obtain it through the imputation of his active obedience, since you can add nothing to [what is] complete.”<sup>44</sup> For Piscator, any justifying act of Christ in our place provides complete righteousness. You cannot add to what is complete. But Beza and the Reformed who follow him do not think remission of sins is the whole of righteousness neither do they believe Christ’s active obedience provides the whole of righteousness. Still, Piscator cannot understand both obediences separately. When his adversary writes that we are not made righteous only by Christ’s active obedience because the perfect conduct fulfills the debt of the law only if Adam had never fallen, he is trying to show that the fallen human has a double duty towards the law. Piscator’s response denies the notion that Christ’s active obedience makes us actively righteous, but not passively.<sup>45</sup>

The second kind of *reductio* argument comes from a strictly chronological comprehension of how the different parts of righteousness are applied. Piscator understands our reception of Christ’s righteousness to follow the course of his life. If in his life Christ gained righteousness for us, we come to his death already being righteous and in no need of the cross. He makes the same chronological connection between the cross and the holiness of Christ’s birth. When the structural order of Beza is echoed in the

---

<sup>44</sup> “Quum enim utraque perfecta sit: utricunq̄e attribueris causam meritoriam justificationis, ab altera eandem removeas necesse est. nam si perfectam justitiam obtinemus per imputationem obedientiae Christi passivae: certè non obtinemus illam per imputationem obedientiae activae: quum perfecto nihil possit addi.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 39.

<sup>45</sup> “Exceptio autem illa nihil valet, quòd obedientia Christi activa constituat nos justos activè, non passivè: quippe quum prorsus non constituat nos justos.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 75.

to whichever you would attribute the meritorious cause of justification you remove the necessity of the other;” which means that “if we obtain perfect righteousness through the imputation of Christ’s passive obedience, we certainly do not obtain it through the imputation of his active obedience, since you can add nothing to [what is] complete.”<sup>44</sup> For Piscator, any justifying act of Christ in our place provides complete righteousness. You cannot add to what is complete. But Beza and the Reformed who follow him do not think remission of sins is the whole of righteousness neither do they believe Christ’s active obedience provides the whole of righteousness. Still, Piscator cannot understand both obediences separately. When his adversary writes that we are not made righteous only by Christ’s active obedience because the perfect conduct fulfills the debt of the law only if Adam had never fallen, he is trying to show that the fallen human has a double duty towards the law. Piscator’s response denies the notion that Christ’s active obedience makes us actively righteous, but not passively.<sup>45</sup>

The second kind of *reductio* argument comes from a strictly chronological comprehension of how the different parts of righteousness are applied. Piscator understands our reception of Christ’s righteousness to follow the course of his life. If in his life Christ gained righteousness for us, we come to his death already being righteous and in no need of the cross. He makes the same chronological connection between the cross and the holiness of Christ’s birth. When the structural order of Beza is echoed in the

---

<sup>44</sup> “Quum enim utraque perfecta sit: utricunq̄e attribueris causam meritoriam justificationis, ab altera eandem removeas necesse est. nam si perfectam justitiam obtinemus per imputationem obedientiae Christi passivae: certè non obtinemus illam per imputationem obedientiae activae: quum perfecto nihil possit addi.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 39.

<sup>45</sup> “Exceptio autem illa nihil valet, quòd obedientia Christi activa constituat nos justos activè, non passivè: quippe quum prorsus non constituat nos justos.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 75.

idea that the garment of Christ's holiness follows (*succedat*) the erasing of guilt through Christ's blood, Piscator rejects the order saying that the former does not follow, but antecedes the latter (*non succedit, sed antecedit*) in order to prepare him for sacrifice.<sup>46</sup> Piscator does not detach the subjective elements of justification from its objective historical order. But the Reformed proponents of active obedience imputed understand the relation of the objective works of Christ and its respective blessings to be of a different nature. The connection is not chronological, but merely causal. John Owen notices this precise point in Piscator and argues a corrective:

But this whole argument I say, proceeds upon an evident mistake. For it supposes such an order of things, as that the obedience of Christ or his righteousness in fulfilling the law, is first imputed to us, and then the righteousness of his death is afterwards to take place, or to be imputed to us, which on that supposition he says would be of no use. But no such order or divine constitution is pleaded or pretended in our justification. It is true, the life of Christ, and his obedience to the law preceded his sufferings and undergoing the curse thereof; neither could it otherwise be. For this order of these things between themselves was made necessary from the law of nature; but it does not thence follow that it must be observed in the imputation or application of them to us. For this is an effect of sovereign wisdom and grace, not respecting the natural order of Christ's obedience and suffering, but the moral order of the things whereto they are appointed. And although we need not assert, nor do I so do, different acts of the imputation of the obedience of Christ to the justification of life, or a right and title to life eternal, and of the suffering of Christ to the pardon of our sins and freedom from condemnation; but by both we have both, according to the ordinance of God, that Christ may be all in all; yet as to the effects themselves, in the method of God's bringing sinners to the justification of life, the application of the death of Christ to them to the pardon of sin and freedom from condemnation, is in order of nature, and in the exercise of faith, antecedent to the application of his obedience to us for a right and title to life eternal.<sup>47</sup>

Owen observes the application of Christ's justifying work does not necessarily follow the natural order of Christ's period of humility. He stresses the causal connection, which is

---

<sup>46</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritorîâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 55-58.

<sup>47</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 375-376. For a similar criticism to the argument, see Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:348-349.

idea that the garment of Christ's holiness follows (*succedat*) the erasing of guilt through Christ's blood, Piscator rejects the order saying that the former does not follow, but antecedes the latter (*non succedit, sed antecedit*) in order to prepare him for sacrifice.<sup>46</sup> Piscator does not detach the subjective elements of justification from its objective historical order. But the Reformed proponents of active obedience imputed understand the relation of the objective works of Christ and its respective blessings to be of a different nature. The connection is not chronological, but merely causal. John Owen notices this precise point in Piscator and argues a corrective:

But this whole argument I say, proceeds upon an evident mistake. For it supposes such an order of things, as that the obedience of Christ or his righteousness in fulfilling the law, is first imputed to us, and then the righteousness of his death is afterwards to take place, or to be imputed to us, which on that supposition he says would be of no use. But no such order or divine constitution is pleaded or pretended in our justification. It is true, the life of Christ, and his obedience to the law preceded his sufferings and undergoing the curse thereof; neither could it otherwise be. For this order of these things between themselves was made necessary from the law of nature; but it does not thence follow that it must be observed in the imputation or application of them to us. For this is an effect of sovereign wisdom and grace, not respecting the natural order of Christ's obedience and suffering, but the moral order of the things whereto they are appointed. And although we need not assert, nor do I so do, different acts of the imputation of the obedience of Christ to the justification of life, or a right and title to life eternal, and of the suffering of Christ to the pardon of our sins and freedom from condemnation; but by both we have both, according to the ordinance of God, that Christ may be all in all; yet as to the effects themselves, in the method of God's bringing sinners to the justification of life, the application of the death of Christ to them to the pardon of sin and freedom from condemnation, is in order of nature, and in the exercise of faith, antecedent to the application of his obedience to us for a right and title to life eternal.<sup>47</sup>

Owen observes the application of Christ's justifying work does not necessarily follow the natural order of Christ's period of humility. He stresses the causal connection, which is

---

<sup>46</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritorîâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 55-58.

<sup>47</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 375-376. For a similar criticism to the argument, see Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:348-349.

the reason why he repeats the idea of ‘effect’. But in the end of this quotation, he notices that if there is a logical and chronological order of application, pardon from sin and freedom from condemnation has to come before the right to eternal life.<sup>48</sup>

### 5.3.b. Challenging the Justice of God

The second theological inconsistency created by the imputation of Christ’s fulfillment of the law is in maintaining the justice of God. Piscator wrote to Beza:

But do you expect that I show how this opinion is opposed to the justice of God? Without a doubt it is! If God imputes to us for righteousness Christ’s obedience in which he fulfilled the law, then he unjustly punished us as sinners in Christ. Or, which means the same thing, he unjustly condemned our sins (whose guilt was already covered previously in the fulfilling of the law) in the flesh of the Son of God (as the Apostle says in Rom. 8:3).<sup>49</sup>

Again, the presupposition is that righteousness equals forgiveness of sins. So, all that either the active or the passive obedience can do is to forgive sins. That is why his first objection to the theological contradiction of Beza’s theology was that the application of one makes the application of the other unnecessary. However, there is a sense in which the objection now is even more serious than the preceding one, especially if one upholds the necessity of the cross. “In fact, it was necessary that he die for us the unjust (1 Pet. 3:18),” Piscator adds to the previous objection. “Therefore if we are made just through his life, there would be no compelling reason why he would die for us. Indeed, the justice of God does not allow that the righteous be punished. But he punished us in Christ, or

---

<sup>48</sup> This goes against Ritschl who asserts that Reformed divines taught a logical order where *imputatio justitiae* precedes the remission of the guilt of sin. Cf. Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, 256. Turretin, however, expresses the opinion highlighted by Ritschl. Cf. Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, XVI.iv.4-5. This shows the variety within the Reformed defense of the imputation of active obedience.

<sup>49</sup> “Sed expectas ut ostendam quomodo haec sententia adversetur justitiae Dei? Sic nimirum: si Deus obedientiam Christi qua is Legem praestitit nobis imputat in justitiam, ergo injuste nos tanquam peccatores in Christo punivit. Seu, quod idem valet, injuste peccatum nostrum (cujus reatus jam ante Legis praestationem fuit tectus) in carne Filii Dei (ut Apostolus loquitur), condemnavit, Rom.8, v.3.” Piscator, “Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae,” 54; cf. p. 58.

the reason why he repeats the idea of ‘effect’. But in the end of this quotation, he notices that if there is a logical and chronological order of application, pardon from sin and freedom from condemnation has to come before the right to eternal life.<sup>48</sup>

### 5.3.b. Challenging the Justice of God

The second theological inconsistency created by the imputation of Christ’s fulfillment of the law is in maintaining the justice of God. Piscator wrote to Beza:

But do you expect that I show how this opinion is opposed to the justice of God? Without a doubt it is! If God imputes to us for righteousness Christ’s obedience in which he fulfilled the law, then he unjustly punished us as sinners in Christ. Or, which means the same thing, he unjustly condemned our sins (whose guilt was already covered previously in the fulfilling of the law) in the flesh of the Son of God (as the Apostle says in Rom. 8:3).<sup>49</sup>

Again, the presupposition is that righteousness equals forgiveness of sins. So, all that either the active or the passive obedience can do is to forgive sins. That is why his first objection to the theological contradiction of Beza’s theology was that the application of one makes the application of the other unnecessary. However, there is a sense in which the objection now is even more serious than the preceding one, especially if one upholds the necessity of the cross. “In fact, it was necessary that he die for us the unjust (1 Pet. 3:18),” Piscator adds to the previous objection. “Therefore if we are made just through his life, there would be no compelling reason why he would die for us. Indeed, the justice of God does not allow that the righteous be punished. But he punished us in Christ, or

---

<sup>48</sup> This goes against Ritschl who asserts that Reformed divines taught a logical order where *imputatio justitiae* precedes the remission of the guilt of sin. Cf. Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, 256. Turretin, however, expresses the opinion highlighted by Ritschl. Cf. Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, XVI.iv.4-5. This shows the variety within the Reformed defense of the imputation of active obedience.

<sup>49</sup> “Sed expectas ut ostendam quomodo haec sententia adversetur justitiae Dei? Sic nimirum: si Deus obedientiam Christi qua is Legem praestitit nobis imputat in justitiam, ergo injuste nos tanquam peccatores in Christo punivit. Seu, quod idem valet, injuste peccatum nostrum (cujus reatus jam ante Legis praestationem fuit tectus) in carne Filii Dei (ut Apostolus loquitur), condemnavit, Rom.8, v.3.” Piscator, “Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae,” 54; cf. p. 58.

what means the same thing, he punished Christ for us and in our place after that one had lived in a holy manner.”<sup>50</sup> The reason why he raises 1 Peter 3:18 is because this verse says that the “righteous” Christ suffered for the “unrighteous.” Thus, based on this verse, it cannot be that Christ’s holiness is imputed to us.<sup>51</sup> However, if we are made righteous by the life of Christ – here, again, we see the chronological order come into play –, then God’s demand for satisfaction on the cross is unjust: “If Christ by the obedience of his life had satisfied God for our sins, it would follow that God is unjust, who in addition required to be satisfied through the obedience of death, and so he wished that the same debt be paid to him twice. But God is not unjust; therefore Christ did not satisfy God for our sins through the obedience of his life.”<sup>52</sup>

In the *Apologia* we see that such theological contradiction created by Piscator is not, in fact, a contradiction for his opponent. There are two parts of the justifying righteousness which concur for the one act of justification, and both are necessary for having different ends. It is not true that we are obliged either to obedience or to

---

<sup>50</sup> “Mori enim necesse fuit pro nobis injustis, 1. Pet. 3. vers. 18. Quòd si ergo justì effecti sumus per vitam illius, causa nulla rejecta fuit cur pro nobis moreretur. Imò justitia Dei non patitur ut puniat justos. At punivit nos in Christo, seu quod idem valet, punivit Christum pro nobis & loco nostri; posteaquàm ille sanctè vixisset.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 66-67. *Causa nulla rejecta*: lit. No reason rejected, or no reason forcing back.

<sup>51</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoria justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 29. In another work, Piscator connects this verse with the first theological contradiction: “Nam si Christus obedientia illa nobis meritis esset justificationem: obedientia illa nobis imputaretur ad justitiam, non sequitur per illam imputationem justì essemus: ac proinde frustra passus ac mortuus esset Christus: quippe qui passus & mortuus est non pro justis, sed pro injustis, 1 Pet. 3. v.18.” Johannes Piscator, *Theses Theologicae De Justificatione Hominis Coram Deo* (Herborn: Christophorus Corvinus, 1612), xv.

<sup>52</sup> “Si Christus obedientia vitae satisfecisset Deo pro nostris peccatis, sequeretur Deum esse injustum, qui insuper postulaverit sibi satisfieri per obedientiam mortis, atque ita idem debitum sibi bis persolvi voluerit. Atqui Deus non est injustus; ergo Christus obedientia vitae suae non satisfecit Deo pro peccatis nostris.” Piscator, “Epistle 68,” 124.

what means the same thing, he punished Christ for us and in our place after that one had lived in a holy manner.”<sup>50</sup> The reason why he raises 1 Peter 3:18 is because this verse says that the “righteous” Christ suffered for the “unrighteous.” Thus, based on this verse, it cannot be that Christ’s holiness is imputed to us.<sup>51</sup> However, if we are made righteous by the life of Christ – here, again, we see the chronological order come into play –, then God’s demand for satisfaction on the cross is unjust: “If Christ by the obedience of his life had satisfied God for our sins, it would follow that God is unjust, who in addition required to be satisfied through the obedience of death, and so he wished that the same debt be paid to him twice. But God is not unjust; therefore Christ did not satisfy God for our sins through the obedience of his life.”<sup>52</sup>

In the *Apologia* we see that such theological contradiction created by Piscator is not, in fact, a contradiction for his opponent. There are two parts of the justifying righteousness which concur for the one act of justification, and both are necessary for having different ends. It is not true that we are obliged either to obedience or to

---

<sup>50</sup> “Mori enim necesse fuit pro nobis injustis, 1. Pet. 3. vers. 18. Quòd si ergo justì effecti sumus per vitam illius, causa nulla rejecta fuit cur pro nobis moreretur. Imò justitia Dei non patitur ut puniat justos. At punivit nos in Christo, seu quod idem valet, punivit Christum pro nobis & loco nostri; posteaquàm ille sanctè vixisset.” Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 66-67. *Causa nulla rejecta*: lit. No reason rejected, or no reason forcing back.

<sup>51</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoria justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 29. In another work, Piscator connects this verse with the first theological contradiction: “Nam si Christus obedientia illa nobis meritis esset justificationem: obedientia illa nobis imputaretur ad justitiam, non sequitur per illam imputationem justì essemus: ac proinde frustra passus ac mortuus esset Christus: quippe qui passus & mortuus est non pro justis, sed pro injustis, 1 Pet. 3. v.18.” Johannes Piscator, *Theses Theologicae De Justificatione Hominis Coram Deo* (Herborn: Christophorus Corvinus, 1612), xv.

<sup>52</sup> “Si Christus obedientia vitae satisfecisset Deo pro nostris peccatis, sequeretur Deum esse injustum, qui insuper postulaverit sibi satisfieri per obedientiam mortis, atque ita idem debitum sibi bis persolvi voluerit. Atqui Deus non est injustus; ergo Christus obedientia vitae suae non satisfecit Deo pro peccatis nostris.” Piscator, “Epistle 68,” 124.

punishment, like the first Adam. Because after the Fall we became obliged to both.<sup>53</sup>

Piscator's reply is a denial of the existence of two parts of justifying righteousness. He denies that his argument is that the human being is obliged either to the penalty or to obedience,<sup>54</sup> and the reason is because humanity is always obliged to obey the law as a creature subject to his Creator and Lord:

It is certain that the human being is always obligated to God to obey the law and its commands, because God always maintains the duty towards the very same principles and commands, as it is proper to a creator and master (*dominus*). From here it follows that the asserted disjunctive that the human being is obliged either to obedience or to penalty, cannot stand. For if it were true, it would follow that the human being is not always obligated to obey God.<sup>55</sup>

Apparently, these words are in contrast to his comments on Romans 8:1-4 where he said that the law demands from us either perfect obedience or penalty (*aut perfectam obedientiam aut poenam*).<sup>56</sup> This incongruence could be interpreted as either a meticulous adherence to technicalities or a significant change in his opinion. The interpretation that Piscator is meticulous follows if he is distinguishing between 'obedience' and 'perfect

---

<sup>53</sup> "Duae n. sunt partes justificantis justitiae, ad unum justificationis actum concurrentes: passiva liberans nos à peccatis, activa legis proprium finem theticè pro nobis implens, ne enervetur. Nec est quòd dicas, obligamur aut ad poenam, aut ad obedientiam. Nam ex quo lapsi sumus, obligamur ad poenam: volentes autem redire ad Deum, obligamur ad utrumque: ut non solùm transgressio expietur, sed etiam lex perfectâ obedientiâ impleatur, alias nobis non visuris vitâ. Proinde non valet argumentum, Si primus Adam ante lapsum aut ad poenã, aut ad obedientiam obligabatur, non vero ad utrumque: ergo nec secundus Adam pro nobis obligatur ad utrumque: quia Christum auferre in justitiam & adferre justitiam sempiternam oportuit, si vellet lapsos aeternùm beare." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 83-84.

<sup>54</sup> "Exceptione de obligatione aut ad poenam aut ad obedientiam, apud me non fuerat opus. nam ego nec ex illo disjuncto argumentor, nec pro vero illud habeo." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 85.

<sup>55</sup> "Certum est, hominem semper obligari Deo ad obediendum legibus atque mandatis ipsius: quia Deus semper jus habet ei praecipendi sive mandandi; quum sit ipsius creator ac dominus. Hinc sequitur, disjunctivum istud enuntiatum, Homo obligatur vel ad obedientiam vel ad poenã, consistere non posse. Nam si verum esset: sequeretur, hominem non semper Deo ad obedientiam obligari." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 85-86.

<sup>56</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 85. For a longer discussion of this issue, see the section on this pericope in the previous chapter.

punishment, like the first Adam. Because after the Fall we became obliged to both.<sup>53</sup>

Piscator's reply is a denial of the existence of two parts of justifying righteousness. He denies that his argument is that the human being is obliged either to the penalty or to obedience,<sup>54</sup> and the reason is because humanity is always obliged to obey the law as a creature subject to his Creator and Lord:

It is certain that the human being is always obligated to God to obey the law and its commands, because God always maintains the duty towards the very same principles and commands, as it is proper to a creator and master (*dominus*). From here it follows that the asserted disjunctive that the human being is obliged either to obedience or to penalty, cannot stand. For if it were true, it would follow that the human being is not always obligated to obey God.<sup>55</sup>

Apparently, these words are in contrast to his comments on Romans 8:1-4 where he said that the law demands from us either perfect obedience or penalty (*aut perfectam obedientiam aut poenam*).<sup>56</sup> This incongruence could be interpreted as either a meticulous adherence to technicalities or a significant change in his opinion. The interpretation that Piscator is meticulous follows if he is distinguishing between 'obedience' and 'perfect

---

<sup>53</sup> "Duae n. sunt partes justificantis justitiae, ad unum justificationis actum concurrentes: passiva liberans nos à peccatis, activa legis proprium finem theticè pro nobis implens, ne enervetur. Nec est quòd dicas, obligamur aut ad poenam, aut ad obedientiam. Nam ex quo lapsi sumus, obligamur ad poenam: volentes autem redire ad Deum, obligamur ad utrumque: ut non solùm transgressio expietur, sed etiam lex perfectâ obedientiâ impleatur, alias nobis non visuris vitâ. Proinde non valet argumentum, Si primus Adam ante lapsum aut ad poenâ, aut ad obedientiam obligabatur, non vero ad utrumque: ergo nec secundus Adam pro nobis obligatur ad utrumque: quia Christum auferre in justitiam & adferre justitiam sempiternam oportuit, si vellet lapsos aeternùm beare." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 83-84.

<sup>54</sup> "Exceptione de obligatione aut ad poenam aut ad obedientiam, apud me non fuerat opus. nam ego nec ex illo disjuncto argumentor, nec pro vero illud habeo." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 85.

<sup>55</sup> "Certum est, hominem semper obligari Deo ad obediendum legibus atque mandatis ipsius: quia Deus semper jus habet ei praecipendi sive mandandi; quum sit ipsius creator ac dominus. Hinc sequitur, disjunctivum istud enuntiatum, Homo obligatur vel ad obedientiam vel ad poenâ, consistere non posse. Nam si verum esset: sequeretur, hominem non semper Deo ad obedientiam obligari." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 85-86.

<sup>56</sup> Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 85. For a longer discussion of this issue, see the section on this pericope in the previous chapter.

obedience’, saying we are freed from the latter but never of the former. However, such interpretation is not fair to the context in *Apologia*, for on the same page he displays the prelapsarian Adam as being obliged to “obedience” – without any qualifications. So this can only mean that Piscator has changed his opinion – if consciously or unconsciously, there is no evidence – due to an inconsistency created with his own belief that we are always subject to obey God’s commands. This belief will be discussed in the next section since it sustains an argument against the imputation of active obedience.

Nevertheless, one important comment on the relationship of humanity to the law in the various states comes out of his change of opinion. He says there are three states of the human person: first there is Adam before the Fall, secondly there is the human after the Fall and before conversion, and thirdly the human after conversion. “Before the Fall, the human being was obligated only to obedience, but not also to punishment because the commandment of God had not been transgressed. After the Fall and before conversion, the human being is obligated to both obedience and punishment... After conversion, the human person is again obligated only to obedience, but not to punishment.”<sup>57</sup> Piscator makes no distinction between the state Adam was in before the Fall and the state that Christians are in today. The Legal covenant is not part of the comment above for there is no mention of a reward which results from perfect obedience, and obedience is dealt as the eternal obligation we as creatures have to submit to God’s commandments without distinguishing between meritorious obedience (within the legal covenant) and obedience from gratitude (within the gracious covenant). For Piscator, humanity after conversion

---

<sup>57</sup> “Ante lapsum homo obligatus fuit ad obedientiam tantum, non etiam ad poenam: quia mandatum Dei non fuerat transgressus. Post lapsum ante conversionem homo obligatur ad utramque, & ad obedientiam & ad poenam... Post conversionem homo rursus obligatur ad obedientiam tantum, non etiam ad poenam.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causa meritoria justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 86-87. Cf. Gataker, *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis*, 15.

obedience', saying we are freed from the latter but never of the former. However, such interpretation is not fair to the context in *Apologia*, for on the same page he displays the prelapsarian Adam as being obliged to "obedience" – without any qualifications. So this can only mean that Piscator has changed his opinion – if consciously or unconsciously, there is no evidence – due to an inconsistency created with his own belief that we are always subject to obey God's commands. This belief will be discussed in the next section since it sustains an argument against the imputation of active obedience.

Nevertheless, one important comment on the relationship of humanity to the law in the various states comes out of his change of opinion. He says there are three states of the human person: first there is Adam before the Fall, secondly there is the human after the Fall and before conversion, and thirdly the human after conversion. "Before the Fall, the human being was obligated only to obedience, but not also to punishment because the commandment of God had not been transgressed. After the Fall and before conversion, the human being is obligated to both obedience and punishment... After conversion, the human person is again obligated only to obedience, but not to punishment."<sup>57</sup> Piscator makes no distinction between the state Adam was in before the Fall and the state that Christians are in today. The Legal covenant is not part of the comment above for there is no mention of a reward which results from perfect obedience, and obedience is dealt as the eternal obligation we as creatures have to submit to God's commandments without distinguishing between meritorious obedience (within the legal covenant) and obedience from gratitude (within the gracious covenant). For Piscator, humanity after conversion

---

<sup>57</sup> "Ante lapsum homo obligatus fuit ad obedientiam tantum, non etiam ad poenam: quia mandatum Dei non fuerat transgressus. Post lapsum ante conversionem homo obligatur ad utramque, & ad obedientiam & ad poenam... Post conversionem homo rursus obligatur ad obedientiam tantum, non etiam ad poenam." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causa meritoria justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 86-87. Cf. Gataker, *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis*, 15.

goes back (*rursum*) to having the same obligation as the pre-Fall Adam. There is no sense of Christ taking us further than where Adam was.<sup>58</sup>

### 5.3.c. Challenging the Christian's Duty of Obedience

The last theological contradiction noted in Piscator's argument is the claim that Christ obeyed the commandments of the law in our behalf and that we are still required to obey the law. If something is done vicariously, then the ones substituted should be free from the obligation fulfilled in their place. Then, if we receive the righteousness resulting from Christ's fulfillment of the law, "we are not bound to fulfill that, just as we are not bound to that great curse of the law because he was made a curse for us."<sup>59</sup> But that obviously creates a problem, as the syllogism in *Epistle 68* demonstrates:

If Christ satisfied for our sins by obedience performed to the law, so that such obedience is imputed to us by God as if we had performed it, it follows that we have been freed from obedience to the law, since Christ hypothetically performed it for us or in our place; just as we correctly say with the Apostle "we are freed from the curse of the law because Christ was made a curse for us" [Gal. 3:13]. However, we are not freed from obedience to the law, but we have to perform it to God for ever. Therefore, Christ did not satisfy for our sins by the obedience performed to the law.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Herman Bavinck correctly summarizes the predominant seventeenth-century covenant theology when he writes: "Though before his disobedience Adam was righteous, he still had to secure eternal life in the way of works. To bear a punishment is absolutely not as such identical with the observance of the law. A criminal who is punished but who in being punished hardens his heart fulfills the demands of the law but by no means meets the entire demand of the law. In addition, Christ was the second Adam. He came not only to bear our punishment for us but also to obtain for us the righteousness and life that Adam had to secure by his obedience. He delivered us from guilt and punishment and placed us at the end of the road that Adam had to walk, not at the beginning." Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:394-395.

<sup>59</sup> "nos igitur illam praestare non tenemur, sicut non tenemur amplius ad execrationem Legis quia ipse pro nobis factus est execratio." Piscator, "Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae," 54.

<sup>60</sup> "Si Christus pro nostris peccatis satisfecerit per obedientiam praestitam legi, ita ut illa nobis imputetur à Deo ac si eam nos praestitissemus; sequitur nos ab obedientia legis esse liberatos, quippe quam Christus, ex hypothesi, pro nobis, seu vice nostra praestitit: sicut recte cum Apostolo dicimus, nos esse liberatos à maledictione legis, quia Christus pro nobis factus sit maledictio. Atqui nos non sumus liberati ab obedientia legis, sed eam Deo praestare in aeternum tenemur. Ergo Christus per obedientiam legis praestitam pro peccatis nostris non satisfecit." Piscator, "Epistle 68," 124.

goes back (*rursum*) to having the same obligation as the pre-Fall Adam. There is no sense of Christ taking us further than where Adam was.<sup>58</sup>

### 5.3.c. Challenging the Christian's Duty of Obedience

The last theological contradiction noted in Piscator's argument is the claim that Christ obeyed the commandments of the law in our behalf and that we are still required to obey the law. If something is done vicariously, then the ones substituted should be free from the obligation fulfilled in their place. Then, if we receive the righteousness resulting from Christ's fulfillment of the law, "we are not bound to fulfill that, just as we are not bound to that great curse of the law because he was made a curse for us."<sup>59</sup> But that obviously creates a problem, as the syllogism in *Epistle 68* demonstrates:

If Christ satisfied for our sins by obedience performed to the law, so that such obedience is imputed to us by God as if we had performed it, it follows that we have been freed from obedience to the law, since Christ hypothetically performed it for us or in our place; just as we correctly say with the Apostle "we are freed from the curse of the law because Christ was made a curse for us" [Gal. 3:13]. However, we are not freed from obedience to the law, but we have to perform it to God for ever. Therefore, Christ did not satisfy for our sins by the obedience performed to the law.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Herman Bavinck correctly summarizes the predominant seventeenth-century covenant theology when he writes: "Though before his disobedience Adam was righteous, he still had to secure eternal life in the way of works. To bear a punishment is absolutely not as such identical with the observance of the law. A criminal who is punished but who in being punished hardens his heart fulfills the demands of the law but by no means meets the entire demand of the law. In addition, Christ was the second Adam. He came not only to bear our punishment for us but also to obtain for us the righteousness and life that Adam had to secure by his obedience. He delivered us from guilt and punishment and placed us at the end of the road that Adam had to walk, not at the beginning." Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:394-395.

<sup>59</sup> "nos igitur illam praestare non tenemur, sicut non tenemur amplius ad execrationem Legis quia ipse pro nobis factus est execratio." Piscator, "Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae," 54.

<sup>60</sup> "Si Christus pro nostris peccatis satisfecerit per obedientiam praestitam legi, ita ut illa nobis imputetur à Deo ac si eam nos praestitissemus; sequitur nos ab obedientia legis esse liberatos, quippe quam Christus, ex hypothesi, pro nobis, seu vice nostra praestitit: sicut recte cum Apostolo dicimus, nos esse liberatos à maledictione legis, quia Christus pro nobis factus sit maledictio. Atqui nos non sumus liberati ab obedientia legis, sed eam Deo praestare in aeternum tenemur. Ergo Christus per obedientiam legis praestitam pro peccatis nostris non satisfecit." Piscator, "Epistle 68," 124.

In the *Apologia*, Piscator not only reasserts this argument,<sup>61</sup> but even furthers it by creating new distinctions and responding to criticism. One new distinction is that Christ frees us from the moral and the ceremonial law in diverse manners. “Certainly Christ freed us not only from the ceremonial law but also from the moral [law], though differently. From the former he [freed us] not only from the curse, but also from the observation or obedience of it; but from the latter he only [freed us] from the curse, not from the obedience [of it].”<sup>62</sup> Even more important, however, is Piscator’s response to some distinctions raised by his opponent. Piscator’s opponent in the *Apologia* affirms that “[t]here must be a distinction between filial and servile obedience, for the law is a norm of both though in a different manner; the former [obedience] is one of gratitude, the latter [obedience] is one of rigid execution. To the former one we are bound, from the latter one we were freed.”<sup>63</sup> In the same train of thought, he denotes another distinction between the “law of creation” (*jure creationis*) from which we are freed from Christ, and the “law of redemption” (*jure redemptionis*) to which we always obey out of gratitude.<sup>64</sup>

Piscator overturns every distinction mentioned above. He disagrees with the distinction between filial and servile obedience because God in his law did not order servile obedience, but filial. He proves his claim with Exodus 20:2, the prologue of the Ten Commandments, where God calls himself “your God” (*Deus tuus*). Such paternal

---

<sup>61</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 6.

<sup>62</sup> “Sanè Christus liberavit nos non solùm à lege ceremoniali, sed etiam à morali: verùm diversimodè. Ab illius quidem non solùm maledictione, sed etiam observatione seu obedientia: ab istius verò maledictione solùm, non etiam obedientiâ.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 9.

<sup>63</sup> “Distinguendum enim est inter obedientiam filialem & servilem. nam utruisque lex est norma, sed diversimodè: illic gratitudinis, hîc rigidæ exactionis. Ad illam tenemur: ab hac sumus liberati.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 20.

<sup>64</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 93.

In the *Apologia*, Piscator not only reasserts this argument,<sup>61</sup> but even furthers it by creating new distinctions and responding to criticism. One new distinction is that Christ frees us from the moral and the ceremonial law in diverse manners. “Certainly Christ freed us not only from the ceremonial law but also from the moral [law], though differently. From the former he [freed us] not only from the curse, but also from the observation or obedience of it; but from the latter he only [freed us] from the curse, not from the obedience [of it].”<sup>62</sup> Even more important, however, is Piscator’s response to some distinctions raised by his opponent. Piscator’s opponent in the *Apologia* affirms that “[t]here must be a distinction between filial and servile obedience, for the law is a norm of both though in a different manner; the former [obedience] is one of gratitude, the latter [obedience] is one of rigid execution. To the former one we are bound, from the latter one we were freed.”<sup>63</sup> In the same train of thought, he denotes another distinction between the “law of creation” (*jure creationis*) from which we are freed from Christ, and the “law of redemption” (*jure redemptionis*) to which we always obey out of gratitude.<sup>64</sup>

Piscator overturns every distinction mentioned above. He disagrees with the distinction between filial and servile obedience because God in his law did not order servile obedience, but filial. He proves his claim with Exodus 20:2, the prologue of the Ten Commandments, where God calls himself “your God” (*Deus tuus*). Such paternal

---

<sup>61</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 6.

<sup>62</sup> “Sanè Christus liberavit nos non solùm à lege ceremoniali, sed etiam à morali: verùm diversimodè. Ab illius quidem non solùm maledictione, sed etiam observatione seu obedientia: ab istius verò maledictione solùm, non etiam obedientiâ.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 9.

<sup>63</sup> “Distinguendum enim est inter obedientiam filialem & servilem. nam utriusque lex est norma, sed diversimodè: illic gratitudinis, hîc rigidae exactionis. Ad illam tenemur: ab hac sumus liberati.” Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 20.

<sup>64</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 93.

language implies that his people owed filial obedience. Besides, it can't be denied that Christ performed filial obedience to the law. If such performance was for us, then we are freed from filial obedience. But that can't be true. So Piscator concludes that such distinction is not helpful.<sup>65</sup> Neither can the other distinction – between obedience out of gratitude and obedience out of rigid execution – remain valid. He thinks the two elements are heterogeneous, because the former is obedience from our perspective while the latter is from God's.<sup>66</sup> The distinction should be made of homogeneous elements, instead. But there is yet another problem with this distinction:

Besides, even if we were freed from the rigid execution of the law, nevertheless we were not freed from the obligation of perfect obedience to the law; of course, to that we are always bound as God's rational creatures. Therefore, the law always demands perfect obedience from the human being, but from us who believe in Christ he does not demand it rigidly, that is, with the threat of a curse – except if we have fulfilled it – because the curse has been removed from us by Christ and thus the imperfection of our obedience is not imputed to us.<sup>67</sup>

This last comment comes from the desire to maintain the perpetuity of the moral law as a rule of justice, though recognizing that from its curse and severity we are freed.<sup>68</sup> Piscator agrees with his opponent that we were freed from 'rigid execution' of the law – since believers in Christ are not under its curse or strictness – but he still maintains there is

---

<sup>65</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 20-21.

<sup>66</sup> "Gratitudo praestatur à nobis: rigida exactio fit à Deo." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 21.

<sup>67</sup> "Praeterea etsi liberati sumus ab exactione legis rigida: tamen non sumus liberati ab obligatione ad obedientiam legis perfectam: quippe ad quam semper tenemur, tanquam creaturae Dei rationales. Perfectam igitur obedientiam lex ab homine semper exigit: sed illam à nobis, qui in Christum credimus, non exigit rigidè, id est, cum comminatione maledictionis, nisi eam praestiterimus: quia maledictio per Christum à nobis sublata est: ac proinde imperfectio nostrae obedientiae nobis non imputatur." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 21.

<sup>68</sup> "Therefore the morall law, may not be sayd to be abrogate, because it is a perpetuall rule of iustice cōmanding summarily the loue of God and of the neighbour, which are mens duties for euer. Albeit it be grated also as true, that the faithful are freed by Christ frō the curse, seueritie or, extremitie of the law." Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, VIII.xv (p. 37).

language implies that his people owed filial obedience. Besides, it can't be denied that Christ performed filial obedience to the law. If such performance was for us, then we are freed from filial obedience. But that can't be true. So Piscator concludes that such distinction is not helpful.<sup>65</sup> Neither can the other distinction – between obedience out of gratitude and obedience out of rigid execution – remain valid. He thinks the two elements are heterogeneous, because the former is obedience from our perspective while the latter is from God's.<sup>66</sup> The distinction should be made of homogeneous elements, instead. But there is yet another problem with this distinction:

Besides, even if we were freed from the rigid execution of the law, nevertheless we were not freed from the obligation of perfect obedience to the law; of course, to that we are always bound as God's rational creatures. Therefore, the law always demands perfect obedience from the human being, but from us who believe in Christ he does not demand it rigidly, that is, with the threat of a curse – except if we have fulfilled it – because the curse has been removed from us by Christ and thus the imperfection of our obedience is not imputed to us.<sup>67</sup>

This last comment comes from the desire to maintain the perpetuity of the moral law as a rule of justice, though recognizing that from its curse and severity we are freed.<sup>68</sup> Piscator agrees with his opponent that we were freed from 'rigid execution' of the law – since believers in Christ are not under its curse or strictness – but he still maintains there is

---

<sup>65</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 20-21.

<sup>66</sup> "Gratitudo praestatur à nobis: rigida exactio fit à Deo." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 21.

<sup>67</sup> "Praeterea etsi liberati sumus ab exactione legis rigida: tamen non sumus liberati ab obligatione ad obedientiam legis perfectam: quippe ad quam semper tenemur, tanquam creaturae Dei rationales. Perfectam igitur obedientiam lex ab homine semper exigit: sed illam à nobis, qui in Christum credimus, non exigit rigidè, id est, cum comminatione maledictionis, nisi eam praestiterimus: quia maledictio per Christum à nobis sublata est: ac proinde imperfectio nostrae obedientiae nobis non imputatur." Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 21.

<sup>68</sup> "Therefore the morall law, may not be sayd to be abrogate, because it is a perpetuall rule of iustice cōmanding summarily the loue of God and of the neighbour, which are mens duties for euer. Albeit it be grated also as true, that the faithful are freed by Christ frō the curse, seueritie or, extremitie of the law." Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, VIII.xv (p. 37).

nothing absurd about having to “serve God through perfect obedience to the law” (*servire Deo per obedientiam legis perfectam*).<sup>69</sup> That is, Christians are still servants of God and we still owe him perfect obedience. We are still under the code of creation, as well as the code of redemption, and we should obey both gratefully and perfectly.<sup>70</sup>

Two observations on this third objection are due. First, there is no distinction between different kinds of obedience. For example, there is no separation between our obedience to the law for justification and our obedience to the law for sanctification.<sup>71</sup>

Even the earlier Reformers would not allow that their exhortation to Christians towards

---

<sup>69</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 27-28.

<sup>70</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritoriâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 94.

<sup>71</sup> Franeker professor Johannes Maccovius responded to Piscator’s objection as follows: “We do not obey for the same end, that we may satisfy according to that *do this and you will live*, but in order that we may demonstrate our gratitude.” [Nec obedimus, eo fine, ut satisfaciamus, juxta illud, *hoc fac & vives*: sed ut gratitudinem nostram comprobare possimus.] Nicolaus Arnoldus, ed., *Johannes Maccovius Redivivus: Sev Manuscripta Ejus Typis Exscripta* (Franeker: Idzardus Albertus, 1654), 134. The Puritan David Clarkson expands on the distinction: “By Christ’s suffering in our stead we are freed from suffering anything for that end for which he suffered, that is, for satisfying of divine justice; so by Christ’s obeying in our stead we are freed from obedience, for that end for which he performed obedience in our place, that is, that we might have title to life. For these ends for which he suffered and obeyed, it is not required of us either to obey or to suffer, for he alone satisfied justice by the one, and he alone purchased title to life by the other. For other ends we suffer afflictions and death, not to satisfy divine justice; and so for other ends we are as much obliged to obedience as if he had not obeyed for us, but not to purchase a title to life, not for that end.” Clarkson still says that there are two sorts of necessity in connection to the law. There is a *necessitas precepti*, “the necessity of it as a duty indispensably required,” and a *necessitas medii*, “the necessity of it as the means or way to salvation, without which it cannot be attained.” Though Christ frees us from the first necessity, our obedience is still necessary because it fits into the second category. David Clarkson, *The Practical Works of David Clarkson* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1864), 1:292, 297. Anthony Burgess says the same thing more succinctly: “obedience is not required of us to the same end, and for the same purpose that it was of Christ: Christ obeyed the Law for our Justification, but we by way of gratitude, and to testify our thankfulness.” Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 428. John Owen writes: “we are by the death of Christ freed from all sufferings as they are purely penal and the effects of the curse, though they spring out of that root. Only, Sir! You and I know full well that we are not freed from pain, afflictions, and death itselfe, which had never beene, had they not proceeded from the curse of the law. And so, Sir! By the obedience of Christ we are freed from obedience to the law, as to justification by the works thereof. We are no more obliged to obey the law in order to justification than we are obliged to undergo the penalties of the law to answer its curse.” Peter Toon, ed., *The Correspondence of John Owen (1616-1683): With an account of his life and work* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1970), 167. This clear distinction between obeying for justification and obeying in the context of sanctification, while maintaining the necessity of both, occurs throughout the seventeenth-century from Perkins to à Brakel. Cf. William Perkins, *The Whole Works of that famous and worthy Minister of Christ in the Vniversitie of Cambridge, M. William Perkins, in three Volumes* (London: John Legatt, 1631), 1:81, 2:206; Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*, 1:612.

nothing absurd about having to “serve God through perfect obedience to the law” (*servire Deo per obedientiam legis perfectam*).<sup>69</sup> That is, Christians are still servants of God and we still owe him perfect obedience. We are still under the code of creation, as well as the code of redemption, and we should obey both gratefully and perfectly.<sup>70</sup>

Two observations on this third objection are due. First, there is no distinction between different kinds of obedience. For example, there is no separation between our obedience to the law for justification and our obedience to the law for sanctification.<sup>71</sup>

Even the earlier Reformers would not allow that their exhortation to Christians towards

---

<sup>69</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritorîâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 27-28.

<sup>70</sup> Piscator, *Apologia Disputationis De Causâ meritorîâ justificationis hominis coram Deo*, 94.

<sup>71</sup> Franeker professor Johannes Maccovius responded to Piscator’s objection as follows: “We do not obey for the same end, that we may satisfy according to that *do this and you will live*, but in order that we may demonstrate our gratitude.” [Nec obedimus, eo fine, ut satisfaciamus, juxta illud, *hoc fac & vives*: sed ut gratitudinem nostram comprobare possimus.] Nicolaus Arnoldus, ed., *Johannes Maccovius Redivivus: Sev Manuscripta Ejus Typis Exscripta* (Franeker: Idzardus Albertus, 1654), 134. The Puritan David Clarkson expands on the distinction: “By Christ’s suffering in our stead we are freed from suffering anything for that end for which he suffered, that is, for satisfying of divine justice; so by Christ’s obeying in our stead we are freed from obedience, for that end for which he performed obedience in our place, that is, that we might have title to life. For these ends for which he suffered and obeyed, it is not required of us either to obey or to suffer, for he alone satisfied justice by the one, and he alone purchased title to life by the other. For other ends we suffer afflictions and death, not to satisfy divine justice; and so for other ends we are as much obliged to obedience as if he had not obeyed for us, but not to purchase a title to life, not for that end.” Clarkson still says that there are two sorts of necessity in connection to the law. There is a *necessitas precepti*, “the necessity of it as a duty indispensably required,” and a *necessitas medii*, “the necessity of it as the means or way to salvation, without which it cannot be attained.” Though Christ frees us from the first necessity, our obedience is still necessary because it fits into the second category. David Clarkson, *The Practical Works of David Clarkson* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1864), 1:292, 297. Anthony Burgess says the same thing more succinctly: “obedience is not required of us to the same end, and for the same purpose that it was of Christ: Christ obeyed the Law for our Justification, but we by way of gratitude, and to testify our thankfulness.” Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 428. John Owen writes: “we are by the death of Christ freed from all sufferings as they are purely penal and the effects of the curse, though they spring out of that root. Only, Sir! You and I know full well that we are not freed from pain, afflictions, and death itselfe, which had never beene, had they not proceeded from the curse of the law. And so, Sir! By the obedience of Christ we are freed from obedience to the law, as to justification by the works thereof. We are no more obliged to obey the law in order to justification than we are obliged to undergo the penalties of the law to answer its curse.” Peter Toon, ed., *The Correspondence of John Owen (1616-1683): With an account of his life and work* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1970), 167. This clear distinction between obeying for justification and obeying in the context of sanctification, while maintaining the necessity of both, occurs throughout the seventeenth-century from Perkins to à Brakel. Cf. William Perkins, *The Whole Works of that famous and worthy Minister of Christ in the Vniversitie of Cambridge, M. William Perkins, in three Volumes* (London: John Legatt, 1631), 1:81, 2:206; Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*, 1:612.

good works were a refusal of their understanding of justification by faith alone without works. They understood that works played a different role if the issue was sanctification (not a meritorious role), in comparison to its function for justification. Furthermore, Piscator does not see the need to differentiate between the meritorious obedience within a legal covenant which obtains eternal life (*ex pacto*) and every human creature's – Christian and non-Christian – debt of obedience to God as creator. This distinction, as we will see, would become established in seventeenth century systems of theology not only to counter the objection that any discussion of meritorious obedience was a refusal of the Protestant notion of justification by faith alone, but also to explain how Christ was and is subject to the law. The second observation results from the first. The absence of distinction creates conflict between his claim that we still have to obey the law perfectly as Christians and his allegation, mentioned in the first section of this chapter, that within the Evangelical covenant we receive the benefit of freedom from rendering perfect obedience.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 422.

good works were a refusal of their understanding of justification by faith alone without works. They understood that works played a different role if the issue was sanctification (not a meritorious role), in comparison to its function for justification. Furthermore, Piscator does not see the need to differentiate between the meritorious obedience within a legal covenant which obtains eternal life (*ex pacto*) and every human creature's – Christian and non-Christian – debt of obedience to God as creator. This distinction, as we will see, would become established in seventeenth century systems of theology not only to counter the objection that any discussion of meritorious obedience was a refusal of the Protestant notion of justification by faith alone, but also to explain how Christ was and is subject to the law. The second observation results from the first. The absence of distinction creates conflict between his claim that we still have to obey the law perfectly as Christians and his allegation, mentioned in the first section of this chapter, that within the Evangelical covenant we receive the benefit of freedom from rendering perfect obedience.<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Piscator, *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 422.

### PART III

#### THE CONSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMPUTATION OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE

Part II examined Piscator's arguments for rejecting the imputation of Christ's obedience to the law, this part will survey some responses to Piscator in historical and systematic format. The survey intends to highlight important theological loci that matured as the doctrine of Christ's active obedience developed in relation to the early Reformed movement. Both chapters will briefly note some of the same arguments present in Piscator being used again by those who followed him in doctrine. Some new arguments arose in the seventeenth century against the vicariousness of Christ's obedience, and those will be noted as they set the context for the responses. Notwithstanding, these chapters will focus on how the majority of the Reformed community organized their case in favor of its imputation.

The positions on this debate were not necessarily uniform according to geographical location. There were theological schools where opposite opinions were present within the same faculty, such as Heidelberg with Pareus and Tossanus. The school of Sedan at one point had Daniel Tilenus on its faculty and later Pierre du Moulin, polar opposites on this particular point of doctrine. Even the Herborn professors, though strongly influenced by Piscator, do not follow his perspective on active obedience in every respect. Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638), though similar to Piscator on some

### **PART III**

#### **THE CONSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMPUTATION OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE**

Part II examined Piscator's arguments for rejecting the imputation of Christ's obedience to the law, this part will survey some responses to Piscator in historical and systematic format. The survey intends to highlight important theological loci that matured as the doctrine of Christ's active obedience developed in relation to the early Reformed movement. Both chapters will briefly note some of the same arguments present in Piscator being used again by those who followed him in doctrine. Some new arguments arose in the seventeenth century against the vicariousness of Christ's obedience, and those will be noted as they set the context for the responses. Notwithstanding, these chapters will focus on how the majority of the Reformed community organized their case in favor of its imputation.

The positions on this debate were not necessarily uniform according to geographical location. There were theological schools where opposite opinions were present within the same faculty, such as Heidelberg with Pareus and Tossanus. The school of Sedan at one point had Daniel Tilenus on its faculty and later Pierre du Moulin, polar opposites on this particular point of doctrine. Even the Herborn professors, though strongly influenced by Piscator, do not follow his perspective on active obedience in every respect. Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638), though similar to Piscator on some

arguments, sees in Christ's satisfaction both action and passion, does not take remission of sins and imputation of Christ's righteousness to be identical, and finds Christ's active obedience to be done in part for us.<sup>1</sup> All this is to say that Piscator's position was not the beginning of a new tradition nor a standpoint that generated confessional divisions within the Reformed. As much as those engaged in the debate earnestly wanted to convey faithfulness to the biblical teaching on this point of doctrine, it never became a matter for schisms within this theological tradition.

Chapter 6 will select a few seventeenth-century debates which differed in the degree to which the doctrine became the center of attention. The debates also vary in the emphases, concerns, and labels attributed to the opposing party. However, there are sufficient similarities to see which arguments and doctrinal foci were brought into the debate. This chapter will also be the occasion to include certain responses to Piscator which do not fit into the three major areas highlighted in the following chapter.

Chapter 7 will then gather the similar arguments and systematize them in three major sections in which the debate progressed. The three areas are: our relationship to the law, the blessings of justification, and Christ's relationship to the law. Though interconnected, these areas represent the various theological loci (anthropology, soteriology, Christology) brought together to clarify the issue of active obedience imputed.

---

<sup>1</sup> Johann Henricus Alstedius, *Definitiones Theologicae secundum ordinem locorum communium traditae* (Hanover: Conradi Eifridi, 1631), 94, 100, 102. This information qualifies Baxter's identification of Alsted with his professor Piscator. Baxter, *A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness*, 18.

arguments, sees in Christ's satisfaction both action and passion, does not take remission of sins and imputation of Christ's righteousness to be identical, and finds Christ's active obedience to be done in part for us.<sup>1</sup> All this is to say that Piscator's position was not the beginning of a new tradition nor a standpoint that generated confessional divisions within the Reformed. As much as those engaged in the debate earnestly wanted to convey faithfulness to the biblical teaching on this point of doctrine, it never became a matter for schisms within this theological tradition.

Chapter 6 will select a few seventeenth-century debates which differed in the degree to which the doctrine became the center of attention. The debates also vary in the emphases, concerns, and labels attributed to the opposing party. However, there are sufficient similarities to see which arguments and doctrinal foci were brought into the debate. This chapter will also be the occasion to include certain responses to Piscator which do not fit into the three major areas highlighted in the following chapter.

Chapter 7 will then gather the similar arguments and systematize them in three major sections in which the debate progressed. The three areas are: our relationship to the law, the blessings of justification, and Christ's relationship to the law. Though interconnected, these areas represent the various theological loci (anthropology, soteriology, Christology) brought together to clarify the issue of active obedience imputed.

---

<sup>1</sup> Johann Henricus Alstedius, *Definitiones Theologicae secundum ordinem locorum communium traditae* (Hanover: Conradi Eifridi, 1631), 94, 100, 102. This information qualifies Baxter's identification of Alsted with his professor Piscator. Baxter, *A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness*, 18.

**CHAPTER 6**  
**SOME CONTROVERSIES OVER ACTIVE OBEDIENCE**  
**IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

This chapter examines a group of seventeenth-century controversies related to the problem of the active obedience of Christ in order to establish a historical and intellectual context for a more systematic or topical examination of the issues at stake in the debates over Piscator's doctrine. The arguments which support Piscator's viewpoint will be presented, as well as some variations, but more stress will be placed upon the responses provided by those who affirmed the imputation of Christ's active obedience. The various responses were not all uniform, but they engaged some common themes and objections. The presentation of the latter will serve to illuminate how the replies to controversies slowly shaped the doctrine of Christ's active obedience. It will also lay the foundation prior to the more systematic statement which will be attempted in the following chapter.

**6.1. Debates within the Reformed Churches of France**

In the months preceding the Synod of Privas (held from 23<sup>rd</sup> of May to 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1612), Daniel Tilenus was at the center of a debate that reprised the Piscator affair of the previous decade. This debate, which was introduced in the first chapter of this dissertation, arose as Pierre du Moulin reacted violently to Tilenus' teaching on the doctrine of justification. The churches and the Academy in Sedan, where Tilenus taught,

## CHAPTER 6

### SOME CONTROVERSIES OVER ACTIVE OBEDIENCE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

This chapter examines a group of seventeenth-century controversies related to the problem of the active obedience of Christ in order to establish a historical and intellectual context for a more systematic or topical examination of the issues at stake in the debates over Piscator's doctrine. The arguments which support Piscator's viewpoint will be presented, as well as some variations, but more stress will be placed upon the responses provided by those who affirmed the imputation of Christ's active obedience. The various responses were not all uniform, but they engaged some common themes and objections. The presentation of the latter will serve to illuminate how the replies to controversies slowly shaped the doctrine of Christ's active obedience. It will also lay the foundation prior to the more systematic statement which will be attempted in the following chapter.

#### **6.1. Debates within the Reformed Churches of France**

In the months preceding the Synod of Privas (held from 23<sup>rd</sup> of May to 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1612), Daniel Tilenus was at the center of a debate that reprised the Piscator affair of the previous decade. This debate, which was introduced in the first chapter of this dissertation, arose as Pierre du Moulin reacted violently to Tilenus' teaching on the doctrine of justification. The churches and the Academy in Sedan, where Tilenus taught,

were given a tarnished reputation by the fierce response of du Moulin. In defense against du Moulin's attack, the Duke of Bouillon, Henry de La Tour, wrote to the Synod of l'Isle de France a set of theses representative of the teaching within his domains (Sedan and Raucour), in order to prove the faithfulness of pastors and teachers to the Confession and Catechism held by the Reformed Churches of France.

In this document we see some of Piscator's teachings being defended. Thesis IV asserts that Christ's satisfaction obtains remission of sins for us, recovers the righteousness lost in Adam, delivers us from death and acquires life for us.<sup>1</sup> Thesis V states that remission of sins and imputation of righteousness are not two distinct parts in justification, but are two synonymous sentences.<sup>2</sup> Thesis VI distinguishes between two kinds of obedience in Jesus Christ: one is his subjection to the "general law" as a true man and the other is his obedience to the special commandment of giving his life for his sheep.<sup>3</sup> Thesis VII teaches that the first obedience is ours in the sense that it was a necessary condition to fulfill the special commandment.<sup>4</sup> The second obedience, as thesis VIII shows, is ours in a particular manner since it is received through imputation.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "La satisfaction de Jesus Christ consiste en toutes ses souffrances et misereres, principalement en l'ignominieuse mort de la Croix, le prix desquelles choses nous obtient la remission de nos pechés, recouvre la justice perdue en Adam, nous delivre de la mort et nousqquiert la vie." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève ((1610-1613))*, 11:353.

<sup>2</sup> "La remission des pechés, et l'imputation de justice ne sont point deux parties reellement distinctes pour composer une justification entiere; laquelle est exprimée suffisamment par l'une ou l'autre de ces deux phrases equipollentes." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:353.

<sup>3</sup> "L'obeissance que Jesus Christ a rendue à Dieu son pere est de deux sortes, reellement distinctes: l'une se rapporte à la loy generale, à laquelle il a esté subject entant que vray homme; l'autre se rapporte à un commandement du tout special, assavoir de mettre sa vie pour ses brebis." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:353.

<sup>4</sup> "La premiere de ces deux obeissances est nostre, puisque toute la personne de Jesus Christ devient nostre par la foy qui l'embrace tout entier. Joint que ceste obeissance est une qualité et condition si necessaire, que la seconde n'eust trouvé lieu, sans la presupposition de la premiere, estant absolument requis que le

were given a tarnished reputation by the fierce response of du Moulin. In defense against du Moulin's attack, the Duke of Bouillon, Henry de La Tour, wrote to the Synod of l'Isle de France a set of theses representative of the teaching within his domains (Sedan and Raucour), in order to prove the faithfulness of pastors and teachers to the Confession and Catechism held by the Reformed Churches of France.

In this document we see some of Piscator's teachings being defended. Thesis IV asserts that Christ's satisfaction obtains remission of sins for us, recovers the righteousness lost in Adam, delivers us from death and acquires life for us.<sup>1</sup> Thesis V states that remission of sins and imputation of righteousness are not two distinct parts in justification, but are two synonymous sentences.<sup>2</sup> Thesis VI distinguishes between two kinds of obedience in Jesus Christ: one is his subjection to the "general law" as a true man and the other is his obedience to the special commandment of giving his life for his sheep.<sup>3</sup> Thesis VII teaches that the first obedience is ours in the sense that it was a necessary condition to fulfill the special commandment.<sup>4</sup> The second obedience, as thesis VIII shows, is ours in a particular manner since it is received through imputation.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "La satisfaction de Jesus Christ consiste en toutes ses souffrances et miseres, principalement en l'ignominieuse mort de la Croix, le prix desquelles choses nous obtient la remission de nos pechés, recouvre la justice perdue en Adam, nous delivre de la mort et nousacquiert la vie." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève ((1610-1613))*, 11:353.

<sup>2</sup> "La remission des pechés, et l'imputation de justice ne sont point deux parties reellement distinctes pour composer une justification entiere; laquelle est exprimée suffisamment par l'une ou l'autre de ces deux phrases equipollentes." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:353.

<sup>3</sup> "L'obeissance que Jesus Christ a rendue à Dieu son pere est de deux sortes, reellement distinctes: l'une se rapporte à la loy generale, à laquelle il a esté subject entant que vray homme; l'autre se rapporte à un commandement du tout special, assavoir de mettre sa vie pour ses brebis." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:353.

<sup>4</sup> "La premiere de ces deux obeissances est nostre, puisque toute la personne de Jesus Christ devient nostre par la foy qui l'embrasse tout entier. Joint que ceste obeissance est une qualité et condition si necessaire, que la seconde n'eust trouvé lieu, sans la presuposition de la premiere, estant absolument requis que le

Besides the doctrinal standards held by the Church, the debate brought to the discussion other documents such as the Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 60 and Ursinus' lectures on the Catechism, particularly a portion expounding Q/A 60. Since both sides of the discussion presumed that they upheld what these documents stated,<sup>6</sup> it shows how the language of Heidelberg Catechism could be interpreted differently.<sup>7</sup>

Tilenus was at the forefront of the Piscatorian teaching in Sedan. In response to a set of theses and objections by Tilenus, du Moulin writes his *Enucleatio dogmatis*

*Danielis Tileni professoris theologi in Academia Sedanensi 12 antithesibus comprehensa*

---

sacrificateur qui devoit expier les pechés des autres par le sacrifice de sa mort fust de tout exempt de peché." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:354.

<sup>5</sup> "La seconde obeissance est nostre d'une maniere plus particuliere, assavoir par imputation, d'autant que Jesus Christ estant net de tout peché en soy, ne devoit estre subject au gage de peché qui est la mort avec toutes les autres miseres, lesquelles ayant souffert en qualité de nostre pleige, s'ensuit que ses souffrances nous sont alloüées et imputées." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:354. For a summary of Tilenus' position matching several doctrinal points in this document by the Duke of Bouillon, see Landis, "What were the Views entertained by the Early Reformers, on the Doctrine of Justification, Faith, and the Active Obedience of Christ?" part I, 470-471; part III, 441-443.

<sup>6</sup> The documents which include Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 60 were agreed upon on matters of justification by pastors and theologians of Sedan and l'Ile-de-France. Apparently, du Moulin was an exception in not signing this document. Cf. Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:356-358.

<sup>7</sup> The variety of interpretations of Q/A 60 within the Reformed tradition can be exemplified with the commentaries on the Catechism by Sibrandus Lubbertus, Johannes Cocceius and William Ames. On the one side of spectrum, Lubbertus does not allow any idea of active obedience imputed. He takes the threefold righteousness as three words pointing to the same thing. The satisfaction of Christ involves only the suffering, that is, whatever was not obliged of him as a man. He takes the compound clause "as if I had never had nor committed any sin" [*perinde ac si nec ullum ipse peccatum admissem nec ulla labe mihi inhaereret*] as referring to original and actual sins, both types being purged by the blood of Christ. Finally, he understands there is the positive and the negative aspects of the law, what the law prescribes and what the law condemns – both of which Christ abides by –, but there is no sense of our twofold relationship with the law. Sibrandus Lubbertus, *Commentarius in Catechesin Paltino-Belgicam* (Franicae: 1618), 460-470. On the opposite side of the spectrum, Cocceius writes a long paragraph rebutting the arguments of those who deny imputation of Christ's active obedience. He refutes the idea that Christ needs to merit glory for himself, and he explains that in order for someone to be honorable and thus appointed consul there has to be more righteousness than not being punished for its faults. This applies to our justification being more than merely remission of sins. Johannes Coccejus, *Heydelbergensis catechesis religionis christianae ex S. Scriptura explicata & illustrata* (Ludguni Batavorum: Felicem Lopez de Haro, 1671), 235-237. Lastly, there is Ames who in his brief commentary deals with righteousness of Christ, obedience of Christ, remission of sins, all without making distinctions. William Ames, *Christianae catecheseos sciagraphia* (Franeker: Bernardum A. Berentsma, 1635), 154-161.

Besides the doctrinal standards held by the Church, the debate brought to the discussion other documents such as the Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 60 and Ursinus' lectures on the Catechism, particularly a portion expounding Q/A 60. Since both sides of the discussion presumed that they upheld what these documents stated,<sup>6</sup> it shows how the language of Heidelberg Catechism could be interpreted differently.<sup>7</sup>

Tilenus was at the forefront of the Piscatorian teaching in Sedan. In response to a set of theses and objections by Tilenus, du Moulin writes his *Enucleatio dogmatis*

*Danielis Tileni professoris theologi in Academia Sedanensi 12 antithesibus comprehensa*

---

sacrificateur qui devoit expier les pechés des autres par le sacrifice de sa mort fust de tout exempt de peché." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:354.

<sup>5</sup> "La seconde obeissance est nostre d'une maniere plus particuliere, assavoir par imputation, d'autant que Jesus Christ estant net de tout peché en soy, ne devoit estre subject au gage de peché qui est la mort avec toutes les autres miseres, lesquelles ayant souffert en qualité de nostre pleige, s'ensuit que ses souffrances nous sont alloüées et imputées." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:354. For a summary of Tilenus' position matching several doctrinal points in this document by the Duke of Bouillon, see Landis, "What were the Views entertained by the Early Reformers, on the Doctrine of Justification, Faith, and the Active Obedience of Christ?" part I, 470-471; part III, 441-443.

<sup>6</sup> The documents which include Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 60 were agreed upon on matters of justification by pastors and theologians of Sedan and l'Ile-de-France. Apparently, du Moulin was an exception in not signing this document. Cf. Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:356-358.

<sup>7</sup> The variety of interpretations of Q/A 60 within the Reformed tradition can be exemplified with the commentaries on the Catechism by Sibrandus Lubbertus, Johannes Cocceius and William Ames. On the one side of spectrum, Lubbertus does not allow any idea of active obedience imputed. He takes the threefold righteousness as three words pointing to the same thing. The satisfaction of Christ involves only the suffering, that is, whatever was not obliged of him as a man. He takes the compound clause "as if I had never had nor committed any sin" [*perinde ac si nec ullum ipse peccatum admissem nec ulla labes mihi inhaereret*] as referring to original and actual sins, both types being purged by the blood of Christ. Finally, he understands there is the positive and the negative aspects of the law, what the law prescribes and what the law condemns – both of which Christ abides by –, but there is no sense of our twofold relationship with the law. Sibrandus Lubbertus, *Commentarius in Catechesin Paltino-Belgicam* (Franicae: 1618), 460-470. On the opposite side of the spectrum, Cocceius writes a long paragraph rebutting the arguments of those who deny imputation of Christ's active obedience. He refutes the idea that Christ needs to merit glory for himself, and he explains that in order for someone to be honorable and thus appointed consul there has to be more righteousness than not being punished for its faults. This applies to our justification being more than merely remission of sins. Johannes Coccejus, *Heydelbergensis catechesis religionis christianae ex S. Scriptura explicata & illustrata* (Ludguni Batavorum: Felicem Lopez de Haro, 1671), 235-237. Lastly, there is Ames who in his brief commentary deals with righteousness of Christ, obedience of Christ, remission of sins, all without making distinctions. William Ames, *Christianae catecheseos sciagraphia* (Franeker: Bernardum A. Berentsma, 1635), 154-161.

*per Dominum Molineum Ecclesiae Parisiensis pastoris*.<sup>8</sup> The work is divided in three parts: the first is a set of twelve antitheses against Tilenus focusing mostly on the Christological part of the discussion; the second part is made of responses to ten objections raised by Tilenus and his disciples which encompassed more soteriological issues connected to the need of having Christ's active obedience imputed; the third and last part is a set of proofs from Scripture, Catechisms and Confessions, as well as celebrated authors in favor of the imputation of Christ's righteousness and holiness. The first and longest antithesis centers on Christ's subjection to the law being different from ours because his subjection is not merely one of a creature, but of a mediator. Because the Law is given first and foremost to persons rather than to natures,<sup>9</sup> the person of Christ is not obliged to obey it by nature because one of the effects of the divine person being united with humanity is that Christ's humanity becomes free from the necessity and obligation towards the law.<sup>10</sup> The second antithesis targets Tilenus' teaching that Christ obeyed the ceremonial law for himself as a son of Abraham and an Israelite. Du Moulin understands that the ceremonial law must be obeyed by Israelites who are sinners, and this does not apply to Christ not only because he is sinless but also because he is not solely an Israelite person, but merely a divine person.<sup>11</sup> Other Christological

---

<sup>8</sup> This work can be found in Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:362-399.

<sup>9</sup> "Quid quod Lex omnis datur primo personis et praecipue, naturis vero non nisi improprie et secundario." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:366.

<sup>10</sup> "Primo occurrit dignitas et virtus unionis personalis divinitatis cum humanitate, quae tanta est, ut humanam naturam facile liberasset hac necessitate et obligatione ad Legis obsequium, nisi se ei ultro subjecisset." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:365.

<sup>11</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:372.

*per Dominum Molineum Ecclesiae Parisiensis pastoris.*<sup>8</sup> The work is divided in three parts: the first is a set of twelve antitheses against Tilenus focusing mostly on the Christological part of the discussion; the second part is made of responses to ten objections raised by Tilenus and his disciples which encompassed more soteriological issues connected to the need of having Christ's active obedience imputed; the third and last part is a set of proofs from Scripture, Catechisms and Confessions, as well as celebrated authors in favor of the imputation of Christ's righteousness and holiness. The first and longest antithesis centers on Christ's subjection to the law being different from ours because his subjection is not merely one of a creature, but of a mediator. Because the Law is given first and foremost to persons rather than to natures,<sup>9</sup> the person of Christ is not obliged to obey it by nature because one of the effects of the divine person being united with humanity is that Christ's humanity becomes free from the necessity and obligation towards the law.<sup>10</sup> The second antithesis targets Tilenus' teaching that Christ obeyed the ceremonial law for himself as a son of Abraham and an Israelite. Du Moulin understands that the ceremonial law must be obeyed by Israelites who are sinners, and this does not apply to Christ not only because he is sinless but also because he is not solely an Israelite person, but merely a divine person.<sup>11</sup> Other Christological

---

<sup>8</sup> This work can be found in Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:362-399.

<sup>9</sup> "Quid quod Lex omnis datur primo personis et praecipue, naturis vero non nisi improprie et secundario." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:366.

<sup>10</sup> "Primo occurit dignitas et virtus unionis personalis divinitatis cum humanitate, quae tanta est, ut humanam naturam facile liberasset hac necessitate et obligatione ad Legis obsequium, nisi se ei ultro subjecisset." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:365.

<sup>11</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:372.

considerations will be presented in the following document to be analyzed, since they are virtually the same.

The analysis now shifts to the soteriological arguments. Du Moulin addresses Tilenus' teaching of two righteousness in Christ, his obedience to a "general law" (*lex generalis*) and his obedience to a "special mandate" (*mandatum specialis*) – which could be roughly equated with active righteousness (*iustitia activā*) and passive righteousness (*iustitia passiva*) respectively. Du Moulin rejects such a duality because he believes that all righteousness is active and all righteous action of Christ brought him suffering, or passion.<sup>12</sup> However, contrary to Tilenus, du Moulin believed we have a twofold obligation towards the law, punishment and obedience.<sup>13</sup> Hence, Christ's work remedies our twofold shortcoming. Christ's passion redeems us from eternal life and frees us from the guilt of all sin, not only of commission but also of omission; however, there is still the need for the righteousness and holiness of Christ to be imputed in order to acquire eternal life.<sup>14</sup>

In the objection section, du Moulin begins commenting on some texts his opponents claim support their position.<sup>15</sup> Then he comes to some familiar theological

---

<sup>12</sup> "Nomen vero illud justitiae passivae aspernamur, quia omnis justitia est activa, dolor non potest esse virtus aut actio justa, cum sit passio. Omnis enim justitia est virtus aut actio secundum virtutem, nec passiones adjunctae actionibus efficiunt ut actiones sint passivae, non secus ac actiones adjunctae doloribus non efficiunt ut dolores sint actus. Nec vero dubium est quin quicquid est justitiae in morte Christi pars sit justitiae activae Christi." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:379.

<sup>13</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:381-383.

<sup>14</sup> "At nos passiones quidem ejus fatemur unicum luvtron esse redemptionis a morte aeterna et per eum nos liberari poena omni peccatorum, tum omissionis tum commissionis. Ad acquisitionem vero vitae aeternae dicimus et contendimus justitiae et sanctitatis Christi imputationem esse necessariam." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:384.

<sup>15</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:384-385.

considerations will be presented in the following document to be analyzed, since they are virtually the same.

The analysis now shifts to the soteriological arguments. Du Moulin addresses Tilenus' teaching of two righteousness in Christ, his obedience to a "general law" (*lex generalis*) and his obedience to a "special mandate" (*mandatum specialis*) – which could be roughly equated with active righteousness (*iustitia activa*) and passive righteousness (*iustitia passiva*) respectively. Du Moulin rejects such a duality because he believes that all righteousness is active and all righteous action of Christ brought him suffering, or passion.<sup>12</sup> However, contrary to Tilenus, du Moulin believed we have a twofold obligation towards the law, punishment and obedience.<sup>13</sup> Hence, Christ's work remedies our twofold shortcoming. Christ's passion redeems us from eternal life and frees us from the guilt of all sin, not only of commission but also of omission; however, there is still the need for the righteousness and holiness of Christ to be imputed in order to acquire eternal life.<sup>14</sup>

In the objection section, du Moulin begins commenting on some texts his opponents claim support their position.<sup>15</sup> Then he comes to some familiar theological

---

<sup>12</sup> "Nomen vero illud justitiae passivae aspernamur, quia omnis justitia est activa, dolor non potest esse virtus aut actio justa, cum sit passio. Omnis enim justitia est virtus aut actio secundum virtutem, nec passiones adjunctae actionibus efficiunt ut actiones sint passivae, non secus ac actiones adjunctae doloribus non efficiunt ut dolores sint actus. Nec vero dubium est quin quicquid est justitiae in morte Christi pars sit justitiae activae Christi." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:379.

<sup>13</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:381-383.

<sup>14</sup> "At nos passiones quidem ejus fatemur unicum luvtron esse redemptionis a morte aeterna et per eum nos liberari poena omni peccatorum, tum omissionis tum commissionis. Ad acquisitionem vero vitae aeternae dicimus et contendimus justitiae et sanctitatis Christi imputationem esse necessariam." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:384.

<sup>15</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:384-385.

problems. To the objection that there is no middle ground between “unrighteous” and “righteous” since the Churches of France only recognize these two categories, du Moulin replies saying the blood of Christ does make us “not unrighteous,” but it does not make the sinner into one who has perfectly accomplished the law.<sup>16</sup> In fact, du Moulin understands that Christ’s death does not provide us with the “vision of God” (*visio Dei*) as if not having it were just a matter of punishment. There is a sense in which the pre-Fall Adam did not enjoy such a vision<sup>17</sup> and, hence, arises the need for the merit of Christ’s righteous life. To the Piscatorian objection that Christ’s passion is useless and unjust if we are justified by the righteousness of Christ, du Moulin anticipates Owen’s response to Piscator that such an argument misses the order of imputation.<sup>18</sup> To the other Piscatorian objection that if Christ satisfied the law through his active obedience then we are not obliged to obedience, du Moulin distinguishes between the legal “do this and you will live” to which Christ rendered obedience in our behalf and our obedience as actions of thanksgiving and witnesses of love for which we were created.<sup>19</sup> And, finally, to those who raise Romans 4:6 to argue that our justification occurs without works, du Moulin quickly responds that Paul excludes our works from justification not Christ’s.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:385-386.

<sup>17</sup> “Cuius visionis privatio si poena est, statuendum est Adamum multatum esse hac poena antequam peccaret, quippe qui hac visione non fruebatur.” Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:387.

<sup>18</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:386. For Owen’s response, see chapter 5 of this dissertation.

<sup>19</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:387-388.

<sup>20</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:388. Cf. Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 249-250, 324-325.

problems. To the objection that there is no middle ground between “unrighteous” and “righteous” since the Churches of France only recognize these two categories, du Moulin replies saying the blood of Christ does make us “not unrighteous,” but it does not make the sinner into one who has perfectly accomplished the law.<sup>16</sup> In fact, du Moulin understands that Christ’s death does not provide us with the “vision of God” (*visio Dei*) as if not having it were just a matter of punishment. There is a sense in which the pre-Fall Adam did not enjoy such a vision<sup>17</sup> and, hence, arises the need for the merit of Christ’s righteous life. To the Piscatorian objection that Christ’s passion is useless and unjust if we are justified by the righteousness of Christ, du Moulin anticipates Owen’s response to Piscator that such an argument misses the order of imputation.<sup>18</sup> To the other Piscatorian objection that if Christ satisfied the law through his active obedience then we are not obliged to obedience, du Moulin distinguishes between the legal “do this and you will live” to which Christ rendered obedience in our behalf and our obedience as actions of thanksgiving and witnesses of love for which we were created.<sup>19</sup> And, finally, to those who raise Romans 4:6 to argue that our justification occurs without works, du Moulin quickly responds that Paul excludes our works from justification not Christ’s.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:385-386.

<sup>17</sup> “Cuius visionis privatio si poena est, statuendum est Adamum multatum esse hac poena antequam peccaret, quippe qui hac visione non fruebatur.” Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:387.

<sup>18</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:386. For Owen’s response, see chapter 5 of this dissertation.

<sup>19</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:387-388.

<sup>20</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:388. Cf. Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 249-250, 324-325.

As the controversy progressed, the soteriological issues faded, thus giving prominence to the christological question. Prior to the national Synod in Privas, Du Moulin and Tilenus did engage one another in a debate over the concept of law to which Christ was under.<sup>21</sup> However, it is at the Synod that an important document sides with du Moulin on matters of Christology.<sup>22</sup> In summary, the *Refutation* claims that when the Son of God became man he subjected himself to the Ceremonial and Moral Law, not for himself but for us and in our place, not because he was man but because he was mediator.<sup>23</sup> All the fourteen articles focus on the relationship of Jesus Christ to the law, apparently making the first Reformed defense of the doctrine of active obedience solely on christological grounds.

The *Refutation* is concerned that Christ not be subjected to things that are not honorable to him. If Christ is obliged to render obedience to the law he becomes a ‘useless servant’ according to Luke 17 (art. I), he becomes liable to the fifth commandment and thus to his Princes though Matthew 17 says he is not obliged to pay taxes to his Prince (art. IV); similarly, he becomes liable to the commandment of Sabbath observance when Matthew 12 says that Christ is Lord of the Sabbath (art. VIII).<sup>24</sup> Just as Christ has to die, not because he is a human being but because of his mediatorship, so

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:359-361.

<sup>22</sup> “Refutation de la Doctrine de Piscator” in Aymon, *Tous les Synodes nationaux des Églises réformées de France*, I.457-461. The editors of the *Registres* say that the *Refutation* was written by du Moulin and that in the place of Piscator one should read Tilenus. Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:xviii.

<sup>23</sup> “Jesus-Christ Nôtre Seigneur en tant qu’Homme, s’est assujeti à la Loi Morale & Ceremoniale, non pas pour soi, mais pour nous & en nôtre place, non pas parce qu’il est Homme, mais parce qu’il est Mediateur.” Aymon, *Tous les Synodes nationaux des Églises réformées de France*, I.457.

<sup>24</sup> These same passages are worked in more detail in du Moulin’s *Enucleatio*. Cf. Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:366, 372.

As the controversy progressed, the soteriological issues faded, thus giving prominence to the christological question. Prior to the national Synod in Privas, Du Moulin and Tilenus did engage one another in a debate over the concept of law to which Christ was under.<sup>21</sup> However, it is at the Synod that an important document sides with du Moulin on matters of Christology.<sup>22</sup> In summary, the *Refutation* claims that when the Son of God became man he subjected himself to the Ceremonial and Moral Law, not for himself but for us and in our place, not because he was man but because he was mediator.<sup>23</sup> All the fourteen articles focus on the relationship of Jesus Christ to the law, apparently making the first Reformed defense of the doctrine of active obedience solely on christological grounds.

The *Refutation* is concerned that Christ not be subjected to things that are not honorable to him. If Christ is obliged to render obedience to the law he becomes a ‘useless servant’ according to Luke 17 (art. I), he becomes liable to the fifth commandment and thus to his Princes though Matthew 17 says he is not obliged to pay taxes to his Prince (art. IV); similarly, he becomes liable to the commandment of Sabbath observance when Matthew 12 says that Christ is Lord of the Sabbath (art. VIII).<sup>24</sup> Just as Christ has to die, not because he is a human being but because of his mediatorship, so

---

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:359-361.

<sup>22</sup> “Refutation de la Doctrine de Piscator” in Aymon, *Tous les Synodes nationaux des Églises reformées de France*, I.457-461. The editors of the *Registres* say that the *Refutation* was written by du Moulin and that in the place of Piscator one should read Tilenus. Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:xviii.

<sup>23</sup> “Jesus-Christ Nôtre Seigneur en tant qu’Homme, s’est assujeti à la Loi Morale & Ceremoniale, non pas pour soi, mais pour nous & en nôtre place, non pas parce qu’il est Homme, mais parce qu’il est Mediateur.” Aymon, *Tous les Synodes nationaux des Églises reformées de France*, I.457.

<sup>24</sup> These same passages are worked in more detail in du Moulin’s *Enucleatio*. Cf. Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:366, 372.

must it be with his subjection to the law (art. III). The document distinguishes several times between what Christ accomplishes “as man” (*en tant qu’Homme*) and what he does as Mediator, indicating what specifically belongs to the human nature considered as such in the incarnation. As a human being, Christ is King of the Church and cannot be subject to the Law of the Church for himself, as a natural obligation (art. VI). When the document claims the power to forgive sins – which is a demonstration of the divinity of the Person – is communicated to the humanity (art. VIII), and that it is impossible for one nature to be eternally subject to the law while the other is free (art. X), it certainly opens the door for critics to label its language as Lutheran.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the *Refutation* explicitly distinguishes between attributes that are incommunicable from one nature to the other, such as death or infinity, and the offices (*charges*) which are communicated, such as King, Priest and Prophet (art. XIII).<sup>26</sup> Besides, it provides a Reformed (Medieval) tone to its distinctions when it presents the Bezan notion that the dignity of the divine nature in unity with human nature exempts the latter from death and subjection to the law, unless it voluntarily submits to them (art. XI). In sum, it polemically argues that a theology which presents the divinity of Christ to be a Sovereign King above the law while its humanity is an Inferior King subject to the law approaches Nestorianism (art. XIII).

The discussions did not end with the production of this document by the Synod. In the next two years there were still letters spread by each party in order to gather

---

<sup>25</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:xix.

<sup>26</sup> See du Moulin’s detailed distinction in antitheses 3 and 5 of his *Enucleatio* in Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:372-375, 377-378.

must it be with his subjection to the law (art. III). The document distinguishes several times between what Christ accomplishes “as man” (*en tant qu’Homme*) and what he does as Mediator, indicating what specifically belongs to the human nature considered as such in the incarnation. As a human being, Christ is King of the Church and cannot be subject to the Law of the Church for himself, as a natural obligation (art. VI). When the document claims the power to forgive sins – which is a demonstration of the divinity of the Person – is communicated to the humanity (art. VIII), and that it is impossible for one nature to be eternally subject to the law while the other is free (art. X), it certainly opens the door for critics to label its language as Lutheran.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the *Refutation* explicitly distinguishes between attributes that are incommunicable from one nature to the other, such as death or infinity, and the offices (*charges*) which are communicated, such as King, Priest and Prophet (art. XIII).<sup>26</sup> Besides, it provides a Reformed (Medieval) tone to its distinctions when it presents the Bezan notion that the dignity of the divine nature in unity with human nature exempts the latter from death and subjection to the law, unless it voluntarily submits to them (art. XI). In sum, it polemically argues that a theology which presents the divinity of Christ to be a Sovereign King above the law while its humanity is an Inferior King subject to the law approaches Nestorianism (art. XIII).

The discussions did not end with the production of this document by the Synod. In the next two years there were still letters spread by each party in order to gather

---

<sup>25</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:xix.

<sup>26</sup> See du Moulin’s detailed distinction in antitheses 3 and 5 of his *Emucleatio* in Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:372-375, 377-378.

support for its position. Du Moulin continued to accuse his opponent of Nestorianism<sup>27</sup> and Tilenus responded with accusations of Eutychianism and Ubiquitism.<sup>28</sup> Still in 1612, Tilenus wrote *Examen dogmatis P. Molinaei de duarum in Christo naturarum unionis hypostaticae effectis*.<sup>29</sup> Both theologians sent letters to the Company of Pastors in Geneva, and received corrections to their doctrinal assertions. In a letter from the Company<sup>30</sup> to Tilenus, the Genevan theologians cling to the holistic understanding of Christ's whole obedience and righteousness common among the French Churches,<sup>31</sup> but also recognizing the usefulness for edification of appropriate and modest distinctions provided by reputable teachers.<sup>32</sup> They disagree with Tilenus on Christ meriting for

---

<sup>27</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:xvi, xxii. Similarly, the Lutherans believed that Piscator's opinion of Christ obeying the law for himself led to Nestorianism. Cf. Baur, *Die christliche lehre von der versöhnung*, 357-358.

<sup>28</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:274-275, 288-293.

<sup>29</sup> For information on the work and extant copies see Brian Armstrong, *Bibliographia Molinaei: An Alphabetical, Chronological and Descriptive Bibliography of the Works of Pierre Du Moulin (1568-1658)*, Vol. 7 of *Travaux du Grand Siècle* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1997), 230-231.

<sup>30</sup> The letter was signed by Simon Goulart (1543-1628), Antoine de La Faye (†1616-1618) and Jean Diodati (1576-1649).

<sup>31</sup> "Subscribimus itaque Gallicanarum Ecclesiarum communi sententiae, nullam partem obedientiae et iustitiae Christi, quatenus mediator, eximendam nobis, vel excludendam videri a causarum numero, quibus apud tribunal Dei peccati reatus expiatur, poena ejusdem tollitur, obligatio legis nobis adversa solvitur, jus vitae aeternae homini (propria iustitia destituto) quaeritur, plenaque gratia et amor Patris conciliatur, eamque obedientiam, quantaquanta est, per adceptilationem et efficacissimam imputationem, intercedente fide, nostram fieri." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:283. The 18<sup>th</sup> article of the French Confession (1559) equates justification with remission of sins, as was common of the period, but it provides a twofold benefit from Christ's obedience, both a covering of sin as well as acceptance before God: "l'obéissance de Jésus-Christ, laquelle nous est allouée, tant pour couvrir toutes nos fautes, que pour nous faire trouver grace et faveur devant Dieu." Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1919), 3:370.

<sup>32</sup> "Distinctiones appositae et modestae virorum doctorum, hoc in negotio, utiles ad aedificationem iudicamus." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:283.

support for its position. Du Moulin continued to accuse his opponent of Nestorianism<sup>27</sup> and Tilenus responded with accusations of Eutychianism and Ubiquitism.<sup>28</sup> Still in 1612, Tilenus wrote *Examen dogmatis P. Molinaei de duarum in Christo naturarum unionis hypostaticae effectis*.<sup>29</sup> Both theologians sent letters to the Company of Pastors in Geneva, and received corrections to their doctrinal assertions. In a letter from the Company<sup>30</sup> to Tilenus, the Genevan theologians cling to the holistic understanding of Christ's whole obedience and righteousness common among the French Churches,<sup>31</sup> but also recognizing the usefulness for edification of appropriate and modest distinctions provided by reputable teachers.<sup>32</sup> They disagree with Tilenus on Christ meriting for

---

<sup>27</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:xvi, xxii. Similarly, the Lutherans believed that Piscator's opinion of Christ obeying the law for himself led to Nestorianism. Cf. Baur, *Die christliche lehre von der versöhnung*, 357-358.

<sup>28</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:274-275, 288-293.

<sup>29</sup> For information on the work and extant copies see Brian Armstrong, *Bibliographia Molinaei: An Alphabetical, Chronological and Descriptive Bibliography of the Works of Pierre Du Moulin (1568-1658)*, Vol. 7 of *Travaux du Grand Siècle* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1997), 230-231.

<sup>30</sup> The letter was signed by Simon Goulart (1543-1628), Antoine de La Faye (†1616-1618) and Jean Diodati (1576-1649).

<sup>31</sup> "Subscribimus itaque Gallicanarum Ecclesiarum communi sententiae, nullam partem obedientiae et justitiae Christi, quatenus mediator, eximendam nobis, vel excludendam videri a causarum numero, quibus apud tribunal Dei peccati reatus expiatur, poena ejusdem tollitur, obligatio legis nobis adversa solvitur, jus vitae aeternae homini (propria justitia destituto) quaeritur, plenaque gratia et amor Patris conciliatur, eamque obedientiam, quantaquanta est, per adceptilationem et efficacissimam imputationem, intercedente fide, nostram fieri." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:283. The 18<sup>th</sup> article of the French Confession (1559) equates justification with remission of sins, as was common of the period, but it provides a twofold benefit from Christ's obedience, both a covering of sin as well as acceptance before God: "l'obéissance de Jésus-Christ, laquelle nous est allouée, tant pour couvrir toutes nos fautes, que pour nous faire trouver grace et faveur devant Dieu." Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1919), 3:370.

<sup>32</sup> "Distinctiones appositas et modestas virorum doctorum, hoc in negotio, utiles ad aedificationem judicamus." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:283.

himself,<sup>33</sup> thus following Calvin, and show Christ's subjection to the law to be temporary – during the state of his humiliation – and not applicable to his glorious state.

When the Company writes to du Moulin, they disagree with the distinction between Christ's subjection to the law as "mediator" and his subjection as "man," for we know of no other quality or cause for which Christ became man but to become a mediator.<sup>34</sup> They also qualify subjection to the law to be not only conformity and dependence of the creature to its Creator, but also as fulfilling the Legal Covenant which promises life based on perfect obedience, to which Christ submitted himself for us.<sup>35</sup> However, in light of "the eternal right of the law" (*le droit eternel de la Loy*) as a moral compass, the Genevans do maintain, in a very restricted way, a sense in which Christ became subject to the law for himself. Their main issue with du Moulin is in regard to his careless language of the hypostatical union. They rebuke his analogy of body and soul to illustrate the relationship between divine and human natures in Christ as closely resembling the errors of Apollinaris and the Monothelites.<sup>36</sup> They also disagree with the

---

<sup>33</sup> "Christum sibi privatim meruisse vel pro se quicquam praestitisse, admittere non possumus..." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:283.

<sup>34</sup> "pour estre mediateur il s'est fait homme, il y a esté assujetti, c'est à dire, ayant pris ceste forme de mediation qui se fait par substitution d'un en la place d'un autre en tous ses devoirs et obligations, dont, par l'ordre de la justice et sapience de Dieu, il convenoit qu'il prist la nature à laquelle par la Loy eternelle de Dieu elles estoient inseparablement attachees, et comme on ne peut comprendre qu'il ait esté homme en autre qualité, ou pour autre cause, que de la mediation, aussi, tout ce qu'il a fait en ceste nature humaine ne peut estre attribué à autre cause, ne rapporté à autre but." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:297.

<sup>35</sup> "Nous desirons aussi que ceste sujettion à la Loy soit un peu mieux expliquée: car par icelle nous ne pouvons pas entendre que la Loy serve seulement de frein et de retenue, ou de regle et mesure de la conformité et dependance de la creature raisonnable à son Createur, mais estimons que quand l'Escriture en parle, elle a esgard plustost à la promesse et à la paction de la Loy, d'assigner la vie moyennant parfaite obeissance, et qu'ainsi nostre Seigneur s'est rendu spontanement serviteur et sujet à la Loy, voulant s'obliger à parfaire ce qu'elle commandoit, pour obtenir ce qu'elle promettoit..." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:297.

<sup>36</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:298.

himself,<sup>33</sup> thus following Calvin, and show Christ's subjection to the law to be temporary – during the state of his humiliation – and not applicable to his glorious state.

When the Company writes to du Moulin, they disagree with the distinction between Christ's subjection to the law as "mediator" and his subjection as "man," for we know of no other quality or cause for which Christ became man but to become a mediator.<sup>34</sup> They also qualify subjection to the law to be not only conformity and dependence of the creature to its Creator, but also as fulfilling the Legal Covenant which promises life based on perfect obedience, to which Christ submitted himself for us.<sup>35</sup> However, in light of "the eternal right of the law" (*le droit eternel de la Loy*) as a moral compass, the Genevans do maintain, in a very restricted way, a sense in which Christ became subject to the law for himself. Their main issue with du Moulin is in regard to his careless language of the hypostatical union. They rebuke his analogy of body and soul to illustrate the relationship between divine and human natures in Christ as closely resembling the errors of Apollinaris and the Monothelites.<sup>36</sup> They also disagree with the

---

<sup>33</sup> "Christum sibi privatim meruisse vel pro se quicquam praestitisse, admittere non possumus..." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:283.

<sup>34</sup> "pour estre mediateur il s'est fait homme, il y a esté assujetti, c'est à dire, ayant pris ceste forme de mediation qui se fait par substitution d'un en la place d'un autre en tous ses devoirs et obligations, dont, par l'ordre de la justice et sapience de Dieu, il convenoit qu'il prist la nature à laquelle par la Loy eternelle de Dieu elles estoient inseparablement attachees, et comme on ne peut comprendre qu'il ait esté homme en autre qualité, ou pour autre cause, que de la mediation, aussi, tout ce qu'il a fait en ceste nature humaine ne peut estre attribué à autre cause, ne rapporté à autre but." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:297.

<sup>35</sup> "Nous desirons aussi que ceste sujettion à la Loy soit un peu mieux expliquée: car par icelle nous ne pouvons pas entendre que la Loy serve seulement de frein et de retenue, ou de regle et mesure de la conformité et dependance de la creature raisonnable à son Createur, mais estimons que quand l'Escriture en parle, elle a esgard plustost à la promesse et à la paction de la Loy, d'assigner la vie moyennant parfaite obeissance, et qu'ainsi nostre Seigneur s'est rendu spontanement serviteur et sujet à la Loy, voulant s'obliger à parfaire ce qu'elle commandoit, pour obtenir ce qu'elle promettoit..." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:297.

<sup>36</sup> Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:298.

notion that the Law is not given to natures, but to persons.<sup>37</sup> Their warnings to du Moulin regard their desire to use orthodox language when referring to the *unio personalis*.<sup>38</sup> Though the Company of Pastors in Geneva criticizes both theologians, the main tone of their rejoinders is an appeal to peacemaking from both parts.

This plea for peace was echoed by others who intervened in the controversy. Peace was established in 1614, as was explained in chapter one, but concordance of opinions was not reached. Due to doctrinal imprecision and many labels of heresy, the discussion changed from the broad work of Christ to the narrow issue of the person of Christ in relation to the law. That is why the agreement only dealt with the issue of the hypostatical union. The concerns raised by such a debate initiated a more careful discussion of the topic in later years. The Christological issues regarding the imputation of Christ's active obedience were in need of a more finely tuned expression.

## 6.2. Responses to the School of Saumur

The belief that Christ's active obedience is not imputed continued to abide within the Reformed Churches of France after the du Moulin/Tilenus debate. However, because it is linked to the school of Saumur, and the latter was associated with more controversial issues (hypothetical universalism, mediate imputation of Adam's sin, unreliability of the vowel points in the Masoretic text of the Old Testament), the issue of active obedience

---

<sup>37</sup> "Nous tenons aussi pour trop subtile et dangereuse ceste proposition, que la Loy est donnee non aux natures, mais aux personnes..." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:299.

<sup>38</sup> For a detailed dogmatic and historical assessment of such a doctrine, cf. Heber Carlos de Campos, *A União das Naturezas do Redentor*, Coleção Fé Evangélica (São Paulo: Editora Cultura Cristã, 2005).

notion that the Law is not given to natures, but to persons.<sup>37</sup> Their warnings to du Moulin regard their desire to use orthodox language when referring to the *unio personalis*.<sup>38</sup> Though the Company of Pastors in Geneva criticizes both theologians, the main tone of their rejoinders is an appeal to peacemaking from both parts.

This plea for peace was echoed by others who intervened in the controversy. Peace was established in 1614, as was explained in chapter one, but concordance of opinions was not reached. Due to doctrinal imprecision and many labels of heresy, the discussion changed from the broad work of Christ to the narrow issue of the person of Christ in relation to the law. That is why the agreement only dealt with the issue of the hypostatical union. The concerns raised by such a debate initiated a more careful discussion of the topic in later years. The Christological issues regarding the imputation of Christ's active obedience were in need of a more finely tuned expression.

## 6.2. Responses to the School of Saumur

The belief that Christ's active obedience is not imputed continued to abide within the Reformed Churches of France after the du Moulin/Tilenus debate. However, because it is linked to the school of Saumur, and the latter was associated with more controversial issues (hypothetical universalism, mediate imputation of Adam's sin, unreliability of the vowel points in the Masoretic text of the Old Testament), the issue of active obedience

---

<sup>37</sup> "Nous tenons aussi pour trop subtile et dangereuse ceste proposition, que la Loy est donnee non aux natures, mais aux personnes..." Cahier et al., *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève (1610-1613)*, 11:299.

<sup>38</sup> For a detailed dogmatic and historical assessment of such a doctrine, cf. Heber Carlos de Campos, *A União das Naturezas do Redentor*, Coleção Fé Evangélica (São Paulo: Editora Cultura Cristã, 2005).

has been overlooked in the studies on Saumur's theology.<sup>39</sup> Some historians have pointed out that Piscator's position was held by John Cameron, professor in Saumur from 1618-1621, but there is no explanation of his position.<sup>40</sup> It is possible that Cameron's debate with Tilenus over Arminian doctrines in 1620 might have clouded the fact that both stood on similar grounds in regards to Christ's active obedience.

This section will briefly point out the teaching of some Saumur theologians and, then, the response to such teaching in *The Helvetic Formula Consensus* (1675) and its primary author, Johann Heinrich Heidegger (1633-1698). Louis Cappel (1585-1658) has a set of theses on Christ the Mediator where he notes how important for our redemption is Christ's original or habitual holiness as well as all his flawless life,<sup>41</sup> and he supports it with Hebrews 7:26. In the following paragraph he notes that such holiness pertains to the person, not to the office or function of the Mediator, thus implying that it only functions as a qualifier of the Mediator – he says it frees Christ for his offices and functions – and

---

<sup>39</sup> Cf. F. P. van Stam, *The Controversy over the Theology of Saumur, 1635-1650: Disrupting Debates Among the Huguenots in Complicated Circumstances* (Amsterdam: APA-Holland University, 1988); Donald Davis Grohman, "The Genevan Reactions to the Saumur Doctrine of Hypothetical Universalism, 1635-1685" (Ph. D. dissertation, Knox College/Toronto School of Theology, 1971); Brian G. Armstrong, *Calvinism and The Amyraut Heresy: Protestant Scholasticism and Humanism in Seventeenth-Century France* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1969); Jürgen Moltmann, "Gnadenbund und Gnadenwahl: die Prädestinationslehre des Moyses Amyraut, dargestellt im Zusammenhang der Heilsgeschichtlich-föderaltheologischen Tradition der Akademie von Saumur" (Ph. D. dissertation, Theologischen Fakultät der Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, 1951).

<sup>40</sup> Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification*, 175; Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:274; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 ed., s.v. "Cameron, John (1579/80-1625)." Richard Baxter is an exception for listing not only Cameron, but also Josue de la Place and Louis Cappel as siding with Piscator. Baxter also provides some bibliographical references. Cf. Baxter, *A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness*, 18; idem, *Aphorismes of Justification*, 36, 230.

<sup>41</sup> "Hominem illum esse sanctissimum oportuit sanctitate cum originali atque habituali, tum actuali, qualem Christum ab ipso matris vtero à Spiritu Sancto sanctificatum, ac toto vitae curriculo inculpatè prorsus viuentem, Scriptura nobis ob oculos proponit." Ludovico Cappello, "Theses Theologicae De Christo Mediatore" in Ludovicus Cappellus, Moses Amyraldus, Iosvé Placevs, *Syntagma Thesivm Theologicarvm in Academia Salmvriensi Variis Temporibvs Dispytatarvm* (Saumur: Ioannem Lesnerivm, 1644), I.245.

has been overlooked in the studies on Saumur's theology.<sup>39</sup> Some historians have pointed out that Piscator's position was held by John Cameron, professor in Saumur from 1618-1621, but there is no explanation of his position.<sup>40</sup> It is possible that Cameron's debate with Tilenus over Arminian doctrines in 1620 might have clouded the fact that both stood on similar grounds in regards to Christ's active obedience.

This section will briefly point out the teaching of some Saumur theologians and, then, the response to such teaching in *The Helvetic Formula Consensus* (1675) and its primary author, Johann Heinrich Heidegger (1633-1698). Louis Cappel (1585-1658) has a set of theses on Christ the Mediator where he notes how important for our redemption is Christ's original or habitual holiness as well as all his flawless life,<sup>41</sup> and he supports it with Hebrews 7:26. In the following paragraph he notes that such holiness pertains to the person, not to the office or function of the Mediator, thus implying that it only functions as a qualifier of the Mediator – he says it frees Christ for his offices and functions – and

---

<sup>39</sup> Cf. F. P. van Stam, *The Controversy over the Theology of Saumur, 1635-1650: Disrupting Debates Among the Huguenots in Complicated Circumstances* (Amsterdam: APA-Holland University, 1988); Donald Davis Grohman, "The Genevan Reactions to the Saumur Doctrine of Hypothetical Universalism, 1635-1685" (Ph. D. dissertation, Knox College/Toronto School of Theology, 1971); Brian G. Armstrong, *Calvinism and The Amyraut Heresy: Protestant Scholasticism and Humanism in Seventeenth-Century France* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1969); Jürgen Moltmann, "Gnadenbund und Gnadenwahl: die Prädestinationslehre des Moysé Amyraut, dargestellt im Zusammenhang der Heilsgeschichtlich-föderaltheologischen Tradition der Akademie von Saumur" (Ph. D. dissertation, Theologischen Fakultät der Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, 1951).

<sup>40</sup> Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification*, 175; Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:274; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 ed., s.v. "Cameron, John (1579/80-1625)." Richard Baxter is an exception for listing not only Cameron, but also Josue de la Place and Louis Cappel as siding with Piscator. Baxter also provides some bibliographical references. Cf. Baxter, *A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness*, 18; idem, *Aphorismes of Justification*, 36, 230.

<sup>41</sup> "Hominem illum esse sanctissimum oportuit sanctitate cum originali atque habituali, tum actuali, qualem Christum ab ipso matris vtero à Spiritu Sancto sanctificatum, ac toto vitae curriculo inculpatè prorsus viventem, Scriptura nobis ob oculos proponit." Lvdovico Cappello, "Theses Theologicae De Christo Mediatore" in Ludovicus Cappellus, Moses Amyraldus, Iosvé Placevs, *Syntagma Thesivm Theologicarvm in Academia Salmvriensi Variis Temporibvs Dispvtatarvm* (Saumur: Ioannem Lesnerivm, 1644), I.245.

not as a vicarious righteousness.<sup>42</sup> In the very next paragraph, he then says that Christ was incarnate in order that his suffering and punishment could be for us (*vt pati & plecti pro nobis posset*), which was not said of the habitual or actual holiness of Christ.

Josué de la Place (1596-1665), who was criticized for his understanding of the imputation of Adam's sin,<sup>43</sup> also held to a view of imputation of Christ's righteousness that would fall under criticism. In his theses on justification, he presents the authority of the law to be the establishment of the punishment for its transgressors. The law cannot justify, but it only condemns law-breakers. "For either you are a transgressor of the law, or you are not a transgressor. If you are not a transgressor of the law, you are justified by the law. If you are a transgressor, you are condemned by it. Between a transgression of the law and a non-transgression there cannot be a medium. Therefore, either we are entirely justified by the law or not at all."<sup>44</sup> By closing the possibility of justification through the law, de la Place does not leave room for the notion of justification through Christ's obedience to the law. His teaching that there is no medium seems to target more than just the Roman Catholic view of works as part of justification. As the sequence of his work demonstrates, no medium means no 'two-step justification' where one is first

---

<sup>42</sup> "Haec sanctitas, cum ad naturae humanae ipsius perfectionem pertineat, natura autem in Persona subsistat, liquet sanctitatem illam non ad munus & officium Mediatoris, sed ad conuenientem Personae ipsius constitutionem pertinere, nam quae sunt Muneris & officij libera & soluta in Christo fuerunt, ante susceptum Munus, potuit enim esse vel non esse Mediator, at non potuit esse homo peccator." Cappello, "Theses Theologicae De Christo Mediatore," 245.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Stam, *The Controversy over the Theology of Saumur 1635-1650*, 178-180, 209-212, 248-257, 318-321.

<sup>44</sup> "Nam aut legem transgressus es, aut non es transgressus. Si non es legem transgressus, lege justificatis. Si transgressus es, condemnatis. Inter legis transgressionem & non transgressionem nihil potest esse medium. Itaque, aut omninò, aut nullo modo, lege justificamur." Iosvé Placevs, "Theses Theologicae de Ivstificatione Hominis coram Deo" in *Syntagma Thesivm Theologicarvm in Academia Salmvriensi Variis Temporibvs Dispytatarvm*, I.29.

not as a vicarious righteousness.<sup>42</sup> In the very next paragraph, he then says that Christ was incarnate in order that his suffering and punishment could be for us (*vt pati & plecti pro nobis posset*), which was not said of the habitual or actual holiness of Christ.

Josué de la Place (1596-1665), who was criticized for his understanding of the imputation of Adam's sin,<sup>43</sup> also held to a view of imputation of Christ's righteousness that would fall under criticism. In his theses on justification, he presents the authority of the law to be the establishment of the punishment for its transgressors. The law cannot justify, but it only condemns law-breakers. "For either you are a transgressor of the law, or you are not a transgressor. If you are not a transgressor of the law, you are justified by the law. If you are a transgressor, you are condemned by it. Between a transgression of the law and a non-transgression there cannot be a medium. Therefore, either we are entirely justified by the law or not at all."<sup>44</sup> By closing the possibility of justification through the law, de la Place does not leave room for the notion of justification through Christ's obedience to the law. His teaching that there is no medium seems to target more than just the Roman Catholic view of works as part of justification. As the sequence of his work demonstrates, no medium means no 'two-step justification' where one is first

---

<sup>42</sup> "Haec sanctitas, cum ad naturae humanae ipsius perfectionem pertineat, natura autem in Persona subsistat, liquet sanctitatem illam non ad munus & officium Mediatoris, sed ad conuenientem Personae ipsius constitutionem pertinere, nam quae sunt Muneris & officij libera & soluta in Christo fuerunt, ante susceptum Munus, potuit enim esse vel non esse Mediator, at non potuit esse homo peccator." Cappello, "Theses Theologicae De Christo Mediatore," 245.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Stam, *The Controversy over the Theology of Saumur 1635-1650*, 178-180, 209-212, 248-257, 318-321.

<sup>44</sup> "Nam aut legem transgressus es, aut non es transgressus. Si non es legem transgressus, lege justificatis. Si transgressus es, condemnatis. Inter legis transgressionem & non transgressionem nihil potest esse medium. Itaque, aut omnino, aut nullo modo, lege justificamur." Josvé Placevs, "Theses Theologicae de Ivstificatione Hominis coram Deo" in *Syntagma Thesivm Theologicarvm in Academia Salmvriensi Variis Temporibvs Dispytatarvm*, I.29.

forgiven of its debts and then regarded as having fulfilled the law. This conclusion can be gathered, first, from the assertion that the law was not given in order to justify.<sup>45</sup> Secondly, Christ's holiness was necessary for approval to satisfy for our sins,<sup>46</sup> while satisfaction is done in our place.<sup>47</sup> Thirdly, the blessings of the new covenant consist only in remission of sins and sanctification,<sup>48</sup> thus making justification synonymous with the former.

Brian Armstrong presented Moÿse Amyraut (1596-1664) formally defining justification as consisting of two parts, remission of sins and imputation of Christ's righteousness, but noted that Amyraut's discussions of justification include only the idea of remission.<sup>49</sup> Armstrong also quotes Amyraut preaching that the law was not given in order to bring life, but nowhere does Armstrong place Amyraut within the active obedience debates in order to assess where he stood. However, Amyraut's *Paraphrase sur l'Epistre de S. Paul aux Romains* puts him in continuity with Piscator. Amyraut states that the "gift of remission" results in an "entire justification."<sup>50</sup> He even goes beyond

---

<sup>45</sup> "Non igitur eum in finem lex data fuit vt per eam peccatores justificarentur." Placevs, "Theses Theologicae de Iustificatione Homini coram Deo," 30.

<sup>46</sup> "Eum verò oportuit, neque inuitum adigi vt pro nobis satisfaceret, neque tamen id aggredi sine Dei supreme magistratus mandato, atque approbatione. Fuit autem necessarium, vt pro nobis satisfaceret, primùm, vt tota vita omnem iustitiam impleret, omnibusque viri sancti, & iusti partibus accuratissimè perfungeretur: Deinde, vt non modò multa pateretur totâ vita, sed in primis, se in flore aetatis, per Spiritum aeternum sisteret Deo victimam, que, pro peccatis nostris, mortem cum sensu irae diuinae, & maledictionis legis confunctam degustaret." Placevs, "Theses Theologicae de Iustificatione Homini coram Deo," 31.

<sup>47</sup> "Hanc satisfactionem loco nostro praestitam à Christo nobis imputari, negari non potest." Placevs, "Theses Theologicae de Iustificatione Homini coram Deo," 31.

<sup>48</sup> "in nouo foedere Deus nobis primùm *remissionem* peccatorum, dinde *sanctificationem* a promiserit." Placevs, "Theses Theologicae de Iustificatione Homini coram Deo," 33.

<sup>49</sup> Armstrong, *Calvinism and The Amyraut Heresy*, 225-226.

<sup>50</sup> Moÿse Amyraut, *Paraphrase sur l'Epistre de S. Paul aux Romains* (Saumur: Jean Lesnier, 1644), 109.

forgiven of its debts and then regarded as having fulfilled the law. This conclusion can be gathered, first, from the assertion that the law was not given in order to justify.<sup>45</sup> Secondly, Christ's holiness was necessary for approval to satisfy for our sins,<sup>46</sup> while satisfaction is done in our place.<sup>47</sup> Thirdly, the blessings of the new covenant consist only in remission of sins and sanctification,<sup>48</sup> thus making justification synonymous with the former.

Brian Armstrong presented Moÿse Amyraut (1596-1664) formally defining justification as consisting of two parts, remission of sins and imputation of Christ's righteousness, but noted that Amyraut's discussions of justification include only the idea of remission.<sup>49</sup> Armstrong also quotes Amyraut preaching that the law was not given in order to bring life, but nowhere does Armstrong place Amyraut within the active obedience debates in order to assess where he stood. However, Amyraut's *Paraphrase sur l'Epistre de S. Paul aux Romains* puts him in continuity with Piscator. Amyraut states that the "gift of remission" results in an "entire justification."<sup>50</sup> He even goes beyond

---

<sup>45</sup> "Non igitur eum in finem lex data fuit vt per eam peccatores justificarentur." Placevs, "Theses Theologicae de Iustificatione Homini coram Deo," 30.

<sup>46</sup> "Eum verò oportuit, neque inuitum adigi vt pro nobis satisfaceret, neque tamen id aggredi sine Dei supreme magistratus mandato, atque approbatione. Fuit autem necessarium, vt pro nobis satisfaceret, primùm, vt tota vita omnem iustitiam impleret, omnibusque viri sancti, & iusti partibus accuratissimè perfungeretur: Deinde, vt non modò multa pateretur totà vita, sed in primis, se in flore aetatis, per Spiritum aeternum sisteret Deo victimam, que, pro peccatis nostris, mortem cum sensu irae diuinae, & maledictionis legis confunctam degustaret." Placevs, "Theses Theologicae de Iustificatione Homini coram Deo," 31.

<sup>47</sup> "Hanc satisfactionem loco nostro praestitam à Christo nobis imputari, negari non potest." Placevs, "Theses Theologicae de Iustificatione Homini coram Deo," 31.

<sup>48</sup> "in nouo foedere Deus nobis primùm *remissionem* peccatorum, dinde *sanctificationem* a promiserit." Placevs, "Theses Theologicae de Iustificatione Homini coram Deo," 33.

<sup>49</sup> Armstrong, *Calvinism and The Amyraut Heresy*, 225-226.

<sup>50</sup> Moÿse Amyraut, *Paraphrase sur l'Epistre de S. Paul aux Romains* (Saumur: Jean Lesnier, 1644), 109.

Piscator on Romans 5:18 when he compares Adam's "one sole offense" to Christ's "one sole action" which was his obedience to the commandment to die on the cross.<sup>51</sup> As for the function of the law in the history of redemption, Amyraut understands that it was not given in order that man might be justified by it, but merely to enhance sin.<sup>52</sup>

His theses on the Three Covenants also provides a feature of his covenantal thought which differed from Piscator, but provided an element that discarded the notion of Christ fulfilling the covenant of works in the place of man. He taught that Adam could not have attained celestial life through the natural covenant, for his prize could not have come out of merit (*ex merito*); Adam could only have attained a "natural prize" (*praemium naturale*). That means Adam, had he obeyed, would have only attained perennial terrestrial life in Paradise.<sup>53</sup> Such an understanding of the promise within the natural covenant would be opposed by many Reformed theologians throughout high and late orthodoxy.<sup>54</sup>

Confessional response to the school of Saumur on the issue of Christ's active obedience did not come from within the churches of France. The *Helvetic Formula Consensus* (1675),<sup>55</sup> approved in Swiss cantons, provides a response which occupies a

---

<sup>51</sup> Amyraut, *Paraphrase sur l'Epistre de S. Paul aux Romains*, 110-111.

<sup>52</sup> "ce n'a point esté à ce que les hommes fussent iustificiés par la Loy, mais au contraire, à ce que le peché venant à croistre à son occasion." Amyraut, *Paraphrase sur l'Epistre de S. Paul aux Romains*, 112; cf. p. 164.

<sup>53</sup> Mose Amyraldo, "Theses theologicae de tribvs foederibvs divinis" in *Syntagma Thesivm Theologicarvm in Academia Salmvriensi Variis Temporibvs Dispytatarvum*, xi, xii, xv (I.214-215).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. J. Mark Beach, *Christ and the Covenant: Francis Turretin's Federal Theology as a Defense of the Doctrine of Grace*, Reformed Historical Theology, vol. 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 129-131.

<sup>55</sup> For analyses of the context and teaching of the Formula, cf. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:477-489; Martin I. Klauber, "The Helvetic Formula Consensus (1675): An Introduction and Translation," *Trinity Journal* 11 (1990):103-114.

Piscator on Romans 5:18 when he compares Adam's "one sole offense" to Christ's "one sole action" which was his obedience to the commandment to die on the cross.<sup>51</sup> As for the function of the law in the history of redemption, Amyraut understands that it was not given in order that man might be justified by it, but merely to enhance sin.<sup>52</sup>

His theses on the Three Covenants also provides a feature of his covenantal thought which differed from Piscator, but provided an element that discarded the notion of Christ fulfilling the covenant of works in the place of man. He taught that Adam could not have attained celestial life through the natural covenant, for his prize could not have come out of merit (*ex merito*); Adam could only have attained a "natural prize" (*praemium naturale*). That means Adam, had he obeyed, would have only attained perennial terrestrial life in Paradise.<sup>53</sup> Such an understanding of the promise within the natural covenant would be opposed by many Reformed theologians throughout high and late orthodoxy.<sup>54</sup>

Confessional response to the school of Saumur on the issue of Christ's active obedience did not come from within the churches of France. The *Helvetic Formula Consensus* (1675),<sup>55</sup> approved in Swiss cantons, provides a response which occupies a

---

<sup>51</sup> Amyraut, *Paraphrase sur l'Epistre de S. Paul aux Romains*, 110-111.

<sup>52</sup> "ce n'a point esté à ce que les hommes fussent iustificiés par la Loy, mais au contraire, à ce que le peché venant à croistre à son occasion." Amyraut, *Paraphrase sur l'Epistre de S. Paul aux Romains*, 112; cf. p. 164.

<sup>53</sup> Mose Amyraldo, "Theses theologicae de tribvs foederibvs divinis" in *Syntagma Thesisvm Theologicarvm in Academia Salmvriensi Variis Temporibvs Disputatarvm*, xi, xii, xv (I.214-215).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. J. Mark Beach, *Christ and the Covenant: Francis Turretin's Federal Theology as a Defense of the Doctrine of Grace*, Reformed Historical Theology, vol. 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 129-131.

<sup>55</sup> For analyses of the context and teaching of the Formula, cf. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 1:477-489; Martin I. Klauber, "The Helvetic Formula Consensus (1675): An Introduction and Translation," *Trinity Journal* 11 (1990):103-114.

considerable portion of the document. Grohman rightly notes that Canons XV and XVI of the *Formula* are tied to Piscator's teaching.<sup>56</sup> Though the context of these two canons is Amyraut's understanding of the atonement, Canon XV is almost entirely a defense of the imputation of Christ's active obedience:

Canon XV: But by the obedience of his death Christ, in place of the elect, so satisfied God the Father, that in the estimate of his vicarious righteousness and of that obedience, all of that which he rendered to the law, as its just servant, during his entire life, whether by doing or by suffering, ought to be called obedience. For Christ's life, according to the Apostle's testimony (Phil. 2:8), was nothing but submission, humiliation and a continuous emptying of self, descending step by step to the lowest extreme, even to the point of death on the Cross; and the Spirit of God plainly declares that Christ in our stead satisfied the law and divine justice by His most holy life, and makes that ransom with which God has redeemed us to consist not in His sufferings only, but in his whole life conformed to the law. The Spirit, however, ascribes our redemption to the death, or the blood, of Christ, in no other sense than that it was consummated by sufferings; and from that last definitive and noblest act derives a name indeed, but not in such a way as to separate the life preceding from his death.<sup>57</sup>

This canon establishes the whole of Christ's life, whether active or passive, as obedience, as one downward path of humiliation that ends with the cross. Ransom consists not only of Christ's sufferings, but also of his whole life of conformity to the law, for the latter is also rendered "in our stead." The unity of the active and the passive elements under one obedience lays the foundation to assert that when Scripture ascribes our redemption to the death or blood of Christ, it does so by pointing at the consummation of this one obedience.

Canon XVI substantiates this objective unity and its subjective application with the following words: "they so separate the active and passive righteousness of Christ, as

---

<sup>56</sup> Grohman, "The Genevan reactions to the Saumur doctrine of hypothetical universalism, 1635-1685," 398.

<sup>57</sup> Translation taken from Klauber, "The Helvetic Formula Consensus (1675): An Introduction and Translation," 119.

considerable portion of the document. Grohman rightly notes that Canons XV and XVI of the *Formula* are tied to Piscator's teaching.<sup>56</sup> Though the context of these two canons is Amyraut's understanding of the atonement, Canon XV is almost entirely a defense of the imputation of Christ's active obedience:

Canon XV: But by the obedience of his death Christ, in place of the elect, so satisfied God the Father, that in the estimate of his vicarious righteousness and of that obedience, all of that which he rendered to the law, as its just servant, during his entire life, whether by doing or by suffering, ought to be called obedience. For Christ's life, according to the Apostle's testimony (Phil. 2:8), was nothing but submission, humiliation and a continuous emptying of self, descending step by step to the lowest extreme, even to the point of death on the Cross; and the Spirit of God plainly declares that Christ in our stead satisfied the law and divine justice by His most holy life, and makes that ransom with which God has redeemed us to consist not in His sufferings only, but in his whole life conformed to the law. The Spirit, however, ascribes our redemption to the death, or the blood, of Christ, in no other sense than that it was consummated by sufferings; and from that last definitive and noblest act derives a name indeed, but not in such a way as to separate the life preceding from his death.<sup>57</sup>

This canon establishes the whole of Christ's life, whether active or passive, as obedience, as one downward path of humiliation that ends with the cross. Ransom consists not only of Christ's sufferings, but also of his whole life of conformity to the law, for the latter is also rendered "in our stead." The unity of the active and the passive elements under one obedience lays the foundation to assert that when Scripture ascribes our redemption to the death or blood of Christ, it does so by pointing at the consummation of this one obedience.

Canon XVI substantiates this objective unity and its subjective application with the following words: "they so separate the active and passive righteousness of Christ, as

---

<sup>56</sup> Grohman, "The Genevan reactions to the Saumur doctrine of hypothetical universalism, 1635-1685," 398.

<sup>57</sup> Translation taken from Klauber, "The Helvetic Formula Consensus (1675): An Introduction and Translation," 119.

to assert that he claims his active righteousness as his own, but gives and imputes only his passive righteousness to the elect. All these opinions, and all that are like these, are contrary to the plain Scriptures and the glory of Christ.”<sup>58</sup> Canon VIII argues that the promise connected to the Covenant of Works was not only a continuation of earthly felicity, but an eternal and celestial life. And such a promise stands even after the Fall, so that Christ fulfilling the condition of perfect obedience attains the blessing for us. “For not only did the Tree of life prefigure this very thing unto Adam, but the power of the law, which, being fulfilled by Christ, who went under it in our place, awards to us nothing other than celestial life in Christ who kept the same righteousness of the law.”<sup>59</sup> The power of the law which still threatens man with death, both temporal and eternal, is made void upon those who are substituted by Christ because he fulfilled the condition and attained the promise. Canon XXIII also connects justification with covenant, though it parallels legal and evangelical righteousness with covenant of works and covenant of grace, respectively.

J. H. Heidegger, the primary author of the Formula, also targets the teaching of Piscator in other works of his. In his *Dissertationum Selectarum* he has no difficulty in affirming that Scripture defines justification as remission of sins (he points to Romans 4 and Acts 13:38-39), that remission of sins is opposed to fulfilling of the law, and that we are remitted not only of sins of commission but also of omission.<sup>60</sup> These three concepts apparently favor Piscatorian argumentation. However, Heidegger interprets the definition

---

<sup>58</sup> Klauber, “The Helvetic Formula Consensus (1675): An Introduction and Translation,” 119.

<sup>59</sup> Klauber, “The Helvetic Formula Consensus (1675): An Introduction and Translation,” 117.

<sup>60</sup> Joh. Henricus Heidegger, *Dissertationum Selectarum, Sacram Theologiam Dogmaticam, Historicam & Moralem illustrantium*, TRIAKAS (Zurich: David Gesner, 1674), 315-316.

to assert that he claims his active righteousness as his own, but gives and imputes only his passive righteousness to the elect. All these opinions, and all that are like these, are contrary to the plain Scriptures and the glory of Christ.”<sup>58</sup> Canon VIII argues that the promise connected to the Covenant of Works was not only a continuation of earthly felicity, but an eternal and celestial life. And such a promise stands even after the Fall, so that Christ fulfilling the condition of perfect obedience attains the blessing for us. “For not only did the Tree of life prefigure this very thing unto Adam, but the power of the law, which, being fulfilled by Christ, who went under it in our place, awards to us nothing other than celestial life in Christ who kept the same righteousness of the law.”<sup>59</sup> The power of the law which still threatens man with death, both temporal and eternal, is made void upon those who are substituted by Christ because he fulfilled the condition and attained the promise. Canon XXIII also connects justification with covenant, though it parallels legal and evangelical righteousness with covenant of works and covenant of grace, respectively.

J. H. Heidegger, the primary author of the Formula, also targets the teaching of Piscator in other works of his. In his *Dissertationum Selectarum* he has no difficulty in affirming that Scripture defines justification as remission of sins (he points to Romans 4 and Acts 13:38-39), that remission of sins is opposed to fulfilling of the law, and that we are remitted not only of sins of commission but also of omission.<sup>60</sup> These three concepts apparently favor Piscatorian argumentation. However, Heidegger interprets the definition

---

<sup>58</sup> Klauber, “The Helvetic Formula Consensus (1675): An Introduction and Translation,” 119.

<sup>59</sup> Klauber, “The Helvetic Formula Consensus (1675): An Introduction and Translation,” 117.

<sup>60</sup> Joh. Henricus Heidegger, *Dissertationum Selectarum, Sacram Theologiam Dogmaticam, Historicam & Moralem illustrantium*, TRIAKAS (Zurich: David Gesner, 1674), 315-316.

of justification as remission of sins to oppose inherent righteousness, not Christ's positive righteousness imputed. He believes both the obedience and the satisfaction of Christ are the meritorious cause of justification, but both are also the formal cause because both are imputed.<sup>61</sup> Secondly, remission of sins is opposed to *our* fulfilling of the law not Christ's, for his replaces ours (*justitia Christi subit locum nostrae justitiae*).<sup>62</sup> Thirdly, the remission of both kinds of sins (commission and omission) only makes up for negative righteousness; it does not rule out the need for an alien positive righteousness to be imputed.<sup>63</sup>

Heidegger's commentary on the Romans' part of his *Exercitationum Biblicarum*, provides even more exegetical background for the teaching of the Formula. On Romans 4:6, he understands the righteousness of Christ to include his entire obligation to the law on what he was, did and suffered; that means it includes his habitual righteousness or holiness, his active obedience and all his passions up to the cross.<sup>64</sup> The Bezan threefold partition of righteousness is thus explicitly endorsed. He also observes that remission of sins is a synecdoche, "for the Law requires righteousness, it is not content with expiation

---

<sup>61</sup> "obedientia & Satisfactio Christi causa efficiens meritoria nostrae Justificationis: eadem tamen, quatenus per fidem nobis imputatur, est Justificationis nostrae causa etiam formalis." Heidegger, *Dissertationum Selectarum*, 317.

<sup>62</sup> Heidegger, *Dissertationum Selectarum*, 316.

<sup>63</sup> Heidegger, *Dissertationum Selectarum*, 317-318.

<sup>64</sup> "Dico justitiam Christi eam intelligendam, quae donativè & imputativè nostra fit: subjectivè autem in Christo omne illud, quod Christus nostro loco juxta legis nobis incumbentem obligationem, fuit, egit, passus est: sanctitas & justitia habitualis, in qua natus est: obedientia actualis, quam mandatis legis praestitit per totam vitam; Passiones omnes usque ad mortem crucis." Johann Heinrich Heidegger, *Commentarius in Epistolam St. Pauli Ad Romanos* (Zurich: David Gessner, 1699), 27. This is one of Heidegger's commentary in his *Exercitationum biblicarum, quibus libri aliquot, tum Veteris, tum Novi Testamenti illustrantur tomus posterior*, published the same year.

of justification as remission of sins to oppose inherent righteousness, not Christ's positive righteousness imputed. He believes both the obedience and the satisfaction of Christ are the meritorious cause of justification, but both are also the formal cause because both are imputed.<sup>61</sup> Secondly, remission of sins is opposed to *our* fulfilling of the law not Christ's, for his replaces ours (*justitia Christi subit locum nostrae justitiae*).<sup>62</sup> Thirdly, the remission of both kinds of sins (commission and omission) only makes up for negative righteousness; it does not rule out the need for an alien positive righteousness to be imputed.<sup>63</sup>

Heidegger's commentary on the Romans' part of his *Exercitationum Biblicarum*, provides even more exegetical background for the teaching of the Formula. On Romans 4:6, he understands the righteousness of Christ to include his entire obligation to the law on what he was, did and suffered; that means it includes his habitual righteousness or holiness, his active obedience and all his passions up to the cross.<sup>64</sup> The Bezan threefold partition of righteousness is thus explicitly endorsed. He also observes that remission of sins is a synecdoche, "for the Law requires righteousness, it is not content with expiation

---

<sup>61</sup> "obedientia & Satisfactio Christi causa efficiens meritoria nostrae Justificationis: eadem tamen, quatenus per fidem nobis imputatur, est Justificationis nostrae causa etiam formalis." Heidegger, *Dissertationum Selectarum*, 317.

<sup>62</sup> Heidegger, *Dissertationum Selectarum*, 316.

<sup>63</sup> Heidegger, *Dissertationum Selectarum*, 317-318.

<sup>64</sup> "Dico justitiam Christi eam intelligendam, quae donativè & imputativè nostra fit: subjectivè autem in Christo omne illud, quod Christus nostro loco juxta legis nobis incumbentem obligationem, fuit, egit, passus est: sanctitas & justitia habitualis, in qua natus est: obedientia actualis, quam mandatis legis praestitit per totam vitam; Passiones omnes usque ad mortem crucis." Johann Heinrich Heidegger, *Commentarius in Epistolam St. Pauli Ad Romanos* (Zurich: David Gessner, 1699), 27. This is one of Heidegger's commentary in his *Exercitationum biblicarum, quibus libri aliquot, tum Veteris, tum Novi Testamenti illustrantur tomus posterior*, published the same year.

of sins,” an explicit counter argumentation against Piscator.<sup>65</sup> Another explicit rebuttal to Piscator comes in Heidegger’s explanation of Romans 5:8 where he says that justifying by the blood does not exclude the righteousness of Christ’s life, but only points to the apex of merit and fulfillment of the law, which was effusion of his blood.<sup>66</sup> His notation on Romans 5:19 is a concise summary of why the “obedience” referred in the verse should be understood as both active and passive.

Verse 19. What kind of obedience should be understood? *Response*. Both active and passive. About the passive it is agreed. About the active it is evident: 1. Because it is opposed to the disobedience of Adam, reason why of the active. 2. It is also understood that by the same [active obedience] we are made righteous. But unless the active obedience were tied to the passive, we could not be pronounced righteous. For one is only pronounced righteous by the law if he has done all which makes up the law (Leviticus 18:5); since we were not a match for its burden, Christ undertook it (Romans 8:4-5) so that he would not only free us from the curse of the law, but also render us partakers of the promise of eternal life. *Objection 1*. But Adam transgressed a special precept of the Father; similarly, Christ obeyed a special mandate. *Response*. But the virtue he held to was of the entire moral law; hence, he was made a transgressor of the entire law. *Objection 2*. Christ was obliged [to the law] for himself as man. *Response*. But he was made man because of us. Hence, the obligation for obedience to the law pertained to the state of humiliation; while now, though he remains a man, it cannot be said anymore that he is liable to the yoke of the law. *Objection 3*. If this follows, we become exempt to obedience of the law. *Response*. 1. Therefore, are we then not exempt from the suffering or dying on account of sins? 2. The domain of the law does not apply to us anymore, but, nevertheless, by obedience we testify faith and gratitude towards God.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> “Lex enim iustitiam petit non contenta expiatione peccati. Notandum hoc adversus Piscatorem hoc loco abutentem.” Heidegger, *Commentarius in Epistolam St. Pauli Ad Romanos*, 28.

<sup>66</sup> “v. 8. *Justificati igitur nunc ejus sanguine*, (non exclusâ vitae iustitia & sanctitate, solet enim scriptura sanguinem nominare, quia mors, seu sanguinis effusio erat colophon, & ultimus apex meriti, ac impletae legis, quod notandum contra Piscatorem.)” Heidegger, *Commentarius in Epistolam St. Pauli Ad Romanos*, 35-36.

<sup>67</sup> “v. 19. Qualis intelligitur obedientia? *Respond*. Et activa & passiva. De passiva constat. De activa patet 1. Quia opponitur inobedientiae Adami, quae activa utique fuit. 2. Ea intelligitur, per quam constituimur justii. At nisi obedientia activa fuisset passivae connexa, non possemus justii pronuntiiari. Nam is demum à lege justus pronuntiiatur, qui fecit omnia, quae sunt legis. Levit. XVIII.5. cui oneri cùm impares essemus, Christus in se suscepit, Rom. VIII. 4.5. Ut nos non solùm à maledictione legis liberaret, sed & promissionis vitae aeternae participes redderet. *Excip*. 1. At Adamus speciale praeceptum Patris transgressus; Sic etiam

of sins,” an explicit counter argumentation against Piscator.<sup>65</sup> Another explicit rebuttal to Piscator comes in Heidegger’s explanation of Romans 5:8 where he says that justifying by the blood does not exclude the righteousness of Christ’s life, but only points to the apex of merit and fulfillment of the law, which was effusion of his blood.<sup>66</sup> His notation on Romans 5:19 is a concise summary of why the “obedience” referred in the verse should be understood as both active and passive.

Verse 19. What kind of obedience should be understood? *Response*. Both active and passive. About the passive it is agreed. About the active it is evident: 1. Because it is opposed to the disobedience of Adam, reason why of the active. 2. It is also understood that by the same [active obedience] we are made righteous. But unless the active obedience were tied to the passive, we could not be pronounced righteous. For one is only pronounced righteous by the law if he has done all which makes up the law (Leviticus 18:5); since we were not a match for its burden, Christ undertook it (Romans 8:4-5) so that he would not only free us from the curse of the law, but also render us partakers of the promise of eternal life. *Objection 1*. But Adam transgressed a special precept of the Father; similarly, Christ obeyed a special mandate. *Response*. But the virtue he held to was of the entire moral law; hence, he was made a transgressor of the entire law. *Objection 2*. Christ was obliged [to the law] for himself as man. *Response*. But he was made man because of us. Hence, the obligation for obedience to the law pertained to the state of humiliation; while now, though he remains a man, it cannot be said anymore that he is liable to the yoke of the law. *Objection 3*. If this follows, we become exempt to obedience of the law. *Response*. 1. Therefore, are we then not exempt from the suffering or dying on account of sins? 2. The domain of the law does not apply to us anymore, but, nevertheless, by obedience we testify faith and gratitude towards God.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> “Lex enim iustitiam petit non contenta expiatione peccati. Notandum hoc adversus Piscatorem hoc loco abutentem.” Heidegger, *Commentarius in Epistolam St. Pauli Ad Romanos*, 28.

<sup>66</sup> “v. 8. *Justificati igitur nunc ejus sanguine*, (non exclusâ vitae iustitia & sanctitate, solet enim scriptura sanguinem nominare, quia mors, seu sanguinis effusio erat colophon, & ultimus apex meriti, ac impletae legis, quod notandum contra Piscatorem.)” Heidegger, *Commentarius in Epistolam St. Pauli Ad Romanos*, 35-36.

<sup>67</sup> “v. 19. Qualis intelligitur obedientia? *Respond*. Et activa & passiva. De passiva constat. De activa patet 1. Quia opponitur inobedientiae Adami, quae activa utique fuit. 2. Ea intelligitur, per quam constituimur justi. At nisi obedientia activa fuisset passivae connexa, non possemus justi pronuntiari. Nam is demum à lege justus pronuntiatur, qui fecit omnia, quae sunt legis. Levit. XVIII.5. cui oneri cùm impares essemus, Christus in se suscepit, Rom. VIII. 4.5. Ut nos non solùm à maledictione legis liberaret, sed & promissionis vitae aeternae participes redderet. *Excip*. 1. At Adamus speciale praeceptum Patris transgressus; Sic etiam

The way Heidegger manages the objections shows that, first, he corrects the parallel between the two Adams (not a parallel of single acts, but one of moral standings), secondly he differentiates what is proper of the Mediator in his humiliation from what is proper of his person, and he shows the absurdity of the third objection with a rhetorical question as well as a distinction regarding the motivation of our obedience. These aspects of the doctrine show continuity with the teaching of Beza with the liberty, however, to diversify on minor details. Heidegger's interpretation of Romans 8:2, for example, is radically different from Piscator's, but also not as specific as Beza's.<sup>68</sup>

---

Christus speciali mandato obediit. *Respond.* At virtutem continebat totius legis moralis; Hinc transgressor factus est totius legis. *Excip.* 2. Christus obligatus fuit pro semenipso tanquam homo. *Respond.* At propter nos factus est homo. Hinc obligation ad legis obedientiam pertinuit ad statum humiliationis: ut nunc, licet homo manens, non amplius dici possit jugo legis obnoxius. *Excip.* 3. Sic nos essemus exempti ab obedientia Legis. *Respond.* 1. Ergo nec patiendum vel moriendum propter peccata? 2. Non amplius incumbit nobis dominium legis: sed tamen obedientiâ fidem & gratitudinem erga Deum testamur." Heidegger, *Commentarius in Epistolam St. Pauli Ad Romanos*, 41.

<sup>68</sup> "Excip. v. 2. Spiritus vitae. i.e. gratia regenerationis nos liberat à lege peccati. *Respond.* Lex spiritus est justitia Christi. Pareus & Hunnius intelligunt doctrinam Evangelii oppositam legi. Rollocus resurrectionem & vitam Christi. Piscator spiritum sanctificationis, qui à Christo in nos diffunditur. Beza sanctificationem naturae humanae Christi, sive sanctitatem inhaerentem Christi nobis per fidem imputatam. Ego justitiam Christi puto intelligi." Heidegger, *Commentarius in Epistolam St. Pauli Ad Romanos*, 58. Heidegger still understands verses 2 and 4 to be referring to justification, not sanctification, as Beza did. Nevertheless, such interpretation was not uniform within Reformed writers who held to the imputation of Christ's active obedience. Among those who regarded verse 4 as referring to justification, see Johannem Polyandrum, Andream Rivetum, Antonium Walaeum, Antonium Thysium, *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae, Disputationibus Quinquaginta Duabus Comprehensa ac Conscripta*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by H. Bavinck (Lugdunum: Didericum Donner, 1881), XXXIII.viii (p. 332); John Davenant, *A Treatise on Justification*, trans. Josiah Allport (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1844), 1:240; Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:181, 347, 350-352; Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 358-361; Clarkson, *The Practical Works of David Clarkson*, 304; *Annotations Upon all the Books of the Old and New Testament* (London: Evan Tyler, 1657), in loc. cit.; Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 42; Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, trans. William Crookshank (Kingsburg, CA: den Dulk Christian Foundation, 1990), II.v.6; Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, XVI.iii.19; Thomas Brooks, *A Golden Key to open Hidden Treasures* (London: Dorman Newman, 1675), 96. For examples of those who interpreted the same verse as sanctification, see F. Gomarus, *Opera Theologica Omnia* (Amsterdam: Joannes Jansson, 1644), II.41; John Diodati, *Pious and Learned Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Miles Flesher, 1648), 163; Thomas Manton, *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton* (Worthington, PA: Maranatha, n.d.), 11:430-431; Clark, *Scripture-Justification*, 102-103. The most thorough treatment of Romans 8:1-4 in the seventeenth century is Thomas Jacomb, *Several Sermons Preach'd on the whole Eighth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Eighteen of Which Preach'd on the First, Second, Third, Fourth Verses are here Published* (London: W. Godbid, 1672).

The way Heidegger manages the objections shows that, first, he corrects the parallel between the two Adams (not a parallel of single acts, but one of moral standings), secondly he differentiates what is proper of the Mediator in his humiliation from what is proper of his person, and he shows the absurdity of the third objection with a rhetorical question as well as a distinction regarding the motivation of our obedience. These aspects of the doctrine show continuity with the teaching of Beza with the liberty, however, to diversify on minor details. Heidegger's interpretation of Romans 8:2, for example, is radically different from Piscator's, but also not as specific as Beza's.<sup>68</sup>

---

Christus speciali mandato obediit. *Respond.* At virtutem continebat totius legis moralis; Hinc transgressor factus est totius legis. *Excip.* 2. Christus obligatus fuit pro semenipso tanquam homo. *Respond.* At propter nos factus est homo. Hinc obligation ad legis obedientiam pertinuit ad statum humiliationis: ut nunc, licet homo manens, non amplius dici possit jugo legis obnoxius. *Excip.* 3. Sic nos essemus exempti ab obedientia Legis. *Respond.* 1. Ergo nec patiendum vel moriendum propter peccata? 2. Non amplius incumbit nobis dominium legis: sed tamen obedientiâ fidem & gratitudinem erga Deum testamur." Heidegger, *Commentarius in Epistolam St. Pauli Ad Romanos*, 41.

<sup>68</sup> "Excip. v. 2. Spiritus vitae. i.e. gratia regenerationis nos liberat à lege peccati. *Respond.* Lex spiritus est justitia Christi. Pareus & Hunnius intelligunt doctrinam Evangelii oppositam legi. Rollocus resurrectionem & vitam Christi. Piscator spiritum sanctificationis, qui à Christo in nos diffunditur. Beza sanctificationem naturae humanae Christi, sive sanctitatem inhaerentem Christi nobis per fidem imputatam. Ego justitiam Christi puto intelligi." Heidegger, *Commentarius in Epistolam St. Pauli Ad Romanos*, 58. Heidegger still understands verses 2 and 4 to be referring to justification, not sanctification, as Beza did. Nevertheless, such interpretation was not uniform within Reformed writers who held to the imputation of Christ's active obedience. Among those who regarded verse 4 as referring to justification, see Johannem Polyandrum, Andream Rivetum, Antonium Walaemum, Antonium Thysium, *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae, Disputationibus Quinquaginta Duabus Comprehensa ac Conscripta*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., edited by H. Bavink (Lugdunum: Didericum Donner, 1881), XXXIII.viii (p. 332); John Davenant, *A Treatise on Justification*, trans. Josiah Allport (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1844), 1:240; Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:181, 347, 350-352; Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 358-361; Clarkson, *The Practical Works of David Clarkson*, 304; *Annotations Upon all the Books of the Old and New Testament* (London: Evan Tyler, 1657), in loc. cit.; Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 42; Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, trans. William Crookshank (Kingsburg, CA: den Dulk Christian Foundation, 1990), II.v.6; Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, XVI.iii.19; Thomas Brooks, *A Golden Key to open Hidden Treasures* (London: Dorman Newman, 1675), 96. For examples of those who interpreted the same verse as sanctification, see F. Gomarus, *Opera Theologica Omnia* (Amsterdam: Joannes Jansson, 1644), II.41; John Diodati, *Pious and Learned Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Miles Flesher, 1648), 163; Thomas Manton, *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton* (Worthington, PA: Maranatha, n.d.), 11:430-431; Clark, *Scripture-Justification*, 102-103. The most thorough treatment of Romans 8:1-4 in the seventeenth century is Thomas Jacomb, *Several Sermons Preach'd on the whole Eighth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Eighteen of Which Preach'd on the First, Second, Third, Fourth Verses are here Published* (London: W. Godbid, 1672).

Though Piscator is long gone when Heidegger writes his works, the purpose of targeting Piscator coincides with the concern expressed in the Formula, that such teachings are still present in his midst. The teaching which emanated from the theological school of Saumur needed to be countered and by doing so Heidegger was expressing a matured understanding of the imputed righteousness.

### 6.3. Debates on English Soil

The British Isles were arguably the place where this doctrine was preached but also disputed the most in the seventeenth-century. It appears in a national confession as early as 1615, in *The Irish Articles* (articles 30, 35, 37). Its author, James Usher, also preaches it in Oxford in 1640 in the midst of much discussion over the doctrine.<sup>69</sup> It draws the attention of some of the most educated minds among the Puritans, but also the interest of the simple preacher. Ernest Kevan surveys how common this doctrine was among the Puritans.<sup>70</sup> This third section of the chapter will single out some of the most significant treatises and debates among the vast literature on it.

#### 6.3.a. Debates prior to the Westminster Assembly of Divines

In early seventeenth-century England, some theologians discussed the issue raised by Piscator. Some did it in a rather irenic form, others in the midst of controversy.

William Perkins (1558-1602) doesn't mention Piscator by name, but he does side with Beza where Christ's vicarious fulfillment of the law is done "partly by the holiness of his

---

<sup>69</sup> James Usher, *Eighteen Sermons Preached in Oxford, 1640, of Conversion, unto God, of Redemption, & Justification, by Christ* (London: S. Griffin, 1660), 370-392.

<sup>70</sup> Ernest F. Kevan, *The Grace of Law: A Study in Puritan Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), 142-146.

Though Piscator is long gone when Heidegger writes his works, the purpose of targeting Piscator coincides with the concern expressed in the Formula, that such teachings are still present in his midst. The teaching which emanated from the theological school of Saumur needed to be countered and by doing so Heidegger was expressing a matured understanding of the imputed righteousness.

### 6.3. Debates on English Soil

The British Isles were arguably the place where this doctrine was preached but also disputed the most in the seventeenth-century. It appears in a national confession as early as 1615, in *The Irish Articles* (articles 30, 35, 37). Its author, James Usher, also preaches it in Oxford in 1640 in the midst of much discussion over the doctrine.<sup>69</sup> It draws the attention of some of the most educated minds among the Puritans, but also the interest of the simple preacher. Ernest Kevan surveys how common this doctrine was among the Puritans.<sup>70</sup> This third section of the chapter will single out some of the most significant treatises and debates among the vast literature on it.

#### 6.3.a. Debates prior to the Westminster Assembly of Divines

In early seventeenth-century England, some theologians discussed the issue raised by Piscator. Some did it in a rather irenic form, others in the midst of controversy.

William Perkins (1558-1602) doesn't mention Piscator by name, but he does side with Beza where Christ's vicarious fulfillment of the law is done "partly by the holiness of his

---

<sup>69</sup> James Usher, *Eighteen Sermons Preached in Oxford, 1640, of Conversion, unto God, of Redemption, & Justification, by Christ* (London: S. Griffin, 1660), 370-392.

<sup>70</sup> Ernest F. Kevan, *The Grace of Law: A Study in Puritan Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), 142-146.

humane nature, and partly by obedience in the workes of the Law” (Rom. 8:3; Matt. 3:15; John 17:19).<sup>71</sup> Perkins is equating ‘fulfillment of the law’ with two-thirds of Beza’s threefold righteousness. Later in *A Golden Chaine*, Perkins asserts that Christ performed full obedience to the law for us and in this context he provides answer to three of Piscator’s objections.<sup>72</sup> To the first objection that Christ as a man is bound to perform the law for himself, Perkins argues that “his passion and obedience hath respect vnto the whole person, considered as God and man” thus making Christ not bound to obedience by nature, but by his own accord for the purpose of redemption. To the second objection that Christ’s vicarious performance frees us from the obligation of observing the law, Perkins writes:

Christ performed obedience to the law for vs, as it is the satisfaction of the law: but the faithfull they are bounden to obedience, not as it is satisfactory, but as it is a document of faith, and a testimony of their gratitude towards God, or a meanes to edifie their neighbours: euen as Christ suffering eternall punishments for our sinnes, we also suffer punishments, as they are either trials, or chastisements vnto vs.<sup>73</sup>

To the third objection that the justice of God cannot exact both obedience and punishment, Perkins responds that in man’s perfect state God only required obedience, but in the corrupted state he requires both. Perkins concludes this section saying justification has “two parts,” remission of sins and imputation of Christ’s righteousness,

---

<sup>71</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:29.

<sup>72</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:81.

<sup>73</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:81.

humane nature, and partly by obedience in the workes of the Law” (Rom. 8:3; Matt. 3:15; John 17:19).<sup>71</sup> Perkins is equating ‘fulfillment of the law’ with two-thirds of Beza’s threefold righteousness. Later in *A Golden Chaine*, Perkins asserts that Christ performed full obedience to the law for us and in this context he provides answer to three of Piscator’s objections.<sup>72</sup> To the first objection that Christ as a man is bound to perform the law for himself, Perkins argues that “his passion and obedience hath respect vnto the whole person, considered as God and man” thus making Christ not bound to obedience by nature, but by his own accord for the purpose of redemption. To the second objection that Christ’s vicarious performance frees us from the obligation of observing the law, Perkins writes:

Christ performed obedience to the law for vs, as it is the satisfaction of the law: but the faithfull they are bounden to obedience, not as it is satisfactory, but as it is a document of faith, and a testimony of their gratitude towards God, or a meanes to edifie their neighbours: euen as Christ suffering eternall punishments for our sinnes, we also suffer punishments, as they are either trials, or chastisements vnto vs.<sup>73</sup>

To the third objection that the justice of God cannot exact both obedience and punishment, Perkins responds that in man’s perfect state God only required obedience, but in the corrupted state he requires both. Perkins concludes this section saying justification has “two parts,” remission of sins and imputation of Christ’s righteousness,

---

<sup>71</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:29.

<sup>72</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:81.

<sup>73</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:81.

but at the same time he presents a chart with the threefold parallel: guilt, disobedience and corruption healed by passion, obedience and holiness.<sup>74</sup>

In his commentary on Galatians, Perkins repeats the same three objections with answers and he adds a fourth which consists of Bible verses pointing to the blood of Christ as the meritorious cause of we entering the holy place (he quotes Heb. 10:19). His response is that blood points to Christ's passion, and the latter must not be severed from the active and voluntary obedience. Here we see the unity of Christ's active and passive obedience in Perkins. "For Christ in suffering obeyed, & in obeying suffered."<sup>75</sup> Bringing active obedience in joint connection with the passion is also done in his *An Exposition of the Creede*,<sup>76</sup> similarly to Calvin in his *Institutes* (II.xvi.5).

By the time George Downame wrote his *A Treatise of Ivstification*, Johannes Piscator had become an international icon of the position contrary to the imputation of active obedience. Thus, differently from Perkins, Downame responds directly to Piscator in certain sections of his book mainly targeted at Bellarmine. Downame is in continuity

---

<sup>74</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:81-82. This Bezan parallel is unexpectedly found in Piscator's *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, XIII.xv. However, this is found only on the English edition, not in the original Latin. The English translator, Henry Holland, includes a fifteenth aphorism in this chapter which is entirely composed by Holland. In fact, this aphorism goes against the theology of Piscator by presenting a tripartite parallel (guiltinesse, disobedience, corruption paralleled with passion, righteounesse and holynesse of Christ) which resembles a construction by Theodore Beza. In the epistle to the reader of the English translation, Henry Holland states that he has not followed the author's words, though he believes he has been faithful in his translation; "for my boldnesse & libertie sometimes in omission, sometimes in addition of wordes and some few sentences: I haue the authour himselve for example, as may appeare in the Epistle following." Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, Aii-r. From what I could notice, the only chapters where Holland adds whole paragraphs to the Latin edition are the chapters on justification (1 paragraph) and on the Lord's Supper (6 paragraphs). Holland refers to Piscator summarizing Olevianus' *Epitome* not with Olevianus' very words, but thinking he wasn't changing Olevianus' doctrine in any way. Cf. Johannes Piscator, *Aphorismi doctrinae christianae ex Institutione Calvinii excerpti*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Richard Field, 1595), 4.

<sup>75</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 2:206.

<sup>76</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:186.

but at the same time he presents a chart with the threefold parallel: guilt, disobedience and corruption healed by passion, obedience and holiness.<sup>74</sup>

In his commentary on Galatians, Perkins repeats the same three objections with answers and he adds a fourth which consists of Bible verses pointing to the blood of Christ as the meritorious cause of we entering the holy place (he quotes Heb. 10:19). His response is that blood points to Christ's passion, and the latter must not be severed from the active and voluntary obedience. Here we see the unity of Christ's active and passive obedience in Perkins. "For Christ in suffering obeyed, & in obeying suffered."<sup>75</sup> Bringing active obedience in joint connection with the passion is also done in his *An Exposition of the Creede*,<sup>76</sup> similarly to Calvin in his *Institutes* (II.xvi.5).

By the time George Downame wrote his *A Treatise of Iustification*, Johannes Piscator had become an international icon of the position contrary to the imputation of active obedience. Thus, differently from Perkins, Downame responds directly to Piscator in certain sections of his book mainly targeted at Bellarmine. Downame is in continuity

---

<sup>74</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:81-82. This Bezan parallel is unexpectedly found in Piscator's *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, XIII.xv. However, this is found only on the English edition, not in the original Latin. The English translator, Henry Holland, includes a fifteenth aphorism in this chapter which is entirely composed by Holland. In fact, this aphorism goes against the theology of Piscator by presenting a tripartite parallel (guiltiness, disobedience, corruption paralleled with passion, righteousness and holiness of Christ) which resembles a construction by Theodore Beza. In the epistle to the reader of the English translation, Henry Holland states that he has not followed the author's words, though he believes he has been faithful in his translation; "for my boldnesse & libertie sometimes in omission, sometimes in addition of wordes and some few sentences: I haue the authour himselfe for example, as may appeare in the Epistle following." Piscator, *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*, Aii-r. From what I could notice, the only chapters where Holland adds whole paragraphs to the Latin edition are the chapters on justification (1 paragraph) and on the Lord's Supper (6 paragraphs). Holland refers to Piscator summarizing Olevianus' *Epitome* not with Olevianus' very words, but thinking he wasn't changing Olevianus' doctrine in any way. Cf. Johannes Piscator, *Aphorismi doctrinae christianae ex Institutione Calvini excerpti*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Richard Field, 1595), 4.

<sup>75</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 2:206.

<sup>76</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:186.

with the teachings of Beza and Perkins, but he provides different distinctions. When he explains what constitutes the whole righteousness of Christ which is imputed to us, he says it is both the “inherent” as well as the “performed” righteousness, “whether to fulfill the Commandements, or to satisfie the Curse of the Law for us,” both “negative” (absence of sins and vices) and “positive” (the whole of obedience) righteousness. These pairs of distinctions overlap one another, but they are subdivided even further. The positive righteousness encompasses both the fulfilling of commands as well as the satisfaction in respect of the punishment. “The former is the holiness of Christ, which the Apostle calleth the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ, Rom. 8.2. which is also twofold, the holinesse of his nature, which is his habituall righteousness: the holinesse of his life and conversation, which is his actuall obedience.”<sup>77</sup> Not much later, Downname explicitly presents the Bezan threefold division of the whole righteousness of Christ: the righteousness of his person, the righteousness of his life, the righteousness of his death and passion.<sup>78</sup>

Downname responded to non-Piscatorian arguments such as assuming εως δικαιοματος of Romans 5:18 to refer to “one righteous act,” thus pointing to the cross.<sup>79</sup> His theological response is that one act of sin makes you guilty of all while one act of obedience does not make you observer of the whole law; his exegetical reply is that

---

<sup>77</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Iustification*, 18.

<sup>78</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Iustification*, 24.

<sup>79</sup> Though not in connection with Romans 5:18, John Forbes’ words reflect the argument which Downname opposes: “our righteousnes should consist, in the onely one obedience, of that one man, once onely performed: like as our sinfulness, did consist, in that onely one disobedience, of that one man Adam, once onely committed.” John Forbes, *A Treatise tending to cleare the Doctrine of Iustification* (Middelbvrgh: Richard Schilders, 1616), 99. John Brown of Wamphray responds to these very words of Forbes in the same manner as Downname does. Cf. John Broun, *The Life of Justification Opened* (N.p., 1695), 507-508.

with the teachings of Beza and Perkins, but he provides different distinctions. When he explains what constitutes the whole righteousness of Christ which is imputed to us, he says it is both the “inherent” as well as the “performed” righteousness, “whether to fulfill the Commandements, or to satisfie the Curse of the Law for us,” both “negative” (absence of sins and vices) and “positive” (the whole of obedience) righteousness. These pairs of distinctions overlap one another, but they are subdivided even further. The positive righteousness encompasses both the fulfilling of commands as well as the satisfaction in respect of the punishment. “The former is the holiness of Christ, which the Apostle calleth the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ, Rom. 8.2. which is also twofold, the holinesse of his nature, which is his habituall righteousness: the holinesse of his life and conversation, which is his actuall obedience.”<sup>77</sup> Not much later, Downname explicitly presents the Bezan threefold division of the whole righteousness of Christ: the righteousness of his person, the righteousness of his life, the righteousness of his death and passion.<sup>78</sup>

Downname responded to non-Piscatorian arguments such as assuming εως δικαιωματος of Romans 5:18 to refer to “one righteous act,” thus pointing to the cross.<sup>79</sup> His theological response is that one act of sin makes you guilty of all while one act of obedience does not make you observer of the whole law; his exegetical reply is that

---

<sup>77</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 18.

<sup>78</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 24.

<sup>79</sup> Though not in connection with Romans 5:18, John Forbes’ words reflect the argument which Downname opposes: “our righteousnes should consist, in the onely one obedience, of that one man, once onely performed: like as our sinfulness, did consist, in that onely one disobedience, of that one man Adam, once onely committed.” John Forbes, *A Treatise tending to cleare the Doctrine of Ivstification* (Middelbvrg: Richard Schilders, 1616), 99. John Brown of Wamphray responds to these very words of Forbes in the same manner as Downname does. Cf. John Broun, *The Life of Justification Opened* (N.p., 1695), 507-508.

“one” (εἷος) in the passage functions pronominally, pointing to the man, rather than adjectivally, pointing to the act.<sup>80</sup> Downname responds directly to John Forbes (†1634),<sup>81</sup> but most of his discussion on active obedience is against “the principall authour of this Novelty,” by which he means Piscator.<sup>82</sup> To the objection that Christ’s obedience frees us from the obligation of obeying the law ourselves, and to the objection that Christ was obliged to obey for himself, Downname follows Perkins in similar arguments.<sup>83</sup> To the latter, though, he adds at least one more element. He regards the dignity of Christ’s person to be due not only to his flawless humanity, but much more to the virtue of his divinity. The suffering and the obedience of God, according to Downname, is what provides us with freedom from hell and entitlement to the kingdom of heaven.<sup>84</sup>

Downname also responds to Piscator’s exegetical arguments. Based on the blood giving us entrance into heaven it is not correct to conclude that by the blood of Christ alone we are justified, “for we have entrance into heaven by his resurrection, ascension, and intercession, (not to speake of his obedience...) yet we are not justified by any of these alone.”<sup>85</sup> Therefore, blood has to be a synecdoche. It is also incomplete, according to Downname, to say that we are justified only by remission of sins which covers both sins

---

<sup>80</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 27.

<sup>81</sup> The main issue that Downname seeks to correct in Forbes is that the latter believes that only passive obedience was prefigured in the types and figures of the Law as well as represented in the sacraments. Thus, only passive obedience is our righteousness. Cf. Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 37-39. For the opinion of Forbes on active obedience, see Forbes, *A Treatise tending to cleare the Doctrine of Ivstification*, 93-110.

<sup>82</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 36.

<sup>83</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 29, 31.

<sup>84</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 32-33.

<sup>85</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 36.

“one” (εὖος) in the passage functions pronominally, pointing to the man, rather than adjectivally, pointing to the act.<sup>80</sup> Downname responds directly to John Forbes (†1634),<sup>81</sup> but most of his discussion on active obedience is against “the principall authour of this Novelty,” by which he means Piscator.<sup>82</sup> To the objection that Christ’s obedience frees us from the obligation of obeying the law ourselves, and to the objection that Christ was obliged to obey for himself, Downname follows Perkins in similar arguments.<sup>83</sup> To the latter, though, he adds at least one more element. He regards the dignity of Christ’s person to be due not only to his flawless humanity, but much more to the virtue of his divinity. The suffering and the obedience of God, according to Downname, is what provides us with freedom from hell and entitlement to the kingdom of heaven.<sup>84</sup>

Downname also responds to Piscator’s exegetical arguments. Based on the blood giving us entrance into heaven it is not correct to conclude that by the blood of Christ alone we are justified, “for we have entrance into heaven by his resurrection, ascension, and intercession, (not to speake of his obedience...) yet we are not justified by any of these alone.”<sup>85</sup> Therefore, blood has to be a synecdoche. It is also incomplete, according to Downname, to say that we are justified only by remission of sins which covers both sins

---

<sup>80</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 27.

<sup>81</sup> The main issue that Downname seeks to correct in Forbes is that the latter believes that only passive obedience was prefigured in the types and figures of the Law as well as represented in the sacraments. Thus, only passive obedience is our righteousness. Cf. Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 37-39. For the opinion of Forbes on active obedience, see Forbes, *A Treatise tending to cleare the Doctrine of Ivstification*, 93-110.

<sup>82</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 36.

<sup>83</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 29, 31.

<sup>84</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 32-33.

<sup>85</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 36.

of omission and commission. This argument falsely concludes that righteousness is merely privation of guilt, that being innocent is equal to being just.<sup>86</sup> “The proposition is not generally and necessarily true, for wee may conceive a man to bee innocent, who is not just: for innocency is but an absence of sinne, not importing a presence of righteousness. Infants if they were cleare from originall sinne, were innocent, but not just.”<sup>87</sup> This is why Downname poses the necessity of two parts of justification, absolution from sin and acceptation as righteous in Christ.<sup>88</sup>

Though these two authors, Perkins and Downname, represent the typical irenic opposition to Piscator’s teaching in the British Isles, this doctrine received considerable attention in a heated controversy that reached its peak in the early 1640s.<sup>89</sup> Among the main characters were Anthony Wotton (1561?-1626), George Walker (1582?-1651), Thomas Gataker (1574-1654), and John Goodwin (c.1594-1665). The controversy started in the 1610s,<sup>90</sup> when young George Walker claimed Socinian tendencies of older minister Anthony Wotton on justification. Some believed Walker’s charge to be improper. When

---

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Forbes, *A Treatise tending to cleare the Doctrine of Ivstification*, 105-106.

<sup>87</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 35-36.

<sup>88</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 47. This language of absolution and acceptance is also used by Calvin, as has been shown by William Cunningham. See chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>89</sup> This controversy is yet to be explored in depth in its theological arguments and counter arguments. For observations on some of its theology and ecclesiastical politics, see Thomas Jackson, *The Life of John Goodwin* (London: Longman, 1822), 27-54; H. John McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1951), 45-51; Michael P. Winship, “Contesting Control of Orthodoxy among the Godly: William Pynchon Reexamined,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (Oct. 1997): 800-803; Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker’s Revenge: ‘Orthodoxy’, ‘Heterodoxy’ and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2001), 221-246.

<sup>90</sup> For Walker’s version of their confrontation see George Walker, *A true relation of the chiefe passages betweene Mr. Anthony Wotton, and Mr. George Walker, in the yeare of our Lord 1611 and in the yeares next following until 1615* (London: William Branch, 1642). For a version favorable to Wotton see Samuel Wotton (ed), *Mr. Anthony Wotton’s defence against Mr. George Walker’s charge, accusing him of Socinian heresie and blasphemie* (Cambridge: printed by Roger Daniel, 1641).

of omission and commission. This argument falsely concludes that righteousness is merely privation of guilt, that being innocent is equal to being just.<sup>86</sup> “The proposition is not generally and necessarily true, for wee may conceive a man to bee innocent, who is not just: for innocency is but an absence of sinne, not importing a presence of righteousness. Infants if they were cleare from originall sinne, were innocent, but not just.”<sup>87</sup> This is why Downname poses the necessity of two parts of justification, absolution from sin and acceptation as righteous in Christ.<sup>88</sup>

Though these two authors, Perkins and Downname, represent the typical irenic opposition to Piscator’s teaching in the British Isles, this doctrine received considerable attention in a heated controversy that reached its peak in the early 1640s.<sup>89</sup> Among the main characters were Anthony Wotton (1561?-1626), George Walker (1582?-1651), Thomas Gataker (1574-1654), and John Goodwin (c.1594-1665). The controversy started in the 1610s,<sup>90</sup> when young George Walker claimed Socinian tendencies of older minister Anthony Wotton on justification. Some believed Walker’s charge to be improper. When

---

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Forbes, *A Treatise tending to cleare the Doctrine of Ivstification*, 105-106.

<sup>87</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 35-36.

<sup>88</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 47. This language of absolution and acceptance is also used by Calvin, as has been shown by William Cunningham. See chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>89</sup> This controversy is yet to be explored in depth in its theological arguments and counter arguments. For observations on some of its theology and ecclesiastical politics, see Thomas Jackson, *The Life of John Goodwin* (London: Longman, 1822), 27-54; H. John McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1951), 45-51; Michael P. Winship, “Contesting Control of Orthodoxy among the Godly: William Pynchon Reexamined,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (Oct. 1997): 800-803; Peter Lake, *The Boxmaker’s Revenge: ‘Orthodoxy’, ‘Heterodoxy’ and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2001), 221-246.

<sup>90</sup> For Walker’s version of their confrontation see George Walker, *A true relation of the chiefe passages betweene Mr. Anthony Wotton, and Mr. George Walker, in the yeare of our Lord 1611 and in the yeares next following until 1615* (London: William Branch, 1642). For a version favorable to Wotton see Samuel Wotton (ed), *Mr. Anthony Wotton’s defence against Mr. George Walker’s charge, accusing him of Socinian heresie and blasphemie* (Cambridge: printed by Roger Daniel, 1641).

there was a confrontation between the two before a panel of eight divines — four to be chosen by each party — who would assess Walker's accusation of Wotton being a Socinian, all eight subscribed to a final decision where they stated Wotton's doctrine of justification to be different from theirs but not to a point of being considered heretical.<sup>91</sup>

Wotton had made his teachings open to the public through pamphlets written in English,<sup>92</sup> sermons, and a Latin work entitled *De Reconciliatione* (Basel, 1624).<sup>93</sup>

Wotton's teachings on justification are summarized by Walker in three points:

he First utterly renounced the Law, in whole and part performed by ourselves, or any other in our stead, for the justifying of us in the sight of God. Secondly, rejected as a mere device of our late Divines, the imputation of Christs righteousness and satisfaction, not onely his habituall righteousness, but also his whole obedience, both active and passive; and affirmed it to be a thing whereof there was no testimony or proof in Scripture, nor any necessary end or use thereof. Thirdly, he professed and undertook to prove, that Faith, even the act of beleiving and trusting in Christ for salvation after a generall and confused manner, as a favourite of God, and not as a perfect satisfier of his justice and just Law; is that which God accounts and accepts for righteousness to justification, instead of righteousness and perfect obedience performed to the will and Law of God, either by Christ or ourselves.<sup>94</sup>

The third point is a demonstration of Wotton's Arminian tendencies<sup>95</sup> which will not be explored here.<sup>96</sup> But the first two points concern the debate over active obedience. All

---

<sup>91</sup> Walker, *A true relation*, 21.

<sup>92</sup> "Mr. Wotton in his papers which he dispersed in this Citie, and which he acknowledged to be his owne when I brought them to his face before Mr. Gataker and eight other grave Ministers, doth deny the imputation of the whole obedience of Christ, to the Law of God; both active and passive, both joyntly and severally." Walker, *A true relation*, 1-2.

<sup>93</sup> Walker, *A true relation*, 4 and 25. For a collection of citations of Wotton's own words concerning active obedience see Samuel Wotton, *Mr. Anthony Wotton's defence against Mr. George Walker's charge*, 11-34. Anthony Wotton proclaims himself to follow Piscator in regards to acknowledging remission of sins to be the whole of justification and also renouncing that the law is performed by us or someone in our stead for justification. Wotton differs from Piscator, however, in his concept of imputation as well as in the distinction he makes between the formal cause and the meritorious cause of justification.

<sup>94</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, A3v-A4r.

<sup>95</sup> McLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England*, 48-49.

there was a confrontation between the two before a panel of eight divines — four to be chosen by each party — who would assess Walker's accusation of Wotton being a Socinian, all eight subscribed to a final decision where they stated Wotton's doctrine of justification to be different from theirs but not to a point of being considered heretical.<sup>91</sup>

Wotton had made his teachings open to the public through pamphlets written in English,<sup>92</sup> sermons, and a Latin work entitled *De Reconciliatione* (Basel, 1624).<sup>93</sup>

Wotton's teachings on justification are summarized by Walker in three points:

he First utterly renounced the Law, in whole and part performed by ourselves, or any other in our stead, for the justifying of us in the sight of God. Secondly, rejected as a mere device of our late Divines, the imputation of Christs righteousnesse and satisfaction, not onely his habituall righteousnesse, but also his whole obedience, both active and passive; and affirmed it to be a thing whereof there was no testimony or proof in Scripture, nor any necessary end or use thereof. Thirdly, he professed and undertook to prove, that Faith, even the act of beleeving and trusting in Christ for salvation after a generall and confused manner, as a favourite of God, and not as a perfect satisfier of his justice and just Law; is that which God accounts and accepts for righteousnesse to justification, instead of righteousnesse and perfect obedience performed to the will and Law of God, either by Christ or ourselves.<sup>94</sup>

The third point is a demonstration of Wotton's Arminian tendencies<sup>95</sup> which will not be explored here.<sup>96</sup> But the first two points concern the debate over active obedience. All

---

<sup>91</sup> Walker, *A true relation*, 21.

<sup>92</sup> "Mr. Wotton in his papers which he dispersed in this Citie, and which he acknowledged to be his owne when I brought them to his face before Mr. Gataker and eight other grave Ministers, doth deny the imputation of the whole obedience of Christ, to the Law of God; both active and passive, both joyntly and severally." Walker, *A true relation*, 1-2.

<sup>93</sup> Walker, *A true relation*, 4 and 25. For a collection of citations of Wotton's own words concerning active obedience see Samuel Wotton, *Mr. Anthony Wotton's defence against Mr. George Walker's charge*, 11-34. Anthony Wotton proclaims himself to follow Piscator in regards to acknowledging remission of sins to be the whole of justification and also renouncing that the law is performed by us or someone in our stead for justification. Wotton differs from Piscator, however, in his concept of imputation as well as in the distinction he makes between the formal cause and the meritorious cause of justification.

<sup>94</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, A3v-A4r.

<sup>95</sup> McLachlan, *Socianianism in Seventeenth-Century England*, 48-49.

three points are connected to Wotton's nuanced understanding of imputation, which will be explained later. Because of some overlap of ideas between Arminians and Socinians, and the Socinian denial of vicariousness of Christ's righteousness which resulted in a refusal of the imputation of active obedience,<sup>97</sup> a polemicist such as Walker chose to use strong labels for Wotton such as 'Socinian'. In fact, even decades after the panel ruled that Wotton was not a Socinian, Walker continued to charge Wotton and his followers with the same heresy.<sup>98</sup>

In the late 1630s, Walker contended that John Goodwin had resurrected Wotton's ideas in his preaching. Because of the 'silence' of the press and political oppression during the strict ecclesiastical administration of Archbishop William Laud, published treatises did not come out until 1641. But when they started being published, a series of them were sent to the press in the next two years. The series of books involved not only

---

<sup>96</sup> For a discussion of these ideas in James Arminius and furthered by Richard Baxter, see Heber Carlos de Campos Júnior, "O Lugar da Fé e da Obediência na Justificação: Um Apanhado Histórico das Discussões Reformadas do Século XVII," *Fides Reformata* 13, no. 1 (Jan-Jun 2008): 53-69.

<sup>97</sup> For a summary of these ideas in Faustus Socinus, see Franks, *A History of The Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, 364-373.

<sup>98</sup> This is obvious from his 1641 treatise entitled *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*. The labels came from the other side of the controversy as well. Goodwin returned the criticism and claimed that Walker's opinion was more Socinian than his. Cf. Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, II.187-189. Besides the label of Socinian, Goodwin and his followers regarded Walker's position to be Antinomian because according to their logic, by stressing Christ's obedience of the law in our behalf Walker was eliminating our obligation to obey. Cf. Jackson, *The Life of John Goodwin*, 32; Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, I.153-155. Though active obedience imputed was a commonality between Walker and the Antinomians, such label is as inaccurate as "Socinian" for Wotton or Goodwin. After all, both sides of the active obedience debate (e.g. Thomas Gataker and Anthony Burgess) reacted in print against the Antinomian movement in England. This should qualify any careless emphasis on the fear of Antinomianism being a major spur for the denial of active obedience imputed among English divines. The presence of Antinomianism in London, in the 1640s, should be noted as an important context but not a determining factor for the rise of some opponents to the doctrine of active obedience. It is important to note that the "Antinomian" objection goes back to Piscator and it comes up in several localities and times when there is no Antinomian movement. For the connection between Antinomianism and the active obedience debate, see Van Dixhoorn, "Reforming the Reformation," I.276-282, 307-309; Jeffrey K. Jue, "The Active Obedience of Christ and the Theology of the Westminster Standards: A Historical Investigation," in *Justified in Christ: God's Plan for Us in Justification*, ed. K. Scott Oliphint (Geanies House, Fearn: Mentor, 2007), 119-120.

three points are connected to Wotton's nuanced understanding of imputation, which will be explained later. Because of some overlap of ideas between Arminians and Socinians, and the Socinian denial of vicariousness of Christ's righteousness which resulted in a refusal of the imputation of active obedience,<sup>97</sup> a polemicist such as Walker chose to use strong labels for Wotton such as 'Socinian'. In fact, even decades after the panel ruled that Wotton was not a Socinian, Walker continued to charge Wotton and his followers with the same heresy.<sup>98</sup>

In the late 1630s, Walker contended that John Goodwin had resurrected Wotton's ideas in his preaching. Because of the 'silence' of the press and political oppression during the strict ecclesiastical administration of Archbishop William Laud, published treatises did not come out until 1641. But when they started being published, a series of them were sent to the press in the next two years. The series of books involved not only

---

<sup>96</sup> For a discussion of these ideas in James Arminius and furthered by Richard Baxter, see Heber Carlos de Campos Júnior, "O Lugar da Fé e da Obediência na Justificação: Um Apanhado Histórico das Discussões Reformadas do Século XVII," *Fides Reformata* 13, no. 1 (Jan-Jun 2008): 53-69.

<sup>97</sup> For a summary of these ideas in Faustus Socinus, see Franks, *A History of The Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, 364-373.

<sup>98</sup> This is obvious from his 1641 treatise entitled *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*. The labels came from the other side of the controversy as well. Goodwin returned the criticism and claimed that Walker's opinion was more Socinian than his. Cf. Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, II.187-189. Besides the label of Socinian, Goodwin and his followers regarded Walker's position to be Antinomian because according to their logic, by stressing Christ's obedience of the law in our behalf Walker was eliminating our obligation to obey. Cf. Jackson, *The Life of John Goodwin*, 32; Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, I.153-155. Though active obedience imputed was a commonality between Walker and the Antinomians, such label is as inaccurate as "Socinian" for Wotton or Goodwin. After all, both sides of the active obedience debate (e.g. Thomas Gataker and Anthony Burgess) reacted in print against the Antinomian movement in England. This should qualify any careless emphasis on the fear of Antinomianism being a major spur for the denial of active obedience imputed among English divines. The presence of Antinomianism in London, in the 1640s, should be noted as an important context but not a determining factor for the rise of some opponents to the doctrine of active obedience. It is important to note that the "Antinomian" objection goes back to Piscator and it comes up in several localities and times when there is no Antinomian movement. For the connection between Antinomianism and the active obedience debate, see Van Dixhoorn, "Reforming the Reformation," 1.276-282, 307-309; Jeffrey K. Jue, "The Active Obedience of Christ and the Theology of the Westminster Standards: A Historical Investigation," in *Justified in Christ: God's Plan for Us in Justification*, ed. K. Scott Oliphint (Geanies House, Fearn: Mentor, 2007), 119-120.

Walker and Goodwin, but also Thomas Gataker who stood up to defend Anthony Wotton from Walker's accusations.<sup>99</sup> Since the works are too numerous to survey them all, only certain teachings selected from some of the major works will be highlighted here.

We start with George Walker's *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*. The notion that the Evangelical covenant requires faith in the same way that the Legal covenant requires perfect obedience<sup>100</sup> was an equivalence in conditions that Walker could not withhold.<sup>101</sup> He sustains the eternality of the law which requires it to be fulfilled whether by us or by a surety in our behalf.<sup>102</sup> He connects the satisfaction of Christ to the legal righteousness, though to us it is evangelical righteousness.<sup>103</sup> He believes that justification is composed of deliverance into condemnation and acceptance

---

<sup>99</sup> The order of the works here suggested do not follow exactly but is mainly in accordance with Packer, *The Redemption & Restoration of Man in the thought of Richard Baxter*, 246, footnote 16. A comrade of Goodwin published *Christ lifted up, or, The head of the chief Controverted Points, Preached by Mr. John Goodwin* (1641). Walker wrote *A Defence of The Trve Sence and Meaning of the Words of the Holy Apostle Rom. Chap. 4. Vers. 3. 5. 9* (1641) against Goodwin and the latter responded with *Impedit ira animum, or Animadversions vpon some of the looser and fovler passages in... A Defence of the Trve Sence* (1641). Walker, then, countered with *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification* (1641), where Walker shows that Goodwin was not original but was merely stealing Wotton's ideas. Gataker then came in defense of Wotton by writing the postscript of *Mr. Anthony Wotton's defence against Mr. George Walker's charge* (1641). Gataker also wrote *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis, Scripta quaedam adversaria; de causâ meritoriâ nostrî coram Deo justificationis: unâ cum Thomae Gatakeri Londinatis Animadversionibus in utraque* (1641) where his objections to Ludovicus Lucius were a manner to indirectly undermine the position held by Walker. Walker's reply to the Wotton/Gataker work was *A true relation of the chiefe passages betweene Mr. Anthony Wotton, and Mr. George Walker* (1642), and Gataker's response was *An answer to Mr. Walker's Vindication* (1642). Goodwin still wrote *Imputatio Fidei, or, A treatise of justification* (1642) against Walker and those who held the same opinions.

<sup>100</sup> Wotton, *Mr. Anthony Wotton's defence against Mr. George Walker's charge*, 15-16, 29.

<sup>101</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 223-226.

<sup>102</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 28.

<sup>103</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 30-31.

Walker and Goodwin, but also Thomas Gataker who stood up to defend Anthony Wotton from Walker's accusations.<sup>99</sup> Since the works are too numerous to survey them all, only certain teachings selected from some of the major works will be highlighted here.

We start with George Walker's *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*. The notion that the Evangelical covenant requires faith in the same way that the Legal covenant requires perfect obedience<sup>100</sup> was an equivalence in conditions that Walker could not withhold.<sup>101</sup> He sustains the eternality of the law which requires it to be fulfilled whether by us or by a surety in our behalf.<sup>102</sup> He connects the satisfaction of Christ to the legal righteousness, though to us it is evangelical righteousness.<sup>103</sup> He believes that justification is composed of deliverance into condemnation and acceptance

---

<sup>99</sup> The order of the works here suggested do not follow exactly but is mainly in accordance with Packer, *The Redemption & Restoration of Man in the thought of Richard Baxter*, 246, footnote 16. A comrade of Goodwin published *Christ lifted up, or, The head sof the chief Controverted Points, Preached by Mr. John Goodwin* (1641). Walker wrote *A Defence of The Trve Sence and Meaning of the Words of the Holy Apostle Rom. Chap. 4. Vers. 3. 5. 9* (1641) against Goodwin and the latter responded with *Impedit ira animum, or Animadversions vpon some of the looser and fovler passages in... A Defence of the Trve Sence* (1641). Walker, then, countered with *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification* (1641), where Walker shows that Goodwin was not original but was merely stealing Wotton's ideas. Gataker then came in defense of Wotton by writing the postscript of *Mr. Anthony Wotton's defence against Mr. George Walker's charge* (1641). Gataker also wrote *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis, Scripta quaedam adversaria; de causâ meritoriâ nostrî coram Deo justificationis: unâ cum Thomae Gatakeri Londinatis Animadversionibus in utraque* (1641) where his objections to Ludovicus Lucius were a manner to indirectly undermine the position held by Walker. Walker's reply to the Wotton/Gataker work was *A true relation of the chiefe passages betweene Mr. Anthony Wotton, and Mr. George Walker* (1642), and Gataker's response was *An answer to Mr. Walker's Vindication* (1642). Goodwin still wrote *Imputatio Fidei, or, A treatise of justification* (1642) against Walker and those who held the same opinions.

<sup>100</sup> Wotton, *Mr. Anthony Wotton's defence against Mr. George Walker's charge*, 15-16, 29.

<sup>101</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 223-226.

<sup>102</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 28.

<sup>103</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 30-31.

into favor with God.<sup>104</sup> Against the Arminian notion that God reckons our faith as if it were righteousness and justifies without the perfect fulfilling of the law, Walker states:

though God doth not purpose to justifie men by their owne fulfilling of the law, every one in his owne person: yet by *Christs* righteousnesse and his fulfilling of the Law in their stead, and by communicating and imputing that righteousnesse to them, he purposeth in the Gospell, and professeth that men shall bee and are by him iustified, and this is in *Christ* such a righteousnesse as the Law requires, for proove of this see Rom. 8.4. and 10.4.<sup>105</sup>

Wotton, and Goodwin with him, believed that Christ's righteousness was the meritorious cause of justification,<sup>106</sup> but only in the sense in which it merited God's favor was it imputed, not in the sense of being communicated or imparted. Christ earned God's grace and favor, but his righteousness was not properly ours. We only receive the benefits of Christ's righteousness. Christ's righteousness is, by a metonymy of the cause for the effect, used to signify the fruit and effect of it in us. So, Wotton interpreted imputation as expressed by Luther, Calvin, Musculus and the rest of the Reformation tradition in a rather strict and qualified way.<sup>107</sup> Walker calls it "a new, and strange imputation of *Christs* righteousnesse."<sup>108</sup> After all, we are righteous by faith in a proper sense. We do not merely receive God's favor as a benefit of Christ's righteousness. We receive righteousness itself by imputation, and consequently come into God's favor.<sup>109</sup> "For God whose judgment is according to truth, cannot judge, and count us righteous, till hee hath communicated *Christs* righteousnesse to us, and by it, constituted, and made us righteous;

<sup>104</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 57.

<sup>105</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 59-60.

<sup>106</sup> Wotton, *Mr. Anthony Wotton's defence against Mr. George Walker's charge*, 18, 22.

<sup>107</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 81-86, 134.

<sup>108</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 88.

<sup>109</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 92, 94.

into favor with God.<sup>104</sup> Against the Arminian notion that God reckons our faith as if it were righteousness and justifies without the perfect fulfilling of the law, Walker states:

though God doth not purpose to justifie men by their owne fulfilling of the law, every one in his owne person: yet by *Christs* righteousnesse and his fulfilling of the Law in their stead, and by communicating and imputing that righteousnesse to them, he purposeth in the Gospell, and professeth that men shall bee and are by him iustified, and this is in *Christ* such a righteousnesse as the Law requires, for proove of this see Rom. 8.4. and 10.4.<sup>105</sup>

Wotton, and Goodwin with him, believed that Christ's righteousness was the meritorious cause of justification,<sup>106</sup> but only in the sense in which it merited God's favor was it imputed, not in the sense of being communicated or imparted. Christ earned God's grace and favor, but his righteousness was not properly ours. We only receive the benefits of Christ's righteousness. Christ's righteousness is, by a metonymy of the cause for the effect, used to signify the fruit and effect of it in us. So, Wotton interpreted imputation as expressed by Luther, Calvin, Musculus and the rest of the Reformation tradition in a rather strict and qualified way.<sup>107</sup> Walker calls it "a new, and strange imputation of *Christs* righteousnesse."<sup>108</sup> After all, we are righteous by faith in a proper sense. We do not merely receive God's favor as a benefit of Christ's righteousness. We receive righteousness itself by imputation, and consequently come into God's favor.<sup>109</sup> "For God whose judgment is according to truth, cannot judge, and count us righteous, till hee hath communicated *Christs* righteousnesse to us, and by it, constituted, and made us righteous;

---

<sup>104</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 57.

<sup>105</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 59-60.

<sup>106</sup> Wotton, *Mr. Anthony Wotton's defence against Mr. George Walker's charge*, 18, 22.

<sup>107</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 81-86, 134.

<sup>108</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 88.

<sup>109</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 92, 94.

which when we by faith, receive... then God accounts us righteous.”<sup>110</sup> No one can have the merit and benefit of Christ’s righteousness, unless there is propriety in having it.<sup>111</sup>

Walker corrects his adversary saying that the doctrine of active obedience imputed never held that God reckons men to have performed in their own persons the obedience Christ performed to the law.<sup>112</sup> We are not accounted righteous by legal performance in our own persons, but by communion and imputation. Then, Walker qualifies the difference between Christ being righteous and men being righteous, though still affirming that his righteousness becomes theirs: “And though the righteousness by which they are justified, is the very same which is in Christ, and which hee performed, yet it doth not follow, that they thereby are as fully righteous as Christ himself, for he is originally righteous, by his owne personall righteousness, as the justifier; they are righteous by communion, and imputation, as justified.”<sup>113</sup> Christ’s righteous obedience is not only the meritorious, but also the material cause of their justification.<sup>114</sup>

John Goodwin’s *Imputatio Fidei*, though written prior to his formal move towards Arminianism, contains the hints of Arminius’s theology even on matters of justification.<sup>115</sup> Goodwin believes that faith is imputed for righteousness in a proper, not a

---

<sup>110</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 98.

<sup>111</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 104.

<sup>112</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 129.

<sup>113</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 130.

<sup>114</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 140.

<sup>115</sup> More, “John Goodwin and the Origins of the New Arminianism,” 52, 56.

metaphorical or metonymical sense.<sup>116</sup> Another Arminian tendency arises when he argues that we can't be formally righteous by the righteousness of Christ because by parallel we would have to be formally sinful by God's imputation of Adam's sin, which can't be because it would make God the author of sin.<sup>117</sup>

Concerning his rejection of the imputation of Christ's active obedience, Goodwin has similar concerns as Piscator had. He identifies remission of sins with the entirety of justification<sup>118</sup> and judges that nowhere in Scripture can one find support for the teaching of active obedience imputed.<sup>119</sup> He claims that the law was never intended to be that righteousness with which we should be justified even if performed by another,<sup>120</sup> he thinks such imputation challenges the necessity of Christ's death,<sup>121</sup> he classifies Christ's obedience to the moral law as part of his personal righteousness (*justitia personae*) – not his meritorious righteousness of mediator (*justitia meriti*) – with which only he is

---

<sup>116</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, I.21-44; cf. James Arminius, *The Works of James Arminius*, trans. James Nichols (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 1:697-700; idem, *The Works of James Arminius*, 2:701-702.

<sup>117</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, I.173-174. Michael Winship writes of the Arminians: "Denial of imputation was a logical, if not a major, part of their effort to enlarge human agency within a predestinarian framework and thereby avoid implicating God as the author of sin." Winship, "Contesting Control of Orthodoxy among the Godly," 800.

<sup>118</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, I.118-135.

<sup>119</sup> For his detailed discussion of the major texts alleged to support active obedience imputed, see Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, II.122-174.

<sup>120</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, I.55-68. In the preface, Goodwin writes: "that distinction which you commonly make, between the law or workes of the law, as performed by your selves, and as performed by another (meaning Christ), to salve the danger (as you conceive) of your being justified by the Law, is but a devise of humane wisdom at the best, and no where warranted, much lesse necessitated unto, in the Scriptures." Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, d4r.

<sup>121</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, I.149, II.188.

declared righteous,<sup>122</sup> and, lastly, Goodwin believes that there is no medium between absolution from sin and perfect righteousness.<sup>123</sup>

At least two of his arguments demonstrate novelty in relation to Piscator's reasoning. First, he uses the argument, probably taken from Gataker, that if one makes the active righteousness of Christ necessary in order to have the right and title to eternal life, then it frustrates the purpose of adoption which is to make us heirs to eternal life.<sup>124</sup> Secondly, Goodwin believes his opponents confuse the two covenants. Goodwin shows an interesting connection of the covenants in his adversaries when they

conceive that God never made more covenants then one, with man: and that the Gospell is nothing else but a gracious aide or reliefe from God, to helpe man out with the performance of the first Covenant of works: so that life and salvation which is said to come by Christ, shall in no other sense be said to come by him, but only as he fulfilled that Law of works for man... so that they in the right of this perfect obedience, thus made theirs by imputation, shall come to inherit life and salvation, according to the strict and rigid tenor of the Covenant of works, *Doe this and live.*<sup>125</sup>

The reason why this is a theological confusion, for Goodwin, is because the two covenants have opposite conditions: 'do this' and 'to believe', or works and faith. The

---

<sup>122</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, II.45-50. James Usher is one who rejected the argument that Christ was obliged to obey the law for himself. In a sermon preached in 1640 he demonstrated both the active and the passive obedience to be intertwined in Christ's commitment to obey the Father. After quoting John 10:17, he observes: "He was not humbled as a meer patient; but he humbled himself... and in all his passive obedience he had an eye to do the Will of God. The merit of his passive obedience ariseth from a mixture with his active." Later he quotes the very next verse and rebukes: "They are grosly deceived then, that say Christs active obedience was not free and voluntary, because he was commanded: for as well may they say, his passive is not voluntary, and so not meritorious, because it likewise was commanded, which none can deny." Usher, *Eighteen Sermons Preached in Oxford 1640*, 372-373.

<sup>123</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, II.3-4. Gataker had made that point quite forcefully prior to Goodwin. Cf. Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 144; Thomas Gataker, *An Antidote Against Errour, Concerning Justification*, ed. Charles Gataker (London: J.C., 1670), 19-20.

<sup>124</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, I.139-141. Even before Goodwin and Gataker used it, there is a hint of this argument in Piscator's 1586 letter to Beza. See the quotation in chapter 5, section 2.

<sup>125</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, I.154.

novelty of Goodwin's doctrine in relation to Piscator is not that the former establishes a condition for the Covenant of grace, for so does Piscator. The novelty is that by rejecting the judiciary sense of justification in a similar fashion as Grotius rejected<sup>126</sup> – where the judge is bound to give sentence according to the rule of the law instead of being able to will remission from the penalty<sup>127</sup> – and by establishing that Christ's righteousness is not properly imputed,<sup>128</sup> he creates a new sense of imputation (following Wotton) where faith gains the sole status of propriety.<sup>129</sup>

Concerning Gataker, though he did side with Piscator against those who preached that Christ's active obedience was imputed, he attempted to devise a unique way of understanding justification.<sup>130</sup> He believed that neither those who taught that justification was equivalent with remission of sins like Piscator and Wotton, nor those who believed justification to consist of two parts were correct. Justification is not equivalent with remission of sins because the latter is a consequence of the former, and remission also is an act of mercy whereas justification is a work of justice based on satisfaction. Furthermore, justification cannot have two parts because not to impute sin is no other thing than to impute righteousness. Though Gataker's position contains the forensic

---

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Hugo Grotius, *Defensus Fidei Catholicae de Satisfactione Christi, Adversus Faustum Socinum Senensem: Scripta ab Hugone Grotio. Cum Gerardi Iohannis Vossii ad Iudicium Hermanni Ravenspergeri de Hoc Libro Responsione* (Oxford: Guilielmus Webb, 1636).

<sup>127</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, I.1-2.

<sup>128</sup> “so may a believer be said to be cloathed with the righteousnes of Christ, and yet the righteousnesse of Christ it selfe not be his cloathing, but only that which procured this cloathing unto him.” Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, I.17.

<sup>129</sup> Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, I.14-15. For a summary of some of Goodwin's views on active obedience, see John Goodwin, *Banner of Justification Displayed: or; A Discourse, Concerning the Deep, and Important Mystery of the Justification of a Sinner* (London: E.C., 1659), 19-20.

<sup>130</sup> Gataker, *An Antidote Against Errour, Concerning Justification*, 6-39.

element which is characteristic of the Protestant doctrine of justification, and though on active obedience he is fairly close to the first group, his intention of creating a third position demonstrates the complexity of the debate concerning the imputation of righteousness just prior to the Westminster Assembly which met from 1643 to 1652. On the other hand, Walker and Gataker are joined by other divines in the Assembly on a debate characterized by two major groups. Third ways and minor differences did not play a major role as two conglomerates of theologians polarized the discussion at Westminster.<sup>131</sup>

### 6.3.b. The Westminster Assembly of Divines

In the summer of 1643 (more precisely from September 5<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup>), while the Thirty-Nine Articles were being revised, the Assembly was devoted to the issue of justification by faith. Most of the discussion was about the expression “whole obedience” being attached to article eleven, on justification. This debate is better known for the words of Daniel Featley, one of the divines present at the Assembly, which were printed in two different books.<sup>132</sup> Featley’s five speeches are the main source used by Alexander Mitchell to survey what the discussion was about and how it proceeded to its outcome.<sup>133</sup> These speeches are a great example of Featley’s clear distinctions such as our three types

---

<sup>131</sup> Van Dixhoorn, “Reforming the Reformation,” I.337.

<sup>132</sup> They were first printed in Daniel Featley, *Sacra Nemesis, The Levites Scourge* (Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, 1644), 20-47, and then in idem, *The Dippers dipt, or, The Anabaptists Duck'd and Plung'd Over Head and Ears, at a Disputation in Southwark* (London: N. B. and Richard Royston, 1647), 187-216. Future references to these lectures will be made from both works.

<sup>133</sup> Alexander F. Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly: Its History and Standards*, The Baird Lecture for 1882, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1897), 150-160; Alex F. Mitchell and John Struthers, eds., *Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), lxxv-lxxvii.

of righteousness,<sup>134</sup> or when he affirms that both kinds of obedience in Christ (a general obedience performed to the whole law and a special obedience of laying down his life) have to be “for us” not only *bono nostro* (for our good) but also *loco nostro* (in our place),<sup>135</sup> or even when he says that in criminal justice to be innocent and to be just are the same thing but that in civil justice a guiltless man is not necessarily a deserving man.<sup>136</sup> However, Van Dixhoorn has pointed out that reliance on this single source provides a partial picture of the debate, for the printed speeches corrected spoken mistakes and provided a triumphant perspective on the effect of Featley’s participations.<sup>137</sup> Hence, Van Dixhoorn’s transcription of the Minutes in its entirety allows for a more comprehensive picture of the debate.

Article eleven originally said that “we are accompted righteous before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” and the committee’s proposal for change was: “we are accounted righteous before God onely for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ sake, his whole obedience and satisfaction being by God imputed unto us.” The expression “whole obedience” intended to include both the active and the passive

---

<sup>134</sup> Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 20-21; *The Dippers Dipt*, 193. This is a different distinction from the one presented by Beza. He speaks first of a perfect but not inherent righteousness (by which we are justified; it includes Christ’s active and passive obedience), then of an inherent but not perfect righteousness (by which we are sanctified), and thirdly a perfect and inherent righteousness (by which we are glorified). Featley points to Beza’s threefold remedy, but he appears to follow Andre Rivetus when the latter observed that Christ’s original righteousness “was not properly the work of Christ, but of the holy Ghost sanctifying him in the womb, and in that regard not to be imputed to us as any act of our mediator.” Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 36; *The Dippers Dipt*, 205.

<sup>135</sup> Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 23-24; *The Dippers Dipt*, 195-196.

<sup>136</sup> Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 32-35; *The Dippers Dipt*, 202-204. Featley says that whosoever is freed from eternal death is stated in eternal life, yet it does not follow that there is the same cause for both. Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 26; *The Dippers Dipt*, 197.

<sup>137</sup> Van Dixhoorn, “Reforming the Reformation,” I.287-288.

obedience.<sup>138</sup> A survey of the main arguments raised in the discussion over active obedience, which lasted from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, should allow the reader to see what was being repeated and thus solidifying as peculiar arguments of one side or the other, and what nuances were being brought forth.<sup>139</sup> This survey will focus on three aspects: the Christological issue, some exegetical questions, and the structure of the covenants.<sup>140</sup>

Richard Vines does not deny that the whole obedience of Christ is related to our redemption, but the whole of the obedience is not imputed to us. Christ's acts of obedience made him the spotless lamb, but the sacrifice is only in the blood. Just as Christ's purity of nature – which Osiander believed to be ours – cooperates for our redemption but is not imputed to us, so should we conclude about his life of obedience.<sup>141</sup> Gataker proceeded in the same Anselmian doctrine affirming that Christ as a man was under the duty of creature towards its Creator. Only the voluntary aspect of his obedience, i.e. his suffering, can have satisfactory value.<sup>142</sup> On the other side of the spectrum, Charles Herle said it was a mistake to affirm that Christ merited something for himself, for the active obedience was part of the mediatorship. Herle also noted that the obligation to the law occurs between God and a person – not between God and a nature –

---

<sup>138</sup> Van Dixhoorn, "Reforming the Reformation," I.293.

<sup>139</sup> The reference to the minutes comes from volume 3 of Van Dixhoorn's dissertation.

<sup>140</sup> For a more detailed account of the theology of this debate in the Assembly, see Van Dixhoorn, "Reforming the Reformation," I.292-319.

<sup>141</sup> Minutes 1:12v; 1:16r.

<sup>142</sup> Minutes 1:13v.

and the person of Christ is not a creature.<sup>143</sup> Thomas Goodwin added that the text of Galatians 4:4 does not teach that Christ was born under the law, but that he put himself under it (“not *natus* but *factus*”), thus stressing the voluntariness of his obedience to the law.<sup>144</sup> Featley added an interesting argument about the person of Christ in heaven: “because no man will say, that Christ in heaven hath any obligation upon him, yet there he hath his humane nature: that nature therefore, as in him it was hypostatically united to the deitie, was free from all tye in regard of himselfe; what he engaged himself was for us, and to be allowed on our accompt.”<sup>145</sup>

Shifting to some exegetical comments, the Biblical texts that tie justification to the cross were again part of the discussion. Joshua Hoyle said that such Scriptural language of almost always linking justification to the blood of Christ – an argument which had been raised by Vines – was a synecdoche,<sup>146</sup> an argument raised in the days of Piscator but which was becoming rather common. Romans 5 was a passage which came under detailed scrutiny.<sup>147</sup> Vines said the parallel was between one act of disobedience

---

<sup>143</sup> Minutes 1:14r; 1:43v. Featley wrote: “every humane creature *ratione naturae & personae*, that is, such a creature as hath not only humane nature but a humane person also, is bound to fulfill the morall Law for himself: but Christ was not so; he had a humane nature, but no humane person. Now we know, *Lex datur personae*, the Law is given to the person.” Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 32; *The Dippers Dipt*, 202.

<sup>144</sup> Minutes 1:19r. In *Christ the Mediator*, Thomas Goodwin writes of Galatians 4:4-5: “whatever Christ redeemed us from, he was himself made for us; redeeming us from it by being made it. He that made the law, was made under it for us. Both he and we were under the law; but with this difference, we were *born* under it, but he was *made* under it, by a voluntary covenant freely undergoing it.” Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:180.

<sup>145</sup> Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 28; *The Dippers Dipt*, 198-199.

<sup>146</sup> Minutes 1:12v. Featley also has it in his printed speeches. Cf. Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 25; *The Dippers Dipt*, 197.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Van Dixhoorn, “Reforming the Reformation,” 1.310-312.

and one act of obedience, namely, the cross.<sup>148</sup> To counter, Thomas Goodwin showed that verse 17 did not speak of one offering, but of abundance of grace.<sup>149</sup> He still argued that if the disobedience of Adam was both for himself and for those he represented, the same should be said of Christ's obedience.<sup>150</sup> Featley challenged his opponents to find a single verse where δικαιοματι referred to passive obedience.<sup>151</sup>

The last of the topics concerns covenant theology as it connects with Christ's active obedience. Faced with the Scriptural teaching that Christ came to do the will of the Father, Gataker interpreted it not as fulfilling the law – which is the covenant between God and man – but in fulfilling the *pactum* between the Father and the Son. It is not true that 'do this and you will live' – the covenant with Adam before the fall – leads to heaven, for Adam was not promised anything beyond continuing in the state in which he was created. This is what justification does: it elevates us to the state in which Adam was before the fall. For Gataker, the right to heaven was a result of adoption.<sup>152</sup> William Raynor followed Gataker in believing that adoption was what entitled us to heaven.<sup>153</sup> Vines also saw no Scriptural proof to assert that Christ's active obedience was the

---

<sup>148</sup> Minutes 1:12v.

<sup>149</sup> "The comparison is so made, that the gift of righteousness is said to be abundant, not in merit only, but in quantity and number, for the multitude of the acts of righteousness seem to be opposed to the one disobedience of Adam; therefore the alone passive righteousness is not understood; therefore his active is also imputed to us, and in respect of that too he is made righteousness to us." Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:347.

<sup>150</sup> Minutes 1:18r-v.

<sup>151</sup> Minutes 1:37r.

<sup>152</sup> Minutes 1:15r.

<sup>153</sup> Minutes 1:31r.

foundation for the right to heaven.<sup>154</sup> On the other hand, since Thomas Goodwin believed that Christ did not owe obedience as a man, but through the covenant he placed himself under such yoke, then the obedience of Christ as a creature may be imputed.<sup>155</sup> Gataker responded that Christ's desire to be under the law is *ex pacto*, and not part of the price of our ransom.<sup>156</sup> Goodwin's rejoinder differentiated between Adam at the moment of creation (only innocent) and if he had obeyed the law (righteous); he also discerned between the obedience we owe to the law as creatures (which never ceases) and the obedience for life, referencing the promise of life in the covenant of works.<sup>157</sup> Gataker replied saying that the claim that Adam was created innocent but not just is contrary to Scripture which says that he was created in righteousness and true holiness.<sup>158</sup>

After this brief survey of theological topics, a couple of corrections are due to Van Dixhoorn's otherwise helpful report of the discussion. First, he seems unaware of antecedents when he classifies Thomas Goodwin's references to Christ's holy nature –

---

<sup>154</sup> Minutes 1:25v. Van Dixhoorn observes: "Vines suggested that believers are adopted and given a right to heaven because they are sanctified and thus in a sense righteous themselves, and not because of the merits of Christ that are first imputed to them and then seen as their own merits." Van Dixhoorn, "Reforming the Reformation," I.304. This assertion is not clearly stated in the place of the Minutes to which Van Dixhoorn refers. Later in the Minutes, Vines makes a connection between Christ's merit and adoption: "We doe not exclude the merit of Christ; other things besides this are founded in the merit of Christ, as adoption, &c." Minutes 1:25v.

<sup>155</sup> Lightfoot, MS Journal, fo. 28r. John Lightfoot's journal is transcribed in volume 2 of Van Dixhoorn's dissertation.

<sup>156</sup> Minutes 1:34r.

<sup>157</sup> Minutes 1:38r-v. For Goodwin, though, the promise of life within the covenant was not a translating of Adam to a celestial abode, but the continuance of the same happy life he enjoyed in paradise. After all, Adam's covenant was a *foedus naturae* which could only be enjoyed *per modum naturae*. Entrance into the heavenly paradise can only come through the second Adam, the heavenly man. Cf. Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 7:48-53. This shows how even if he differed from the rest of group which defended the imputation of Christ's active obedience, during the debate in the Assembly the complexity of opinions faded into two polarized positions.

<sup>158</sup> Minutes 1:40r.

“The holynesse of Christs nature opposite to the sinfullnesse of our nature” (Minutes 1:18v) and “ther is a holynesse in the nature of Christ that frees me from the law of sin & of death” (Minutes 1:27r) – as careless language that resembles Osiander.<sup>159</sup> Goodwin is reflecting the threefold righteousness of Beza in which the holy conception of Christ is a redemptive correspondent to original sin.<sup>160</sup> Secondly, Van Dixhoorn’s assumption that the position one held concerning Christ’s active obedience led to stress on the covenant of works seems reductionistic and unqualified. He says that those favoring imputation of active obedience almost monopolized covenant of works while those who were against its imputation had little or no place for covenant of works.<sup>161</sup> However, we know that starting with Piscator, many who denied the imputation of Christ’s active obedience had a place for the concept of legal covenant with the condition of perfect obedience and the promise of life, just like the opposing party on active obedience believed. George Walker testifies to this when he writes of Anthony Wotton and his followers: “they argue, that as in the first Covenant, God required workes of the Law performed by every man in his owne person, and this was the condition which man was to performe for iustification, and eternall life...”<sup>162</sup> So the scenario is not so simple to affirm that those who did not adhere to the imputation of Christ’s active obedience had no covenant of works in their theology. What they did not have was a sense of stability of the law that pervaded even the

---

<sup>159</sup> Van Dixhoorn, “Reforming the Reformation,” I.306.

<sup>160</sup> Jeffrey Jue apparently shows the same unawareness when he equates “habitual righteousness” with “active obedience” in the participation of one of the Westminster divines. Jue, “The Active Obedience of Christ and the Theology of the Westminster Standards,” 122, footnote 96.

<sup>161</sup> Van Dixhoorn, “Reforming the Reformation,” I.316-317, 337.

<sup>162</sup> Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 223-224.

covenant of grace, which most in the opposing group were starting to connect to Christ's obedience to the commands.

When the debate at the Assembly came to an end, the majority voted to include the expression "whole obedience" in the eleventh of the Thirty-nine Articles, only three or four dissenting (out of more than one hundred members present).<sup>163</sup> However, the word "whole" did not enter the documents produced by the Assembly in the following years. *The Westminster Confession*, chapter 11, article 1 has "by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them," while article 3 has the pairs "obedience and death" and "obedience and satisfaction." The Larger Catechism has "the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them" (Q/A 70) and also the pair "obedience and death" (Q/A 71).<sup>164</sup>

There is disagreement in the scholarship concerning the implications of this omission. Van Dixhoorn<sup>165</sup> and Kirk<sup>166</sup> argue that the Assembly purposively omitted the language of active obedience and used a language of consensus which could be accepted by different groups. The evidence for this reading of the documents is founded in the interpretations of the Confession right after the Assembly and, especially, the *Savoy Declaration* (1658; written by Thomas Goodwin and John Owen) which was the revision

---

<sup>163</sup> Minutes 1:45r. Van Dixhoorn numbers six, possibly eight, divines who through their speeches on justification appeared to be "against" the imputation of the active obedience of Christ. See the table on Van Dixhoorn, "Reforming the Reformation," I.332-334.

<sup>164</sup> Quotations taken from *The Confession of Faith; the Larger and Shorter Catechisms: With the Scripture Proofs at large; Together With The Sum of Saving Knowledge* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1985).

<sup>165</sup> Van Dixhoorn, "Reforming the Reformation," I.326-330.

<sup>166</sup> J. R. Daniel Kirk, "The Sufficiency of the Cross (I): The Crucifixion as Jesus' Act of Obedience," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 24, no. 1 (2006): 37.

of the Confession by the Independents. Chapter 11, article 1 of the Savoy Declaration has the following addition: “by imputing Christ’s active obedience to the whole law, and passive obedience in his death for their whole and sole righteousness.” On the other hand, Mitchell doesn’t see the language of the Westminster Confession as inclusive of both opinions<sup>167</sup> and Clark argues that the pairs of distinctions were exactly what the orthodox aimed for to express their idea.<sup>168</sup> Vickers<sup>169</sup> still adds Westminster Confession VIII.5 to demonstrate the double aspect of justification: “The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself... hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.” VanDrunen also sees the Confession similarly, underlining that the teaching on active obedience is grounded on the fact that Christ fulfilled the terms of the covenant of works.<sup>170</sup> Jue is careful in asserting that explanations for the omission of the word “whole” are simply tentative suggestions or provisional possibilities, but he leans towards rejecting the interpretation of latitude based on the two-Adam Christology throughout the Confession.<sup>171</sup>

Omission of the word “whole” could either indicate an attempt to be inclusive of all opinions or simply witness to a settled matter; after all, since it had been inserted in the Thirty-nine articles, one should then understand what the *Confession* means by

---

<sup>167</sup> Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly: Its History and Standards*, 160.

<sup>168</sup> Clark, “Do This and Live,” 236.

<sup>169</sup> Vickers, *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness*, 40.

<sup>170</sup> David VanDrunen, “To Obey is Better than Sacrifice: A Defense of the Active Obedience of Christ in the Light of Recent Criticism,” in *By Faith Alone: Answering the Challenges to the Doctrine of Justification*, ed. Gary L. W. Johnson and Guy Prentiss Waters (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007), 129.

<sup>171</sup> Jue, “The Active Obedience of Christ and the Theology of the Westminster Standards,” 126-130.

“obedience.” The fact that the interpretation can go either way demonstrates that a search for intention can be vague and arbitrary. Nevertheless, by the time of the Assembly the debates over active obedience had progressed to a point where those who used the pairs for Christ’s work and resulting benefits conveyed much more of the developed doctrine than the early Reformed (Calvin, Ursinus, etc.). Since the language of “obedience and death” and its equivalents is typical of those who endorsed the imputation of active obedience, and not of Gataker and his allies, it is not hard to deduce what was implied by use of those terms.

### 6.3.c. Reformed Consensus and the New Proposal by Richard Baxter

The vote of the majority in the Assembly as described in the section above is a sign of the Reformed consensus in the decades that followed Westminster.<sup>172</sup> Not that there were no exceptions, but the majority opinion among the Reformed can be clearly extracted from the writings of the Puritans. Several British writers, not yet mentioned, upheld to the traditional understanding of the imputation of Christ’s obedience to the law, but cannot be covered in this chapter. Those who briefly mention their belief in this doctrine would be too many to number in this project. Thomas Boston,<sup>173</sup> Robert Boyd of Trochrig,<sup>174</sup> Thomas Brooks,<sup>175</sup> John Brown of Wamphray,<sup>176</sup> John Bunyan,<sup>177</sup> Samuel

---

<sup>172</sup> William Bradshaw testifies of this majority opinion before the Assembly, whereas Richard Baxter and Anthony Burgess provide the same testimony after the Assembly. William Bradshaw, *A Treatise of Iustification* (London: Thomas Creede, 1615), preface; Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification*, 30-31; Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, preface.

<sup>173</sup> Samuel McMillan, ed., *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend Thomas Boston of Ettrick* (Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1848), 1:492-493, 582, 590-600; 7:96-97.

<sup>174</sup> Boyd, *In Epistolam Pauli Apostoli Ad Ephesios Praelectiones*, 790-818.

<sup>175</sup> Brooks, *A Golden Key to open Hidden Treasures*, 89-97.

Clark,<sup>178</sup> Obadiah Grew,<sup>179</sup> Thomas Jacombe,<sup>180</sup> Samuel Rutherford,<sup>181</sup> William Strong,<sup>182</sup> are some among those who discoursed on active obedience in some length. They are witnesses to the claim of a majority opinion among the English Reformed, but they will not be presented as major figures in this section. The names of Thomas Goodwin (1600-1679), Anthony Burgess (†1664), John Owen (1616-1683), and David Clarkson (1622-1686) have been selected as representative of this preponderant position. They will be contrasted with Richard Baxter (1615-1691) who reworked the notion of imputation present in Anthony Wotton and John Goodwin and proposed a new way of understanding the imputation of Christ's active obedience.<sup>183</sup>

Baxter writes that for several years he denied the imputation of Christ's active obedience, apparently on similar grounds as Piscator, but by the time he writes his *Aphorismes of Justification* (1649) he holds a third position which he says he took from

---

<sup>176</sup> Broun, *The Life of Justification Opened*, 431-442, 506-517. Cf. Bruce R. Backensto, "John Brown of Wamphray, Richard Baxter, and the Justification Controversy," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007): 118-146.

<sup>177</sup> George Offor, ed., *The Works of John Bunyan* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1991), 1:316-320, 323-326.

<sup>178</sup> Clark, *Scripture-Justification*, 86-114.

<sup>179</sup> Obadiah Grew, *A Sinner's Justification: or, The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Our Righteousness*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: S. Bridge, 1698), 38-44.

<sup>180</sup> Jacomb, *Several Sermons Preach'd on the whole Eighth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans*, 565-618.

<sup>181</sup> Samuel Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened, or, A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace* (Edinburgh: Andro Anderson, 1654), 225-236.

<sup>182</sup> William Strong, *A Discourse of the Two Covenants* (London: J. M., 1678), 84-86, 143-144; idem, *XXXI Select Sermons* (London: R. W., 1656), 341-345, 351-352.

<sup>183</sup> For a summary of the controversies and adversaries raised by Baxter's theology of justification, see C. F. Allison, *The Rise of Moralism: The Proclamation of the Gospel from Hooker to Baxter* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1966), 154-177. For a survey of similar controversies resurged at the last decade of the seventeenth-century, see Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism* (Swengel: Reiner Publications, 1973), 85-106.

William Bradshaw (1571-1618)<sup>184</sup> and Hugo Grotius (1583-1645).<sup>185</sup> It is the non-strict notion of imputation tied to a new covenant theology that makes Baxter unique. Baxter's abhorrence for the strict sense of imputation comes mainly from the extreme consequences drawn by the Antinomians where Christ becomes a real sinner and man becomes so righteous that he is not even required obedience in the New Covenant. Imputation both ways appears to generate propriety of the thing received: Christ becomes sin not only by receiving guilt and punishment but receiving the transgression itself so that it becomes Christ's;<sup>186</sup> and the believer is righteous to the point that God cannot see sin in him.<sup>187</sup> Baxter agrees with the Antinomians that imputation cannot be a fiction

---

<sup>184</sup> In the preface of his work on justification, Bradshaw identifies his position with those who believe in the imputation of Christ's active and passive obedience. However, the treatise shows a modified version of this "most orthodoxall" position. He doesn't believe the hypostatical union frees Christ from human obligation towards the law. Bradshaw also agrees with the opposing party's problems for active obedience such as the necessity for satisfaction when legal righteousness has been imputed and that there is no warrant from Scripture that there is a medium between him that is no sinner and a righteous person. Cf. Bradshaw, *A Treatise of Iustification*, 57-80. Baxter adds an important element of Bradshaw's response to the debates whether active obedience was imputed or not: "Mr. Bradshaw I say attempted a Conciliatory middle way, which indeed is the same in the main with Mr. Wotton's: He honoureth the Learned Godly person on each side, but maintaineth that the Active and Passive Righteousness are both Imputed, but not in the rigid sence of Imputation." Baxter, *A Treatise of Justifying righteousness*, 20. Some of the ideas which Baxter extracts from Bradshaw come from the latter's Latin expansion of the English treatise entitled *Dissertatio De iustificationis doctrina* (1618).

<sup>185</sup> Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification* (1655), 37. An example of the Grotian governmental theory of atonement shaping Baxter's view of imputation can be seen in this objection to the traditional understanding of two kinds of righteousness imputed: "It maketh Christ to have paid the *Idem*, and not the *Tantundem*; the same that was due, and not the value; and so to justifie us by payment of the proper debt, and not by strict satisfaction. And indeed this is the very core of the mistake, to think that we have by delegation paid the proper debt of *Obedience* to the whole Law, or that in Christ we have perfectly obeyed; whereas; 1. It can neither be said, that we did it; 2. And that which Christ did, was to satisfie for our non-payment and disobedience." Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification* (1655), 32. For the influence of Bradshaw and Grotius on Baxter, see Boersma, *A Hot Pepper Corn*, 200-206.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. Tobias Crisp, *Christ Alone Exalted: in Seventeene Sermons*, vol. 2 (N.p., 1643), 78-94.

<sup>187</sup> For a summary of the Antinomian positions rejected by Baxter, see Packer, *The Redemption & Restoration of Man in the thought of Richard Baxter*, 248-251; Allison, *The Rise of Moralism*, 168-172. For Antinomians more broadly as the context for the Baxterian opposition, see Tim Cooper, *Fear and Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England: Richard Baxter and Antinomianism* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001); David R. Como, *Blown By The Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil-War England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 176-218; Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *The*

where Christ suffered “as if” he were a sinner and sinners attained salvation “as if” they were righteous. However, Baxter’s solution is to say men received the benefits of the obedience of Christ, not literally what Christ did and suffered. In the strict sense of the term ‘imputation,’ neither the active nor the passive is imputed.<sup>188</sup> The righteousness of Christ – an accident which cannot be transferred from one to another – is only indirectly imputed to us. The believer receives the effects of Christ’s righteousness. Christ’s active and passive obedience became our legal righteousness by which the conditions of the covenant of works were met. But this legal righteousness is not ours personally. It simply gives us freedom from the obligations of the covenant of works. Since God in his sovereign ruling establishes a new covenant with a new law with easier conditions to be met by a sinner, it is up to man to practice actions of faith and obedience to the gospel. This evangelical righteousness is the only one to which there is propriety in having it.<sup>189</sup>

Thomas Goodwin positions himself between the Antinomians and Richard Baxter in regards to imputation. When explaining 2 Corinthians 5:21, he writes: “by the righteousness of his made ours, is here meant, not only the benefits which his righteousness deserved and purchased, but his very fulfilling the law; so Rom. 8:4.”<sup>190</sup> On the other hand, Christ being made sin which he “knew not,” cannot be punishment alone.

---

*Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion & Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 183-210.

<sup>188</sup> Boersma, *A Hot Pepper Corn*, 225.

<sup>189</sup> Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification* (1655), 47-51, 66-84, 215-221. For another defense of the imputation of Christ’s active obedience in Baxterian terms, though more mildly, see John Gibbon, “The Nature of Justification Opened,” in *Puritan Sermons 1659-1689: Being the Morning Exercises at Cripplegate, St. Giles in the Fields, and in Southwark by Seventy-Five Ministers of the Gospel in or near London*, notes and translations by James Nichols (Wheaton: Richard Owen Roberts, 1981), 5:304-327.

<sup>190</sup> Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:181.

As we are made his righteousness, so he was made our sin. Now, we are made his righteousness merely by imputation, that is, all his obedience to the law is accounted ours, is reckoned ours, even as if we had fulfilled it, though we knew none of it. It was fulfilled, not by us, but in us, Rom. 8:4. He fulfilled it, not we; so that there was an exchange made, and all our breaches of the law were made his; our debts put over to him, that is, reckoned to him, put upon his score. That is all; let your thoughts therefore go no further. It was “we that like sheep went astray,” and not he, and yet “the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all,” Isa. 53:6. And to be made sin in this sense is but to be charged and accused as a sinner, and not made really so by committing it.<sup>191</sup>

Goodwin is returning to the simple forensic notion of imputation to assert more than Baxter in regards to the imputation of righteousness and less than the Antinomians in relation to the imputation of sin. Besides responding to alternative notions of imputation, Goodwin expounds his defense for the imputation of the whole righteousness of Christ the mediator performed in the state of humiliation. By that he means the twofold obedience (active and passive) to which ought to be added the holiness of his nature as the principle for both former obediences.<sup>192</sup>

David Clarkson targets another aspect of the Antinomian/Baxter debate when he raises a Protestant objection to the imputation of active obedience: “If Christ’s fulfilling of the law be ours, then we need not fulfil it; no need of our repentance or obedience.”<sup>193</sup> The conclusion of this argument is the reason for Baxter’s polemic against the Antinomians. Baxter saw the unconditionality of the covenant in Antinomian teaching as an opening for licentiousness. He saw in the passages that demanded faith, repentance, obedience and works of love, several conditions (all attached to faith) of the New

---

<sup>191</sup> Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:182.

<sup>192</sup> For his whole defense, see Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:337-352.

<sup>193</sup> Clarkson, *The Practical Works of David Clarkson*, 1:304.

Covenant.<sup>194</sup> Responding to these passages was the fulfillment of the law in the Covenant of Grace. In fact, the “do this and live” passages were valid in both covenants, depending on the law established: Christ obeys the commands of the law but we still have to obey the commands of the Gospel.<sup>195</sup> Hence, Baxter disagreed with those who out of a strict sense of imputation, confused the two sorts of righteousness (that of the law and that of the Gospel) and minimized the importance of repentance and obedience, as he believed the Antinomians did.

Clarkson’s response to the Antinomian argument is different from Baxter’s, but is a trademark of the Puritan understanding of obedience for justification and obedience out of gratitude. He agrees with his objector that because of Christ’s whole obedience (active and passive) we need not fulfill it for those ends which Christ fulfilled it, i.e. to satisfy justice and to purchase heaven. “But in other respects it doth no more follow that we should not endeavour after repentance and obedience, because of Christ’s fulfilling the law for us, than it follows from the surety’s paying, the debtor needs express no thankfulness to the surety, nor sorrow for unnecessary contracting that debt, or diligence in his calling for the future.”<sup>196</sup> Clarkson doesn’t turn our obedience and repentance into a new righteousness which acquires promises (as Baxter did), but his theology still maintains the necessity of our obedience. As mentioned at the end of chapter 5, Clarkson distinguished between *necessitas precepti* (necessity of duty) and *necessitas medii*

---

<sup>194</sup> Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification* (1655), 149-155.

<sup>195</sup> Baxter, *Aphorismes of Justification* (1655), 262-276.

<sup>196</sup> Clarkson, *The Practical Works of David Clarkson*, 1:304.

(necessity of means).<sup>197</sup> When Christ frees us from the necessity of obeying the precept, our obedience and repentance are still necessary means to attain salvation.

Anthony Burgess is another who distances himself from the Antinomians,<sup>198</sup> but also vehemently disagrees with his colleague Baxter's neonomism,<sup>199</sup> and tries to place himself between those extremes.<sup>200</sup> In opposition to the Grotian idea in Baxter that Christ only paid the *Idem* (the value) and not the *Tantundem* (the same debt that was due), Burgess says that if so then the veracity of the law and the Lawgiver falls to the ground. How is the law established if not by the exact fulfillment of our Surety? There cannot be change in the law whether in the perceptive or threatening part. Or else, "if then the Law be abrogated or changed, so that the penalty required is not necessarily to be born, nor the duty it commanded necessarily to be fulfilled, I see not thus why Christs death should be called a Satisfaction."<sup>201</sup>

Baxter's approach to Christ's satisfaction is merely one among many issues Burgess wants to engage. As he expounds the doctrine of Christ's active obedience imputed, he uses a variety of arguments against different adversaries such as Papists, Socinians, Arminians, Antinomians, Piscator, Grotius, Forbes, Wendelin, among others. His is one of the most complete defenses of the doctrine produced in the seventeenth century. His sense of federal headship from the passage of Romans 5 is foundational for his defense of a righteousness imputed in parallel with the way Adam's sin was

---

<sup>197</sup> Clarkson, *The Practical Works of David Clarkson*, 1:297.

<sup>198</sup> His book *Vindiciae Legis* (1646) was written mainly against Antinomians.

<sup>199</sup> Cf. Boersma, *A Hot Pepper Corn*, 34-35.

<sup>200</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 220.

<sup>201</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 441.

imputed.<sup>202</sup> He argues for Adam's sin imputed to us, not merely transmitted by natural propagation, as a public person that he is. This is important to establish the principle of imputation of Christ's righteousness but also the notion of a pre-lapsarian covenant. Since Christ is not our natural root as Adam was to mankind, and since Adam's posterity could not be made partakers of his righteousness and blessedness by mere natural propagation, Christ's righteousness can only be ours by imputation, by a covenant.<sup>203</sup> When he answers the argument that Scripture points to death only, he argues that even his opponents use the synecdoche concept to say death encompasses his suffering as well. For this reason, why not take death as a synecdoche of the whole since there are several texts that point to Christ himself as the object of our justification? Even Forbes' argument that sacraments only point to Christ's suffering is responded in a similar manner. Sacraments are interpreted by Burgess as the seal of our communion not with the actions of Christ, but with Christ himself. Therefore, the benefits flow from him by consequence.<sup>204</sup>

Concerning Piscator's argument that Christ's holiness was only a qualification for his death, Burgess classifies it as "strange Doctrine" to think "that Christ was not a qualified or fit Mediator for us, till he had accomplished the last act of his obedience."<sup>205</sup> It is not enough to say that Christ obeyed God's law for our good only, for such a task may be done by any godly man for another: a parent for his children or a magistrate for

---

<sup>202</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 330, 340, 351-352.

<sup>203</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 353-356.

<sup>204</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 382-384.

<sup>205</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 343. Bos reports that for a while Piscator's emphasis on the death was so restricted to the point that even Pareus rebuked him and encouraged him to include all the sufferings of Christ as vicarious. Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 107-109.

his subject. But Christ's was "a *fidejusticial* obedience," of someone who undertakes it in our stead.<sup>206</sup> The opponents' argument that Christ had to obey the law for himself because he was a man fails to understand the distinction between a *viator* and a *comprehensor*. Christ, while on earth, was a *comprehensor*, that is, entitled to all happiness out of his personal union, but he voluntarily became a *viator* in order to obtain a promise for us. Christ in heaven, though still a man, is not a *viator* anymore.<sup>207</sup>

John Owen also produced a volume which defended the imputation of the righteousness of Christ against several adversaries, though most of them unnamed for the sake of targeting ideas rather than people.<sup>208</sup> Owen's teaching addresses not only Papists and Socinians, but even those Protestants "who would walk with most wariness between the imputation of the righteousness of Christ and justification by our own works, either are in such a slippery place, that they seem sometimes to be on the one side, sometimes on the other, or else to express themselves with so much caution that it is very difficult to apprehend their minds."<sup>209</sup> Baxter appears to be part of such a group from the way Owen teaches about the place of evangelical righteousness in justification.<sup>210</sup> First, Owen does not distinguish justification in this life from the sentential justification in the Day of

---

<sup>206</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 415.

<sup>207</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 416-419.

<sup>208</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 6.

<sup>209</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 417.

<sup>210</sup> Carl Trueman elucidates the theological context in England as background for Owen's treatise: "antinomianism and neonomianism both arose in specific social contexts and were symbiotic in an antagonistic way; Owen needed to bear the Scylla of one and the Charybdis of the other in mind as he penned his great treatise on the topic." Carl Trueman, "John Owen on Justification" in Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, iv.

Judgment,<sup>211</sup> for the latter only declares what was done in this life.<sup>212</sup> Owen rejects Baxter's two types of justification, one legal in which the active and passive obedience of Christ is imputed and the other evangelical in which faith accompanied with other virtues is what justifies us from the accusation of incredulity, hypocrisy, etc.<sup>213</sup> When someone believes, he or she is completely justified yet in this life. Secondly, Owen denied that God can judge our works and obedience according to gospel, as if it could replace the only proper measure of them, which is the law. Such is a confusion of Gospel and law. When God justifies according to the gospel, he does not proceed on our works of obedience but upon the righteousness of Christ.<sup>214</sup> Owen confronts Baxter's ideas that the Gospel can condemn someone for not obeying the law of the new covenant. A Gospel which condemns does so by false accusations, reasoned Owen, for the same announces the good news that God justifies the elect and there is no one who can accuse them.<sup>215</sup> Thirdly, Owen demonstrated that evangelical righteousness is our inherent righteousness and thus cannot be the cause of our justification before God. If there is anything in us which we do that others do not, such as evangelical obedience, then we have reason to boast even if it is not called meritorious.<sup>216</sup> Finally, Owen shows the inconsistency of the Baxterian thought about Christ only being our legal righteousness within Baxter's idea of imputation. For, if Baxter says that we do not receive the righteousness of Christ properly

---

<sup>211</sup> Cf. Richard Baxter, *Confession of his Faith* (London: R. W., 1654), 56-57.

<sup>212</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 181.

<sup>213</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 172-173.

<sup>214</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 256.

<sup>215</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 176-177.

<sup>216</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 178-180.

speaking, but only the fruits of what he did for us, then Christ ends up being our evangelical righteousness as well for sanctification is an effect of what he did for us.<sup>217</sup>

Underlying Owen's criticism of Baxter and others on active obedience imputed, there are three very important principles of theology which function as supports for the doctrine. The first overarching principle concerns the moral law as being "the sole eternal unchangeable rule of righteousness."<sup>218</sup> Though the Gospel is not the rule, if considered so it would still be blasphemous to say it requires a lower degree of love to God than the law does.

This opinion puts an irreconcilable difference between the law and the gospel, not to be composed by any distinctions. For according to it, God declares by the gospel a man to be perfectly righteous, justified and blessed, upon the consideration of a righteousness, that is imperfect; and in the law he pronounces every one accursed who continues not in all things required by it, and as they are therein required.<sup>219</sup>

The second architectonic principle is the necessity of the Mediator to undergo the penalty of the law as well as yield obedience to its perceptive part. He defends this twofold righteousness in justification against those who say the imputation of active obedience is "useless" once you have been pardoned of sins of omission and commission. Man was created a *viator* who has not yet arrived at his eternal end, and the fall does not change this condition, but simply adds the due punishment. "A wicked servant that is punished for his fault, if it be with such a punishment as yet continues his being, and his

---

<sup>217</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 179.

<sup>218</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 261.

<sup>219</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 267.

state of servitude, is not by his punishment freed from an obligation to duty, according to the rule of it.”<sup>220</sup>

The third major principle regards Christ’s freedom to obey the law vicariously against those who claim it as “impossible” due to his human obligation.<sup>221</sup> Owen perpetuates the argument that the obedience of Christ the Mediator was the obedience of a person, not of a nature. Against those who separate both natures, Owen asserts that the whole person of Christ was the object of worship and honor, not only his divine nature.<sup>222</sup> Just like from the moment of his conception he became the object of worship, so did he become substitutively subjected to the law.<sup>223</sup> “The Lord Christ in his obedience was not a private, but a public person. He obeyed as he was the surety of the covenant, as the mediator between God and man.”<sup>224</sup>

These three principles are not unique in Owen, but the representation of a Reformed consensus in defending the imputation of Christ’s active obedience. The same three principles will be explored in the next chapter as the development which was characteristic of the doctrine in the Post-Reformation era.

---

<sup>220</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 298.

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Kelly M. Kopic, *Communion with God: The Divine and the Human in the Theology of John Owen* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 143-145.

<sup>222</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 289.

<sup>223</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 290.

<sup>224</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 292.

## CHAPTER 7

### SYSTEMATIZING THE DEVELOPED DOCTRINE

This dissertation has shown passages from Scripture that were commonly used by those who espoused the imputation of Christ's obedience to the law. It has also dealt with the responses to arguments raised by Piscator against such a doctrine. This chapter will show how the doctrine was developed and finalized on grounds of its relationship to three specific theological *loci* in the orthodox Reformed theology of the era. Arguably, these topics were present in early Reformed writers such as Calvin, Ursinus and Olevianus, but it is their later development in the era of orthodoxy that provided the context for a resolution of the issue of the imputation of Christ's active obedience to believers. The three theological loci are: the stability of the law and covenant of works, twofold righteousness in justification, and the person of Christ in relationship to the law.

These three points of theology are quite interconnected. Although this interconnection is particularly true of the first and second theological principles, we will need to approach them separately in order first to assess the immutable standing of the law and then the resultant blessings of a legal justification in relation to the problem of imputation. The third point is also intertwined with the first, but it shifts from an anthropological to a christological discussion. In short, the three following sections

function as interrelated elements of the seventeenth-century Reformed argument for the imputation of Christ's active obedience.

### **7.1. The Stability of Divine Law and Covenant of Works**

Some writers have argued the importance of the stability or eternity of the law in connection with the doctrine of justification in the Puritans and Protestant Scholastics.<sup>1</sup> This section intends to show how this principle of the stability of the law was bound to the doctrine of Christ's active obedience in seventeenth-century Reformed thought. It will explore the relation between law and gospel as well as the function of the covenant of works in our redemption.

#### **7.1.a. Continuity between Law and Gospel**

The antonymic nature of the law/gospel distinction so prevalent in the first decades of the Protestant Reformation was not abandoned, rather it gained another dimension in the seventeenth-century. The novelty did not come in relating law and gospel to the two dispensations, for even Melanchthon<sup>2</sup> and Calvin<sup>3</sup> saw both law and gospel running parallel throughout the Old and New Testaments. Development came as greater stress was given to the continuity between law and gospel regarding the requirements and promises of God. If seventeenth-century Reformed theologians continued to understand law and gospel as opposite ways of obtaining salvation, they

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kevan, *The Grace of Law*, 66-69; Richard A. Muller, "The Covenant of Works and the Stability of Divine Law in Seventeenth-Century Reformed Orthodoxy: A Study in the Theology of Herman Witsius and Wilhelmus à Brakel," *Calvin Theological Journal* 29, no. 1 (1994): 75-100.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Melanchthon, *Loci Communes*, 1521 edition, in Wilhelm Pauck ed., *Melanchthon and Bucer*, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 19 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), 71; *CR* 21:139-140.

<sup>3</sup> Calvin, *Institutes* II.x.4; *CO* 2:315.

were perhaps more intent on insisting that in the sphere of God's redemption the gospel did not supplant the law. Rather, the gospel fulfilled the legal requirements and showed a gracious way for humanity to obtain the legal promises.

Calvin certainly had indicated continuity between legal blessings and gospel blessings: "the gospel did not so supplant the entire law as to bring forward a different way of salvation. Rather, it confirmed and satisfied whatever the law had promised, and gave substance to the shadows."<sup>4</sup> Calvin also understood that redemption provided by Christ was not entirely disconnected to the law. "We must seek from Christ what the law would give if anyone could fulfill it; or, what is the same thing, that we obtain through Christ's grace what God promised in the law for our works: 'He who will do these things, will live in them' [Lev. 18:5]... For if righteousness consists in the observance of the law, who will deny that Christ merited favor for us when, by taking that burden upon himself, he reconciled us to God as if we had kept the law?"<sup>5</sup> In his commentary on Leviticus 18:5, Calvin argued that the promise of eternal life attached to the law is still valid, though he holds to the Scriptural emphasis that inward sin makes such promise unattainable by us. Nevertheless, it is the authority of the law which gives it sustenance until the present day with valid promises and threats.<sup>6</sup>

Beza follows Calvin on the continuity between law and gospel, though within a more consistent teaching on Christ's performance of the law as argued in chapter 3. He writes that law and gospel "haue thys in common: bothe be of one onelye verye god who remaineth continually lyke unto hymselfe, so that we maye not thynke that the one

---

<sup>4</sup> Calvin, *Institutes* II.ix.4; CO 2:312.

<sup>5</sup> Calvin, *Institutes*, II.xvii.5; CO 2:389.

<sup>6</sup> Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses*, 203-209; CO 25:7-10.

abolisheth the other, concernynge the substaunce, but contrarye, the one establysheth the substaunce of the other. As we shall say hereafter. They bothe dothe purpose and sette forth to us one god only and one ryghteousnes in substaunce, wherin consysteth the perfyte loue of God, and oure neyghboure.”<sup>7</sup> To speak of a God who remains the same is to say that his law cannot be changed, but stands in force just like the legislator. To speak of the same righteousness in substance is also an anticipation of what Protestant Orthodoxy would stress concerning essential equality between salvation by the law and by the gospel recognizing, of course, the inaccessibility of the former.<sup>8</sup> Later, Beza reasserts this idea “that the law and ghospell be not contrary in the substaunce of the righteousnes whiche we ought to bryng before god, but onely in the meane how to haue this righteousnes.”<sup>9</sup>

Later Reformed theology was even more explicit in connecting the conquests of the gospel with the demands of the law. The gospel supplants the law only in the sense of providing humanity with a means to salvation by grace, but it does not undo the demands of the law. In fact, it cannot do so. The good news is the very fact that someone else fulfilled the law in our place. William Perkins believes “the law is of a constant and unchangeable nature,”<sup>10</sup> and based on the “immutability of the Law”<sup>11</sup> he weaves together some Bible texts to show how necessary it is for Christ to fulfill the commands of the law in our place:

---

<sup>7</sup> Beza, *A Briefe and Pithie Summe of the Christian Faith*, 43v.

<sup>8</sup> Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, I.375; Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, VIII.iii.4; vi.3-5.

<sup>9</sup> Beza, *A Briefe and Pithie Summe of the Christian Faith*, 45v.

<sup>10</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 2:237.

<sup>11</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 3:36.

By the second Obedience in fulfilling the law, the Sonne of God performed for us, all things contained therein, that we might have right to life everlasting, and that according to the tenour of the law, Levit. 18.5. *Doe these things and live*. Of this obedience two questions are demanded. The first is, whether it be necessary for the justification of a sinner? *Ans*. It is: The summe of the law is, *Love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thy selfe*: now every jot and title of the law must necessarily be fulfilled, Matth. 5.18. Much more then the summe and substance of the law. And it cannot be fulfilled by us being sinners: therefore there must needs be a translation of the law from our persons, to the person of the Mediator, who is to accomplish every jot of the law for us. Againe, *He that doth not all things contained in the law, is accursed* [Gal. 3:10]. He therefore that would eschew the curse of the law, and come to life everlasting, must by himself accomplish all things contained in the law: and if this cannot bee done, the law and all the contents thereof, must needs bee accomplished in the person of the Mediator: otherwise the curse cannot be avoided.<sup>12</sup>

Note that Perkins emphasizes the authority of the law which does not lose its force both to demand perfect obedience from man and to curse him when he does not render such obedience. À Brakel complements this by saying that a “man’s transgression of the law results in nonconformity to the law, even if by the bearing of punishment he is free from guilt. One can only be conformed to the law by fulfilling its demands,” which, for à Brakel, is not the suffering for satisfaction but the obedience to the precepts.<sup>13</sup>

The opposition between law and gospel is not absolute, as Ernest Kevan has shown in Puritan writings.<sup>14</sup> While Ursinus already showed that legal righteousness and evangelical righteousness differ mainly in who obtains the righteousness,<sup>15</sup> Reformed Puritans expanded such an idea to speak of a circumstantial, not an essential difference. William Sclater (1575-1627) drew from Romans 3:31 the truth that the righteousness required by the law *quod ad materiam* is not abolished, but established. “Legall and

---

<sup>12</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 2:274.

<sup>13</sup> Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*, 1:610.

<sup>14</sup> Kevan, *The Grace of Law*, 131-134; cf. Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 2:363.

<sup>15</sup> Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 325-326.

Euangelicall righteousness differ, not in matter, but *efficiente & modo*;" that is, only in that law requires righteousness of us by our own performance whereas the gospel teaches that Mediator performs it and we apprehend it by faith. The righteousness is still the same, reason why Sclater believes "that Christs active obedience enters our justification."<sup>16</sup> This is the only way in which the doctrine of justification by faith does not abrogate the law.<sup>17</sup> Burgess believes that Scriptural passages such as Leviticus 18:5, Ezekiel 20:11, Matthew 5:18 and Romans 3:31 "prove the immutability of the Law, both in the perceptive part of it, it doth and will require perfect obedience, as also in regard of the promise of eternal life."<sup>18</sup>

The Reformed in continental Europe follow the same understanding of law and gospel. The *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae* (1625) speaks of the righteousness we have in Christ as not essentially opposed (*simpliciter adversatur*) to the righteousness of the law. After all, we are not justified against the law (*non enim justificamur contra legem*) for Christ fulfilled it both by suffering its penalty as well as rendering obedience to the law.<sup>19</sup> Heidegger also says that legal righteousness does not differ from evangelical righteousness in essence (*essentia*), since both occur by fulfilling the righteousness of the law, but only in circumstance (*circumstantia*), Christ in the place of the sinner. Mercy

---

<sup>16</sup> William Sclater, *A Key to the Key of Scripture: or An Exposition with Notes, Vpon the Epistle to the Romanes; The Three First Chapters* (London: T. S., 1611), 387-388; cf. idem, *An Exposition with Notes on the Whole Fourth Chapter to the Romanes* (London: J. L., 1650), 51-52; cf. Downname, *A Treatise of Iustification*, 27.

<sup>17</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Iustification*, 25.

<sup>18</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 378.

<sup>19</sup> Polyander et al., *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*, XXXIII.xx (p. 335).

does not relax God's justice or abolish or mitigate his judgment seat, as if it could challenge it, but gives and accepts the Mediator.<sup>20</sup>

When someone believes and is justified, he or she enters into a new relationship with the law for the very reason that the Mediator assumed his or her old relationship to the law. That is why the distinction between obedience for justification and obedience out of gratitude in sanctification comes up so regularly among those who defend active obedience imputed. David Clarkson shows very pastorally how the law goes from dread to delight because of the righteousness of Christ:

the apostle, when he is proving justification by faith only, which seems quite to repeal the law in this point, Rom. iii. 28, answers this very objection: ver. 31, 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid,' saith he; 'yea, we establish the law.' So that it seems the way to heaven by perfect obedience, which the law prescribed, is not contradicted by the gospel, but established... The righteousness of Christ turns the law into gospel to a believer, and of a doctrine full of dread and terror, renders it the most acceptable message that ever was brought to the world. The law, which stands as the angel with a flaming sword, to bar all flesh out of paradise, when the righteousness of Christ is applied, it becomes an angel to carry every believer into Abraham's bosom; Christ's righteousness added, it loses its name, and we call it gospel. The way in both seems to be the same for substance; perfect obedience is requisite in both. They differ in the circumstances of the person performing this obedience. In the law it was to be personal, in the gospel his surety's performance is sufficient. However, if there be any terror, dread in the law, Christ's righteousness removes it; if any grace, comfort in the gospel, Christ's righteousness is the rise of it. Take away Christ's righteousness, and the gospel can give no life; take it away, and the law speaks nothing but death; no life, no hope of life without it, either in law or gospel.<sup>21</sup>

The reason why the law cannot be changed in its demands nor in its threats is because that would involve a change in the person of God, according to seventeenth-century Reformed theologians. For them, God binds himself to judge according to the law he established. When confronted with the objection that God is a most free Agent

---

<sup>20</sup> Johann Heinrich Heidegger, *Corpus Theologiae Christianae* (Zurich: David Gessner, 1700), XXII.xv (2:267).

<sup>21</sup> Clarkson, *The Practical Works of David Clarkson*, 1:314-315.

who has the power and right to declare justification by the passive righteousness of Christ only, Downname responded “that the judgement of God is according to the truth, and therefore he justifieth none by his sentence, but such as hee maketh just by imputation of Christs righteousness.”<sup>22</sup> Owen asserted that the law which requires perfect obedience “cannot be disannulled whilst the relation of creator and rewarder on the one hand, and of creatures capable of obedience and rewards on the other, continues.”<sup>23</sup> God’s trustworthiness depends upon how the parameters of his relationship with us remain unchanged. Suppose someone today were free from the curse of the law and were able to perform sinless obedience which the law requires, to deny that he should have the right to the promise of life “is to deny the truth of God, and to reflect the highest dishonour upon his justice Jesus Christ himself was justified by this law.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, the righteousness of this eternal law must be fulfilled in us so that God’s judgment according to truth may esteem us to have fulfilled it.<sup>25</sup> Also, the distinction between God and man is maintained with this doctrine. It is because the law abides in force for ever in this world that God is God and man is man.<sup>26</sup> Any relaxation of the law is derogatory to the obliging power of the law as well as of its Legislator.<sup>27</sup>

The stability of the law in all its character, both in its demands as well as its threats, was a distinctive character of those who upheld the imputation of active

---

<sup>22</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Iustification*, 26.

<sup>23</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 268.

<sup>24</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 273.

<sup>25</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 275, 281.

<sup>26</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 272.

<sup>27</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 279.

obedience. Piscator, as shown in chapter five, spoke of the inviolability of the law but only in its punitive character, since for him one fulfills the law either by obedience or by punishment. Anthony Wotton, Hugo Grotius, John Goodwin, Richard Baxter and others who disagreed with the notion that justification was properly judiciary where the judge was bound to give sentence according to the strict rule of the law,<sup>28</sup> they were breaking with the Puritan ideal of eternality of the law. Packer shows how the root difference between the thought of Richard Baxter and his Reformed counterparts was the matter of the law. While Baxter understood the gospel as the new law which had supplanted the old one, his opponents proclaimed the stability of the law:

To orthodox Calvinism, the law of God is the permanent, unchanging expression of God's eternal and unchangeable holiness and justice. It requires perfect obedience from mankind, on pain of physical and spiritual death, and confers salvation and eternal life only upon those who perfectly obey it. God could not change this law, or set it aside, in His dealings with men, without denying Himself. When man sins, therefore, it is not God's nature to save him at the law's expense. Instead, He saves sinners by satisfying the law on their behalf, that He might continue just when He becomes their Justifier. In the covenant of redemption, made from all eternity on the foresight of man's sin, Christ undertook to become man, and, as man, to fulfill the law's demands in place of the elect. This he did by bearing the penalty, the price of disobedience, and by fulfilling its precept, the price of life.<sup>29</sup>

#### 7.1.b. Federal Framework for Law and Gospel

Alongside and in connection with the stability of the law, the covenant of works provided the federal framework to understand the necessity of the vicariousness of

---

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Goodwin, *Imputatio Fidei*, 1-2.

<sup>29</sup> Packer, *The Redemption & Restoration of Man in the thought of Richard Baxter*, 261-262. "Baxter's 'political method' led him to a very different idea of God's law... When man had fallen, and God purposed to glorify Himself by restoring him, He carried out His plan, not by *satisfying* the law, but by *changing* it... Where orthodox Calvinism taught that Christ satisfied the law in the sinner's place, Baxter held that Christ satisfied the Lawgiver and so procured a change in the law. Here Baxter aligns himself with Arminian thought rather than with orthodox Calvinism." (p. 262)

Christ's active obedience.<sup>30</sup> Ursinus' *Larger Catechism* demonstrated some connection between law and gospel in the federal administration. Q/A 36 says that the covenant of grace contains "the fulfillment in Christ of the righteousness that the law requires" in the natural covenant. Q/A 135 affirms that the immutable God did not receive us into the covenant of grace in contrariety with the covenant established in creation, reason why the law was perfectly satisfied. Though, after this, Ursinus continues to unfold his covenant theology, the preceptive part of the law does not (re)appear as an element which the gospel needs to fulfill.<sup>31</sup> Beza claims that eternal life is due only to Christ by the covenant, and we receive it by grace.<sup>32</sup> By "covenant" Beza here means the Legal Mosaic pact, not a pre-lapsarian covenant.

This and other connections would arise in seventeenth-century federal theology. Secondary literature has shown that the notion of a pre-lapsarian covenant, not only the terminology "covenant of works," consistently became a locus in Reformed theology from the late sixteenth-century onwards.<sup>33</sup> As this locus is solidifying in Reformed theology, it is brought as a framework in which the imputation of Christ's active obedience seems to fit. By the end of the seventeenth-century, covenant works and Christ's active obedience are so intertwined that Wilhelmus à Brakel writes of the

---

<sup>30</sup> McGrath writes: "One of the most important features of Puritan theologies of justification is the federal foundation upon which they are based." McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 235.

<sup>31</sup> See the discussion about the natural covenant in Ursinus' later writings in Bierma, "Law and Grace in Ursinus' Doctrine of the Natural Covenant," 96-110.

<sup>32</sup> Beza, *A Booke of Christian Questions and Answers*, 56v.

<sup>33</sup> Leonard Trinterud, "The Origins of Puritanism," *Church History* 20 (1951): 48-49; Letham, "The Foedus Operum," 457-467; Michael McGiffert, "From Moses to Adam: The Making of the Covenant of Works," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 131-155; Stephen Strehle, *Calvinism, Federalism, and Scholasticism: A Study of the Reformed Doctrine of Covenant* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1988), 163-189; Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth-Century Reformation Thought*, 115-169; Poole, *The History of the Covenant Concept from the Bible to Johannes Cloppenburg's De Foedere Dei*, 157-166.

former: "Acquaintance with this covenant is of the greatest importance, for whoever errs here or denies the existence of the covenant of works, will not understand the covenant of grace, and will readily err concerning the mediatorship of the Lord Jesus. Such a person will very readily deny that Christ by His active obedience has merited a right to eternal life for the elect."<sup>34</sup>

Such a connection, however, is progressive. Rollock's statement that Christ fulfilled the covenant of works by his active obedience, as was shown in chapter 5, appears to be an early exception. Theologians such as Perkins,<sup>35</sup> Polanus,<sup>36</sup> Ames<sup>37</sup> and Wollebius,<sup>38</sup> for example, all teach the promise of eternal life upon the condition of obedience in the covenant of works as well as the imputation of Christ's active obedience. A generation later, Westminster divines such as George Walker, Anthony Burgess, William Strong, Samuel Rutherford, and Obadiah Sedgwick are more explicit in tying the necessity of Christ's active obedience to be imputed based on the covenantal framework. While describing Christ's active obedience as an unconditional blessing of the Covenant of Grace, Walker makes a connection with the Covenant of Works:

<sup>34</sup> Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, 1:355.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:32, 69-71; 2:241-244, 297-302. Though based on the inaccurate Barthian read of seventeenth-century federal theology, Priebe shows how covenant theology is still elementary in Perkins' thought. Cf. Victor Lewis Priebe, "The Covenant Theology of William Perkins" (Ph. diss., Drew University, 1967), 36-47.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Amandus Polanus, *The Substance of Christian Religion*, trans. Elijah Wilcocks (London: R. F., 1595), 69-70, 87-94. This is the translation of *Partitiones Theologiae* (1590). Because justification is discussed right after covenant in this work, one would think the connections between these two loci would be abundant, but they are not. Robert Letham notes that though covenant plays a central part in this book, it is not "overwhelmingly dominant in his theological system." Robert Letham, "Amandus Polanus: A Neglected Theologian?" *Sixteenth Century Journal* 21, no. 3 (1990): 471. See also, Amando Polano a Polansdorf, *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae* (Geneva: Petri Alberti, 1617), III.xxxii-xxxiv, IV.xxxiii, xxxvi.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. John Dykstra Eusden (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth, 1968), I.x.9-11, 30-33; I.xiv.13-22; I.xxvii.11-12, 26-27.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Wollebius, *The Abridgment of Christian Divinitie*, 55, 73-74, 120-124.

In this Covenant [of Grace] there is not any condition or Law to bee performed on mans part by man himselfe, as in the first old Covenant, of Nature; and therefore it is called the free Covenant of Grace, and not of Workes. The perfect obedience, righteousness, and satisfaction of Christ, which he performed to the whole Law, for man, in Mans nature, though it stands in the place of every mans perfect obedience to Gods Law in his owne person, and his subjection to the whole revealed will of God, which was the condition of the Old Covenant of Works, and when man is partaker of it by communion with Christ, he is more perfectly justified, and made worthy of life eternall, than man in the state of nature could have beene by his owne perfect obedience, and personall righteousness performed in his owne person; Yet it cannot so properly bee called, A condition of the New Covenant of Grace which God hath made with Mankinde (because God imposeth it not as a condition to bee performed by every man in his person) but is one of the blessings promised in the New Covenant.<sup>39</sup>

Here, Walker is attempting to highlight the gracious aspect of the New Covenant, since it doesn't have any conditions which we have to perform ourselves. But Christ's perfect obedience to the law in the covenant of grace is tied to the condition in the old covenant of works. This is the aspect in which the covenant of works and the covenant of grace agree on, that is, obeying the law of God perfectly is a common feature in both covenants.

It is noteworthy that Anthony Burgess' treatise on the covenants – which intended to start with the law “as given to Adam, and afterwards as promulgated by Moses to the people of Israel” and also to “give the Law its due, and the Gospel its due” – ends with Christ's active obedience.<sup>40</sup> Burgess sets the context with the law requirements in the covenant of works, both in Adam and Moses, in order to assert the imputation of Christ's righteousness. He raises the objection of those who think that such connection means that “we are still justified by a covenant of works, and so there is no new covenant of grace.”

---

<sup>39</sup> George Walker, *The Manifold Wisedome of God in the divers dispensation of Grace by Jesus Christ* (London: John Bartlet, 1641), 55.

<sup>40</sup> Anthony Burgess, *Vindiciae Legis: or, A Vindication of the Morall Law and the Covenants* (London: Thomas Underhill, 1646), to the reader, 119-137, 254-263.

Burgess responds saying that the promise of eternal life attached to the rule “do this and live” is still standing, but he does not grant the consequence because Christ’s righteousness is ours by believing, not working.<sup>41</sup> In other words, though Christ’s fulfilling the law as our surety is according to the stipulations of the covenant of works, it still becomes ours through the covenant of grace. In his book on justification, the links between covenant and active obedience go even further as he works with the parallel between the two Adams.<sup>42</sup>

His teaching on the *pactum salutis*, or what he calls “a kinde of Covenant and Agreement between the Father and the Sonne,” provides a structure in which Christ’s active obedience is inserted: “for this agreement it is, that Christ is called the second *Adam*; for as with the first *Adam* God plighted a Covenant concerning him and his posterity, if he did not fall; So also did he intend with Christ and his seed concerning eternal life to be obtained by him.”<sup>43</sup> He even claims that Christ’s active obedience was the main stipulation that Christ made with the Father to be our Surety, for God is like “all Law-givers [who] regard more the obedience of their Laws, then Satisfaction to the penalty.”<sup>44</sup>

In a sermon on the two covenants, William Strong (†1654) says that after the Fall “the Lord requires perfect obedience still, and wherein we come short in the least degree... it is made up in the second *Adam* in the obedience of *the beloved*: for there is

---

<sup>41</sup> Burgess, *Vindiciae Legis*, 261.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 355-356.

<sup>43</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 375-376.

<sup>44</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 379.

*commutatio personae*, but not *Justitiae*.”<sup>45</sup> Again, it is said there is no commutation of righteousness, only of person. Later, Strong says that the first covenant which God made with Adam “is the same Covenant that the Lord Christ himself stood under: for he was made under the Law, Gal. 4.4. that is, not only the Ceremonial and Judicial Law, as a Jew, but as a man also under the moral Law, Gal. 4.4. being bound to his obedience, and to suffer the curse thereof.”<sup>46</sup> This covenantal framework allows Strong to distinguish between the Law requiring perfect obedience in the covenant of works and the requirement of duty in the covenant of grace. “Christ has indeed fully satisfied the Law, but yet if the Law should require perfect obedience of us also, then it must remain unto us as a Covenant of Works still; but as Christ hath done it, so he hath done it for us, and it is done once for all, εφραπαξ [Heb. 10:10], for *active obedience*: though the Law require duty of us, yet it is not unto Justification.”<sup>47</sup> Similar links between Christ’s active obedience and federal theology appear in Samuel Rutherford (1600?-1661),<sup>48</sup> Obadiah Sedgwick (1600?-1658)<sup>49</sup> and John Owen.<sup>50</sup>

It is arguable that in Herman Witsius (1636-1708) one sees the full-fledged understanding of how the imputation of Christ’s active obedience fits within the federal framework. When he defines the two covenants of God with man, he affirms that both agree on the promise of eternal life upon the condition of perfect obedience to the law.

---

<sup>45</sup> Strong, *XXXI Select Sermons*, 345.

<sup>46</sup> Strong, *XXXI Select Sermons*, 351. Cf. Strong, *A Discourse of the Two Covenants*, 84, 143-144.

<sup>47</sup> Strong, *A Discourse of the Two Covenants*, 85.

<sup>48</sup> Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened*, 225, 234-236.

<sup>49</sup> Obadiah Sedgwick, *The Bowels of Tender Mercy Sealed in the Everlasting Covenant* (London: Edward Mottershed, 1661), 235.

<sup>50</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 308-311.

Though the condition is the same, the essential difference occurs in the substitution of the performer.<sup>51</sup> Christ procured for his own people a right to eternal life, what the law could not now do because of the weakness of the flesh, not of itself or because it has no promises. In fact, had it not been for sin, the law would have brought men to that eternal life.<sup>52</sup> After all, the commandment considered in itself was ordained to life (Rom. 7:10). “If Adam therefore had persevered in obedience, the law would have brought him to that same inheritance, which now in Christ is allotted not to him that worketh, but to him that believeth.”<sup>53</sup> The apostle Paul nowhere hints that one kind of life is promised by the law and another by the gospel. The same felicity we have in Christ was what awaited Adam beyond his enjoyed happiness.<sup>54</sup> Thus, by the end of his treatment of the covenant of works, he explains what he means by its abrogation, which is different from abolition.<sup>55</sup> Though a new covenant is implemented, certain elements of the first covenant remain immutable: the obligation to obey the precepts of the covenant, the promise of eternal life conditioned to perfect obedience, and the threat of punishment in case of disobedience.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, Witsius makes the following association between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace: “The covenant of grace is not the abolition, but rather the confirmation of the covenant of works, in so far as the Mediator has fulfilled all the

---

<sup>51</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, I.i.15.

<sup>52</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, I.iv.4.

<sup>53</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, I.iv.6.

<sup>54</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, I.iv.7-8; cf. I.viii.31.

<sup>55</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, I.ix.18, 23.

<sup>56</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, I.ix.2; cf. I.ix.12-17.

conditions of that covenant, so that all believers may be justified and saved, according to the covenant of works, to which satisfaction was made by the Mediator.”<sup>57</sup>

Witsius deals with Christ’s twofold obligation as our Surety (obedience and penalty) within the context of the *pactum salutis*. In such a context, Christ’s obedience exceeds Adam’s hypothetical obedience in value and honor. Christ’s merit to reward was one of condignity, like no creature is capable to acquire.<sup>58</sup> Christ’s incarnation and consequent subjection to the law allows for God to renew with Christ the same covenant entered into with the first man.<sup>59</sup> In other words, his holy nature meets with the criteria for a new covenant of works so to speak. What Christ accomplishes in this covenant to satisfy divine justice “both the legislative, the retributive, and vindictive” parts, is all performed in our room and stead.<sup>60</sup> Muller sums up how the *pactum salutis*, or covenant of redemption, undergirds the covenant of grace while maintaining the stability of the

---

<sup>57</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, I.ix.23.

<sup>58</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, II.iii.12, 32-33. Franciscus Burmanus writes that Christ’s merit was not only *ex pacto* but even *ex condigno*, due to the great humiliation of his person and proportionate exaltation. Franciscus Burmanus, *Synopsis Theologiae & speciatim Oeconomiae Foederum Dei, ab initio saeculorum usque ad consummationem eorum* (Amsterdam: Joannem Wolters, 1699), II.xv.14 (1:493). The Protestant language of merit should not be dissociated from the medieval distinctions between *meritum de condigno* and *meritum de congruo*. The Reformed defenders of the imputation of Christ’s active obedience understood the merit which Adam could have attained in the garden to be a merit *ex pacto*, thus, not meritorious by itself. Cf. *Westminster Confession of Faith* VII.1; Gerhardus Vos, “The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology,” in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1980), 244. Christ’s merit, however, exceeds Adam’s in value for besides being attained within a covenant, his divine person allows for his merit to be condign. For the debate on the concept of merit within seventeenth-century federal theology cf. David B. McWilliams, “The Covenant Theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Recent Criticism,” *The Westminster Theological Journal* 53, no. 1 (1991): 109-124; Cornelis P. Venema, “Recent Criticisms of the ‘Covenant of Works’ in the Westminster Confession of Faith,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 9, no. 2 (1993): 165-198; contra James B. Torrance, “Covenant or Contract? A Study of the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth-Century Scotland,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23, no. 1 (Fall 1970): 51-76; Holmes Rolston III, “Responsible Man in Reformed Theology: Calvin versus The Westminster Confession,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23, no. 2 (May 1970): 129-156.

<sup>59</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, II.iv.6.

<sup>60</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, II.v.2, 11.

law: “By the covenant of redemption, the Son binds himself to the work of salvation and, therefore, to the fulfillment of the condition of fellowship with God for the sake of God’s covenant people. Thus the promises, the conditions, and the penalties for failure to fulfill the conditions remain — but the conditions are met and the penalties satisfied in Christ.”<sup>61</sup>

It should be clear, by now, how federal theology provided the framework for the imputation of Christ’s active obedience. This is not say that seventeenth-century opponents of the imputation of Christ’s active obedience did not use the covenant of works as an argument in their favor.<sup>62</sup> But, instead of binding justification in either covenant with the same condition (perfect obedience to the law), the opponents understood both covenants to require conditions that should be fulfilled by the beneficiaries (covenant of works required perfect obedience while the covenant of grace required faith) and/or Christ’s part in the covenant to only be the payment of the penalty for sins. Those who upheld the imputation of Christ’s active obedience, however, could not accept the perceptive part of the law to vanish as a condition. Based on the character of the law and its Legislator, they comprehended the various covenants based on the stability of the law.

## 7.2. Twofold Righteousness in Justification

This second section is quite related to the first one, in that it deals with the issue of meritorious righteousness in relation to the twofold demand of the law. If in the first

---

<sup>61</sup> Muller, “The Covenant of Works and the Stability of Divine Law in Seventeenth-Century Reformed Orthodoxy,” 98.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Walker, *Socinianisme in the fundamental point of justification*, 223-224.

section the stress was on the stability of the law in all its character, including both the precepts and the threats, in this second section the emphasis falls on a righteousness which goes beyond the mere removal of penalty.

This development arose as part of a systematized response to Piscator's appropriation of Ursinus' "the law obliges either to obedience or to punishment" (*lex obligat vel ad obedientiam, vel ad poenam*). Piscator affirmed that Christ frees the redeemed from the *obligatio ad poenam* through his *obedientia mortis* in order that they might fulfill *obligatio ad obedientiam*, which is a duty from creation.<sup>63</sup> However, such reasoning seems to entail a contradiction. One could raise the question: if we are obliged either to obedience or to punishment, and Christ's frees us from punishment, why are we still obliged to obedience? The conundrum arises because there is no distinction between different natures of obligation (creaturely/covenantal or justification/sanctification).

The twin objection which spurred the explanation of what constituted a twofold righteousness was the notion that there cannot be a medium between guiltless and righteous. At the Westminster Assembly, Thomas Gataker expressed such objection with the following words: "He that cannot be charged with any breach of the law is perfectly righteous."<sup>64</sup>

Anthony Burgess addresses both the either/or argument as well as the middle between righteous and unrighteous as "the greatest, and most difficult of all their Objections." If this receives a true and solid answer, he reasons, all the rest falls in that.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Bos, *Johann Piscator*, 131-132. Bos explains the logic of Piscator's argument but sees no contradiction in it.

<sup>64</sup> Minutes 1:13v.

<sup>65</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 450.

He divides this one objection into two parts, as was noted above. The first concerns “the latitude or extension of the obligation of the Law, whether it binde to obedience and punishment disjunctively or copulatively.” The second is in respect to Christ’s death alone, without any imputation of a further righteousness, providing an immediate right to eternal life.<sup>66</sup> To the first part he answers:

if we speak of man abiding in the state of integrity, so the Law did require onely obedience; for punishment it could not demand any, seeing there was no transgression, but if we consider man fallen, so the Law requireth both obedience and punishment... For Christ while he satisfied the Law in dying for us, did not answer the primary and principal end of the Law, which was *To do this and live*; but by his exact and perfect conformity unto it.<sup>67</sup>

To the second part of the objection, the core of his response is: “Christ died not onely to redeem us out of prison, but to invest us with all glorious dignity and honour. Now the taking of the punishment doth not by a natural consequence entitle to all that honour and dignity that the Scripture promiseth.”<sup>68</sup> There are two elements in Burgess’ response, corresponding to the two parts, which are crucial to understand the material and formal cause of justification. The first element is our obligation to the law. The second is the sense of honor and reward tied to notion of a righteous person.

The first element carries over into soteriology in the assumption that Christ had to be obedient to the “preceptive” and the “vindictive” or “penal” parts of the law.<sup>69</sup> Beza was quite clear in his 1570 letter to Olevianus about our twofold relationship to the law

---

<sup>66</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 450.

<sup>67</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 451.

<sup>68</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 455.

<sup>69</sup> Grew, *A Sinner’s Justification*, 42; Brooks, *A Golden Key to Open Hidden Treasures*, 93.

post-Fall.<sup>70</sup> Franciscus Junius (1645-1602) also spoke of two parts of God's justifying action because of the twofold obligation towards the law, both of which Christ fulfilled (*ad vtrumque lege obligaremur, hoc est, & ad poenam pro peccatis, & ad legis impletionem: vtrumque hoc merito Christi est compensatum & restitutum*).<sup>71</sup> William Perkins<sup>72</sup> often refers to the "double debt" we have towards the law, its fulfilling since creation and satisfaction for the breach of it since the fall. Since both obligations remain valid, Christ's vicarious obedience must be twofold. George Downame also works with the different stages in the history of humanity. He notes that man's relationship to the law in integrity was single-sided, but being fallen it becomes twofold. That is why there are two essential parts of justification, absolution and acceptance.<sup>73</sup> Petrus van Mastricht's (1630-1706) and Johannes Marckius' (1656-1731) terminology for the twofold act of justification is "absolution" (*absolutio*) from death and "adjudication" (*adjudicatio*) to eternal life, both of which are required by the Covenant of Works and not removed – just judicially solved – in the Covenant of Grace.<sup>74</sup> Francis Turretin also addresses the twofold efficacy of the obedience of Christ as other Reformed of his day.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> Beza, *Volumen Tractationum Theologicarum*, 3:248; cf. Beza, *A Booke of Christian Questions and Answers*, 40v-41r, 43r.

<sup>71</sup> Franciscus Junius, *D. Francisci Junii Opuscula Theologica Selecta*, ed. Abraham Kuyper (Amsterdam: Fredericum Muller cum Soc. Et Joannem Hermannum Kruyt, 1882), 103, 215, 220.

<sup>72</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 2:205, 206, 273-274; 3:34.

<sup>73</sup> Downame, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 26, 33, 41, 47-48.

<sup>74</sup> Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretico-Practica Theologia* (Amsterdam: n.p., 1724), VI.vi.11, 15-17 (1:804, 806-807); Johannis Marckii, *Christianae Theologiae Medulla Didactico-Elenctica* (Philadelphia: J. Anderson, 1824), XXIV.ix (p. 238).

<sup>75</sup> Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, XIV.xiii.10-11. However, what appears to be his unique terminology is to distinguish between a "righteousness of innocence" and a "righteousness of perseverance," both of which are required. Cf. XIV.xiii.28.

Thomas Goodwin provides a rather thorough explanation for the necessity of the twofold righteousness based on the requirements of the law. The whole righteousness must be imputed “as proportionate conformity to that righteousness which the law requires of us.”<sup>76</sup> In the state of innocence it meant only obligation to the perceptive part of the law, but the fall brought subjection to the punishment as well. “[S]ince the penal payment is only conditional, and not so much required in the law, as in the appendix of it, it will not, though satisfied, invalidate that absolute and eternal obligation of the law itself.” Hence, Goodwin concludes: “the mere suffering of the punishment is not sufficient to the satisfaction of the law, because it doth not adequately answer that primary and absolute design of the legislator, who would rather have obedience than the death of the sinner.”<sup>77</sup> The penal payment does no more than restore one to the same state in which Adam stood at the first moment of creation, without life, for such is the promise made only to doers.<sup>78</sup> Such state of innocence must be supposed in the justification of a sinner as the mid step in ascending from the state of sin to a state of righteousness.<sup>79</sup> Contrary to Piscator and his followers, Goodwin boldly asserts: “It was, indeed, the part of the law to justify in man’s primitive state, and to that it was ordained; but Christ only attained the accomplishment of this design.”<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:339.

<sup>77</sup> Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:340. At the Westminster Assembly, Goodwin said: “Undergoing punishment is not a satisfaction to the law. Men in hell doe not satisfy the law, nor never can because its obedience the law intends.” Minutes 1:22r.

<sup>78</sup> Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:341.

<sup>79</sup> Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:342-343; cf. Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 296, 302.

<sup>80</sup> Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:344.

The second element of the Reformed view of law that undergirds the necessity of a twofold righteousness imputed is the notion of entitlement. The majority position never questioned that Adam was created in righteousness, habitual that is, but they understood that there was an active righteousness which would only be obtained if he remained obedient. John Brown (1610?-1679) understood that Adam prior to the fall was “perfectly Righteous,” but not justified, “for the reward was not adjudged unto him.”<sup>81</sup> Another way to put it was that Adam was “guiltless,” but had no “merit” or “title to a crown of glorie.”<sup>82</sup> Eternal life was understood as a reward to the doer. The scholastic language of merit came up from time to time, but the Reformed saw themselves as correctors of the “Papist” usage of such language. George Downname regarded the “Papists” as teaching that by his satisfaction Christ frees us from hell, but as for heaven, we must attain it by our own merits. Though Downname rebukes this theology, he does not shy away from using the same language. While by Christ’s passive righteousness Christ frees us from hell, by his conformity to the Law he “merits,” “entitles” us to the kingdom of heaven.<sup>83</sup> Any man with his pardon frees the other from the guilt binding over to punishment, but

---

<sup>81</sup> Broun, *The Life of Justification Opened*, 435. His longer explanation is this one: “*Adam*, while he remained innocent, was compleatly Righteous, that is, was changable with no transgression, it is true: That he was compleatly Righteous, that is, had full right to the reward, as having done all his duty, and compleated his work, it is most false. Therefore it is false to say, he was in a state of justification, unless nothing else be hereby meant, than that he was not in a state of condemnation. Though there be no mids betwixt these two now, as to us, but either we must be in a state of justification, or in a state of condemnation; Yet *Adam* while he stood, was in neither; Not in a state of condemnation, because he had not yet transgressed the Law; Nor yet in a state of justification, because he had not yet done all his duty; for he was to persevere in obedience to the end: And if he had been justified, he had full righteous to the reward, & so had been glorified, for whom the Lord justifieth, he glorifieth: But *Adam* was not glorified upon his Law-obedience, and consequently was not justified by his Law-obedience.” (p. 434)

<sup>82</sup> Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 34; *The Dippers Dipt*, 203.

<sup>83</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 20-21, 32-33, 158.

the pardon cannot take away the fault or make the offender just. Only the imputation of Christ's righteous covers one's fault and makes one an heir to eternal life.<sup>84</sup>

The Leyden Synopsis says that by the imputation of active righteousness we are counted worthy of the prize, we receive the right to eternal life (*hac etiam praemio digni censemur, ac jus vitae aeternae accipimus, eaque nobis adjudicatur*).<sup>85</sup> Johannes Maccovius (1588-1644) illustrates with a Bible story how having your sins of omission forgiven is not the same as doing what is commanded. When God forgave Jonah for not going to Nineveh and had him ejected from inside the fish, God still commanded the prophet to go to the city.<sup>86</sup> Featley's insight as to the types of courts of justice is elucidative. For him, to reason that a man who is not condemned is necessarily justified is true only in the criminal court. But in the civil court, a guiltless man is not necessarily a deserving man, a man entitled to glory and honor.<sup>87</sup> His other illustration is quite clear:

In the Olympian games he that overcame received a crown of gold or silver, or a garland of flowers, or some other prize or badge of honour; but he that was overcome, besides the losse of the prize, forfeited something to the keeper of the games. Suppose then some friend of his should pay his forfeiture, will that intitle him to his garland? Certainly no, unless he prove masteries again, and in another race out-strip his adversarie, he must goe away crownlesse. This is our case by Adams transgression and our own: we have incurred a forfeiture, or penaltie; this is satisfied by the imputation of Christs passive obedience: but unlesse his active be also imputed to us, we have no plea or claim at all to our crown of glory; for we have not in our own persons so run, that we might obtain.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 35.

<sup>85</sup> Polyander et al., *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae*, XXXIII.viii (p. 332).

<sup>86</sup> Arnoldus, *Johannes Maccovius Redivivus*, 134.

<sup>87</sup> Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 32-33; *The Dippers Dipt*, 202.

<sup>88</sup> Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 44; *The Dippers Dipt*, 211. An interesting note about Featley's speeches is that, though he constantly works with the idea of representative heads from Romans 5, he never uses the word "covenant" in his defense of active obedience imputed.

Owen writes that passion is not obedience, suffering is not righteousness, it “gives right and title to nothing, only satisfies for something.” So, even though he regards the death of Christ as imputed for justification, he denies it is imputed for righteousness.<sup>89</sup> Here, Owen defines righteousness as positive (the presence of righteous deeds), not merely negative (the absence of transgressions). Turretin explained that there is a middle ground between eternal death and a happy life: a pious, though mortal, life on earth. This is the life which Adam had prior to the fall. But we need more than freedom from corruption; we need “to have acquired merit,” we need “royal dignity.”<sup>90</sup> Against those who claimed the right to heaven was a result of adoption, as John Goodwin and Thomas Gataker asserted, Heidegger responded saying there is no contradiction in associating the right to eternal life to both justification and adoption. They comprehend two different relationships we have with God. In the first, he acts as a Judge, and so eternal life is “owed” (*debitum*). In the second, his role is of a Father and eternal life constitutes “inheritance” (*haereditas*).<sup>91</sup>

Not only should these two elements be understood as interrelated, but the whole defense of the twofold righteousness aimed at speaking about one righteousness, not two. Therefore, the Reformed would often speak of the unity of the obediences.<sup>92</sup> Such emphasis goes back not only as far as Beza, but even to Bernard of Clairvaux, whom they

---

<sup>89</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 298, 299, 308.

<sup>90</sup> Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, XVI.iv.10-11.

<sup>91</sup> Heidegger, *Corpus Theologiae Christianae*, XXII.lxii (2:296).

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Clarkson, *The Practical Works of David Clarkson*, 1:296; Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 348-349, 385; Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, XIV.xiii.12; Broun, *The Life of Justification Opened*, 437-438, 440, 514-515; Burmanus, *Synopsis Theologiae & Speciatim Oeconomiae Foederum Dei*, II.xv.11 (1:492); Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, 1:610. Samuel Clark preaches the unity in a distinct degree so as to include the active obedience in the passive. Clark, *Scripture-Justification*, 92, 112-113.

quoted on that matter. The emphasis on the unity balances the notion of partition and allows for the majority position to be less divisive on the matter of justification than Piscator had charged.

Unity aside, the twofold righteousness became a trademark of the defense for the imputation of Christ's active obedience. Beza's threefold righteousness of Christ imputed was not followed by the majority of the Reformed,<sup>93</sup> though it did continue to appear in theologians of the Protestant Orthodoxy period.<sup>94</sup> Some, like Perkins<sup>95</sup> and Downname,<sup>96</sup> used the threefold righteousness into a twofold structure. But the notion of a twofold righteousness became a foundational aspect in the doctrine of justification of a myriad of seventeenth-century Reformed dogmaticians. The shift to a clear twofold righteousness in justification apparently went from the medieval notion confirmed in the Council of Trent of two types of blessings – one type being merited by Christ and the other being earned by man (in which eternal life is included), though founded on Christ's merits<sup>97</sup> – to a unified sense of blessings earned by Christ alone in the Reformation (whether it is remission of sins or eternal life, or any other),<sup>98</sup> to a final distinction of blessings earned

---

<sup>93</sup> Andre Rivet, Daniel Featley and David Clarkson, reject the habitual righteousness of Christ as our righteousness because it was not performed by Christ, not an act of the mediator, but the Holy Spirit's performance in him. Cf. Clarkson, *The Practical Works of David Clarkson*, 1:303; Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 36; *The Dippers Dipt*, 205. Samuel Clark made a different kind of criticism. He did not appreciate to attribute distinct benefits to distinct acts in Christ. Cf. Clark, *Scripture-Justification*, 96-98.

<sup>94</sup> Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 5:352; Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, III.viii.29; McMillan, *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend Thomas Boston of Ettrick*, 7:96-97.

<sup>95</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:29.

<sup>96</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Ivstification*, 18, 21.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session VI, chapter 16, canons XX and XXXII.

<sup>98</sup> See Melancthon's inconsistency when he lists the benefits of the gospel, which for him is often a synonym of justification, as shown in chapter 3. Calvin's reaction to Rome also exemplifies the unified blessings in Christ: "They falsely represent the material and the formal cause, as if our works held half the place along with faith and Christ's righteousness. But Scripture cries out against this also, simply affirming

by Christ's mediatorial work in the Post-Reformation period. Late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Reformed theology still rejected the Roman Catholic notion of merit in human obedience just like the Reformers had; there was complete continuity in this matter. However, they were able to go beyond the unified merit in Christ by unfolding its multiple redemptive aspects.

### 7.3. The Person of Christ in Relationship to the Law

This Christological section not only provides a third supporting doctrine for the imputation of Christ's active obedience, but it also intends to correct a partial portrayal of secondary literature concerning the Reformed christological argumentation. Albrecht Ritschl considers "Piscator's most fruitful assertion" to be "that Christ by His active obedience could not have given satisfaction vicariously for us, because as man He was Himself legally bound thereto."<sup>99</sup> He notes that Ursinus had been a forerunner of this position. But his most noteworthy evaluation is that Lutheran and Reformed differed in their response to Piscator based on their understanding of the communication of attributes (*communicatio idiomatum*) within the person of Jesus Christ. The Lutherans, on the ground that God cannot be subject to the law but only superior to it, affirmed that Jesus' obedience rendered to the law was solely done in the place of men. Within Reformed Christology, on the other hand, Piscator's doctrine was not problematic. Yet, the Reformed responded saying that Christ's active obedience is also vicarious.

---

that *Christ is for us both righteousness and life*, and that this benefit of righteousness is possessed by faith alone." Calvin, *Institutes* III.xiv.17; *CO* 2:576.

<sup>99</sup> Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, 250.

The response of the Reformed, according to Ritschl, was based on two arguments. First, since Christ became man in our behalf, “even His individual fulfillment of the law pertains to His satisfaction and His merit.” The second argument, closely connected to the first, sustains that from the very beginning of incarnation Christ is fulfilling his destination as Surety and Head of the redeemed.<sup>100</sup> So Christ as the head of the Church (*caput ecclesiae*) became a trademark argument of the Reformed, and a more conclusive argument than the first. For, if Christ becoming a man for our sake does not counter Piscator definitively – since in such a schema Christ’s perfect obedience could still be the condition to endure punishment in our stead –, yet, Christ’s actions on behalf of the Church (as Head and Surety) can justly be regarded as if they had been done by the Church.<sup>101</sup> Even though Ritschl observes that some Reformed theologians agreed with the Lutheran rejection of Christ obeying the law for himself – mainly Beza, with his doctrine of merit from conception – what withstands is his separation of two distinctive arguments which result from the Christological premises of each tradition.<sup>102</sup>

Ritschl’s disjunction is simplistically endorsed by Robert Franks who affirms that the Reformed in general “regard Christ as being, as regards His humanity, under the law like other men.”<sup>103</sup> So he introduces Piscator’s teaching in connection with this Reformed tenet, without explaining how the Reformed responded to the Herborn professor. Franks apparently concluded that Piscator’s Anselmian view of active obedience is a legitimate trajectory of the Reformed Christology. Alister McGrath also appropriates only part of

---

<sup>100</sup> Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, 251-252.

<sup>101</sup> Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, 255.

<sup>102</sup> Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, 263.

<sup>103</sup> Franks, *A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, 359.

Ritschl's more elaborate discussion, thus concluding that in Reformed Christology the obligation to the law as a human being does not dissipate in the incarnation. The vicariousness of active obedience, then, arises out of his role as Head and Sponsor.<sup>104</sup>

The problem with this strand of historiography is that it overlooks the diversity within the Reformed defenders of active obedience imputed. Though the argument of headship worked in a context where some Reformed theologians claimed Christ rendered obedience to the law for himself and for us, there was a significant portion of the Reformed which denied that Christ obeyed the law for himself at all. And their main argument was not federal, but proceeded from an understanding of the person of Christ. They argued that obligation towards the law is a responsibility of a person, not of a nature. When one considers the complex (divine-human) person of Christ in relation to the law, they conclude that the person of Christ is freed from the obligation of fulfilling it. Therefore, not only the Lutherans but even the Reformed argued for imputation of active obedience from their understanding of the person of Christ. This Reformed group did not feel bound by their understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum* to have to search elsewhere in theology to support Christ's active obedience as vicarious.

As for those who believed Christ obeyed the law for himself as well, their understanding of how Christ can render obedience for himself and for others is much more robust than what was presented in the historiography above. Protestant Orthodoxy developed a multi-faceted relationship of Christ to the law with distinctions which enlighten the Reformed understanding of both the person and work of the Mediator.

---

<sup>104</sup> McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 273.

The notion of Christ's person being free from obligation towards the law because of the hypostatic union was made prominent among Protestants by Theodore Beza. In his *Quaestiones et Responsiones*, he wrote:

For seying that this manhod of hys was ioyned to the woord by personall union, yea & so ioyned, as it was most holy in itself: who cã think (if the said humane nature be considered without the charge of mediatorship, which is not of itself coincident to the manhod, but inioyned to the sonne by the father of his owne good will, and willingly undertaken by the sonne) I say, who can thinke that there was any default in thys manhod which hee had taken unto him, so as it should not forthwyth have byn most worthy of the euerlasting lyfe, euen from the very fyrst moment of the sayd unyon: Therefore thys his beyng bounde too the performance of the lawe, is not properly by nature, but of good wyll: not simply for that Christ is a man, but bycause he became man for our sakes: which condiciõ he undertooke of his owne accorde, and performed it, not in hys owne behalf, (for by good right he was moste blessed already) but in our behalf, for whom it was his wyll to become subject to the lawe, to the intent to redeme them that were under the lawe.<sup>105</sup>

For the sake of argumentation, Beza considers Christ's human nature only hypothetically detached from the divine-human person of the mediator.<sup>106</sup> This manhood is entirely without fault and thus "most worthy of everlasting life." However, we don't see Beza saying Adam in his state of innocence was worthy of eternal life. He believes eternal life is due to the one obedient to the perceptive part of the law, as we have seen earlier. So, such worthiness cannot be due to the manhood of Christ by itself, but because of its union with the Son. Christ's subjection to the law is not a consequence of his human nature but a voluntary submission of the mediator with redemptive intent.

Several theologians followed Beza in his argument from the hypostatical union.

Perkins believed Christ did not perform full obedience to the law for himself "for the

---

<sup>105</sup> Beza, *A booke of Christian Questions and Answers*, 42v-43r.

<sup>106</sup> It is important to note that while medieval scholastics spoke of Christ being a Mediator according to his human nature, the Reformers argued that mediatorship could only be performed if both natures were involved. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms*, 188.

flesh of Christ being hypostatically united to the word, and so in it selfe fully sanctified, was euen from the first moment of conception, most worthy to be blessed with eternall life.”<sup>107</sup> He was not bound to perform obedience by nature, because he “was not a meere man, but God and man.” Though subjection to obedience is only in respect of the will of manhood, the operations of the natures are united in one “compound worke of a Mediator.” The hypostatical union makes the person of Christ “exalted in dignity and sanctity,” reason why he does not need to merit for himself. He was not born subject but made subject to the law, not by nature, but “by will and by voluntary abasement.”<sup>108</sup> Pierre du Moulin stressed the unity of Christ’s person in relation to the law to such a degree that he was labeled Lutheran by his opponents.<sup>109</sup> George Downname, John Owen, and John Brown, in continuity with the scholastic terminology, also stressed the dignity of the person of Christ saying that he was at the same time a *comprehensor* for himself but a *viator* for us.<sup>110</sup> Owen adds that for the whole person to be the object of all divine worship and honor, that means the whole person was filled with dignity, honor and worth.<sup>111</sup> Others who believed Christ obeyed the law only for the elect based on the dignity of his whole person were Robert Boyd, William Strong, Thomas Blake, Samuel Clark and Wilhelmus à Brakel.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:81.

<sup>108</sup> Perkins, *The Whole Works of... William Perkins*, 1:81; 2:206, 274.

<sup>109</sup> See the discussion of Du Moulin in chapter 6.

<sup>110</sup> Downname, *A Treatise of Iustification*, 29; Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 291; Broun, *The Life of Justification Opened*, 441, 510-511.

<sup>111</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 287-291.

<sup>112</sup> Boyd, *In Epistolam Pauli Apostoli ad Epheios Praelectiones*, 809-812; Strong, *A Discourse of the Two Covenants*, 84; Thomas Blake, *Vindiciae Foederis; or, A Treatise of the Covenant of God entered with Man-Kinde* (London: Abel Roper, 1652), 77-78; Clark, *Scripture-Justification*, 94-95; Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*, 1:611-612.

Most of these who argued for the hypostatical union as making Christ exempt from the observance of the precepts for himself, also appealed to his mediatorship as an argument. Not all of them distinguished both arguments as neatly as Featley did.<sup>113</sup> But they all understood Christ's person and his work as a compound reason for his exemption. However, it is important to remark that the constancy of the argument coming from the personhood of Christ must not be overlooked by historians of Christ's salvation anymore.<sup>114</sup>

There were also those who understood that Christ obeyed the law for himself as well as for us.<sup>115</sup> Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676) had such a standpoint. He distinguished Christ's merit between the "work for merit" (*opus meritorium*) and "the prize" (*praemium*). The first one is the voluntary and most perfect obedience which in human nature Christ performed "in our place, for us" (*loco nostro pro nobis*) as our sponsor. Such obedience has two parts, the first one referring to the penalty for sins and, obviously, performed only for those who were in debt, not for himself. The second part of obedience, however, was performed for us and for himself, though in different respects. For Christ there was a particular obligation in so far as he was man subject to the divine law, as creature necessarily under the immutable divine commands, and as long as he was aiming towards the prize (*quatenus tendens ad praemium*). His obedience for us was his sponsor obligation to fulfill the righteousness of the law which we were not able to fulfill. When Voetius discourses on the *praemium*, he says that the prize for the first obedience

---

<sup>113</sup> Featley, *Sacra Nemesis*, 25; *The Dippers Dipt*, 196-197.

<sup>114</sup> Carl Trueman is an exception for having raised this argument in connection with Owen and Downname. Cf. Trueman, "John Owen on Justification," viii, xii.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Rollock, *Select Works*, 1:52-53.

is only for the redeemed, but the second obedience brings a prize for both Christ as an individual man and as head of the redeemed and consequently for those who are his members. This prize is the “right, possession and fruition of eternal life” (*jus, possessio ac fruitio vitae aeternae*).<sup>116</sup> This is an example of diversity within the Reformed who defended the imputation of active obedience, for Voetius is in agreement with Piscator’s comment on Philippians 2:9 about Christ meriting eternal life for himself.

Anthony Burgess is another major articulator of the position that Christ obeyed the law for himself, but with different nuances from Voetius. Burgess believed the hypostatical union did not exempt Christ from being a creature. Christ still had the will of a creature, which cannot be the supreme law. Therefore he had an obligation to keep the moral law as a man. Although Burgess concedes that the person is the principle of actions (*principium quod*) and to whom laws are made, they still mediately extend to natures as “the principle by which the person doth work” (*principium quo*).<sup>117</sup> Christ voluntarily subjected himself to the law, but “once he hath thus subjected himself, then there is an obligation upon him.”<sup>118</sup> So, then, absolutely he is not bound by the law, but only conditionally; “an immutable necessity, though not a natural one.”<sup>119</sup> The same obligation after voluntary submission also applies to the special command to die for us.<sup>120</sup> But he does not conclude that this obedience may not be imputed to us. Burgess believes there is

---

<sup>116</sup> Gisbertus Voetius, *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum* (Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1655), 2:229-230.

<sup>117</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 386-388.

<sup>118</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 391.

<sup>119</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 402-403. Burgess questions the validity of older distinctions such as between “legal obedience” and “servile obedience” and also between “legal obedience” and “mediatorial obedience” (cf. 403-408).

<sup>120</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 399, 403.

a distinction between Christ's acting as a single person and as a public person. Just as the first Adam acted individually but also representatively, so did the second Adam. "If Christ because man was bound to obey the Law, as he did, while on earth, then he was still bound to do so, while he is in heaven, because he doth not cease to be man there; and if obedience do follow upon Christs humane Nature inseparably, as they say, then though in heaven he was obliged to do, as once upon the earth." But such a conclusion cannot be true. Thus, Burgess grants that "Christ as man was bound to fulfill the Law, yet to do it in such a manner, by way of a Covenant with the Father for such a space of time," – and Burgess references Hebrews 2:7 – "this is that he was not obliged unto, and so this was wholly voluntary."<sup>121</sup>

Burgess' definition of Christ's vicarious obedience being by "way of a covenant" becomes a common distinction among Protestant Scholastics by the 1670s. Owen says that "the Lord Christ having a human nature, which was a creature, it was impossible but that it should be subject to the law of creation."<sup>122</sup> But this is not only true of this world, but also of Christ in glory. Yet, it is not true that he is still 'under the law' as it is reported in Galatians 4. Therefore, Owen discourses on another relation to the law "imposed on creatures by especial dispensation, for some time, and for some certain end."<sup>123</sup> The end is to attain eternal reward and once it is attained, the obligation ceases. Owen is speaking of a covenant of works, though he doesn't use this term in this place. "In this sense the

---

<sup>121</sup> Burgess, *The True Doctrine of Justification*, 410.

<sup>122</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 293.

<sup>123</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 293.

Lord Christ was not made subject to the law for himself, nor did yield obedience to it for himself. For he was not obliged to it by virtue of his created condition.”<sup>124</sup>

Here we see a fusion of ideas where on the one hand, Owen agrees that there is a sense in which Christ as a creature is forever bound to obey the law, but he still understands that the hypostatical union freed Christ from obeying the covenant of works for himself. Herman Witsius states the same distinction as Owen: “That this subjection to the law, as *enjoining the condition of happiness*, is to be distinguished from that other absolute subjection to it, as *the rule of holiness*, appears hence, that Christ has laid aside the first, while this last continues, and will continue, to eternity.”<sup>125</sup> Witsius agrees with Burgess that the human nature assumed by the Logos could not decline from the office assigned to Christ.<sup>126</sup> The duties of the office are of a temporary nature because they function within a covenantal schema.<sup>127</sup> Franciscus Burman (1628-1679) also uses a federal language when he asserts that Christ’s subjection to the law is twofold (*duplex*): one is natural, which is owed by every rational creature (*naturalis, quae ab omni creatura rationali debetur*), the other arises out of a peculiar covenant or pact (*ex peculiari foedere ac pacto*), which is what Scripture refers to when it affirms Christ’s subjection to the law.<sup>128</sup> Francis Turretin formulates “a threefold subjection to the law – a natural, a federal

---

<sup>124</sup> Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith*, 294.

<sup>125</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, II.iii.13.

<sup>126</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, II.iii.16-18, 27; II.v.12.

<sup>127</sup> Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, II.iii.13-14; II.iv.6-9.

<sup>128</sup> Burmanus, *Synopsis Theologiae & Speciatim Oeconomiae Foederum Dei*, II.xv.9 (1:491); cf. VI.v.14 (2:200-201).

and a penal.”<sup>129</sup> And then he describes how this threefold relation to the law applies to Christ:

According to this threefold relation (*schesis*), it is easy to understand how Christ was made under the law (*hypo nomon*) and how he was subjected to the law – whether for himself or for us. For as a man, there is no doubt but he was subject to the law for himself as a rule of holiness by a common and natural subjection (under which angels and the saints in heaven are who are bound to love and worship God). But it does not at once follow from this that he was subject to the law as commanding the condition of happiness by an economical and federal subjection, so that he merited life by obedience (since he had already obtained that by virtue of the hypostatical union), much less by a penal subjection (for he was most holy and absolutely free from all sin). So that when he undertook this twofold office of fulfilling the law to acquire life, as much as to the precepts by doing as to the sanction by suffering, all this was to be done for us by a voluntary dispensation from the office of Mediator...<sup>130</sup>

Though à Brakel positions himself as one who does not believe Christ was subject to the law as a man, his observations on incarnation put him in continuity with what Owen, Witsius and Turretin have just said. Since à Brakel understands humiliation only in regards to the divine-human person of the Mediator, he notes that incarnation is not a step of Christ’s humiliation for two reasons: before incarnation Christ was not yet God-man, and thus could not be humbled; secondly, the union of divine and human nature continue in the state of exaltation. Therefore, only the suffering for satisfaction and the obedience to merit salvation are steps of humiliation.<sup>131</sup> One may conclude that à Brakel believed that in the state of glory, the man Jesus Christ is obedient to the rule of holiness. However, his subjection to the law as described in Scripture is clearly a temporary function of the Mediator for the ones he represents.

---

<sup>129</sup> Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, XIV.xiii.15.

<sup>130</sup> Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, XIV.xiii.16; cf. XI.xxii.18; XI.xxiii.7; XIV.xiii.26.

<sup>131</sup> Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, 1:575-576.

This whole Christological debate presents a funneling of Chalcedonian dogma and Reformation debates, such as *communicatio idiomatum*, into a very specific Post-Reformation controversy. It presents questions that were not asked in the middle of the sixteenth-century and, thus, a more advanced understanding of the person of Jesus Christ. Triggered by objections related to the imputation of Christ's active obedience, the locus of Christology progressed on the focused issue of Christ's relation to the law.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

Tracing the formation of a locus is not an easy task. Therefore, words of caution are due from the start of this conclusion. This dissertation cannot make a generalizing claim that no other Reformed theologian of mid-sixteenth century besides Beza had a clear and consistent understanding of the different parts of imputed righteousness. Neither can it assert that Beza, then, was the first Reformed theologian or the first Protestant to consistently teach the imputation of Christ's active obedience. A comprehensive survey of the Reformed theologians prior to the 1550s has not been provided and a detailed study of the Lutheran theologians prior to the Karg controversy still needs in depth scholarly research. However, this dissertation does point to Beza as an exception in his time, possibly even the first systematizer of the doctrine under study, since he demonstrates his threefold righteousness imputed as early as his first edition of the *Annotationes Maiores* (1556) and a detailed discussion of the topic soon appears in his *Confession* (1559).

In light of the study of Calvin, Ursinus, and Olevianus on Christ's active obedience, combined with reference to other noteworthy Reformed figures such as Zwingli, Musculus and Vermigli, Beza appears to stand out as being the only one who demonstrates, even if just dimly, the three foundational principles which become

commonplaces in the developed doctrine of Christ's active obedience. In the same degree Beza was unique for one side of the debate, Piscator was for the other. Not even Olevianus' uneasiness with Beza's multipart justification equals Piscator's consistent opposition to Beza's teaching.

In light of this assessment of the thought of early Reformed theologians, a revision of the secondary literature becomes necessary. One cannot discourse on early figures such as Calvin and say he was in favor or opposed to the doctrine of Christ's active obedience imputed. One can attempt to find out glimpses of a position based on certain passages, but a fair comprehensive study will show his unawareness of certain distinctions, his inconsistent language, and a polemical context against Rome which drove his focus on a different direction. Those who in the sixteenth and seventeenth century claimed Calvin (or Ursinus, or Olevianus) sided with them, did so because of their polemical context and also because they were in the middle of the development of this locus. However, more recent secondary sources have repeated this for/against duality without noticing how the doctrine developed. They confuse seeds of the doctrine with the established locus. In light of the assessment of Part I, the assignment of precise labels (favorable to the doctrine/against the doctrine) in the history of the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's active obedience becomes possible only after Piscator raised his voice against Beza. In short, there was no early consensus against which Piscator argued. Doctrinal consensus, limited as it was, arose only after the debates of the early seventeenth century.

That is why the figure of Johannes Piscator is so important. After all, the dissertation's main thesis does not attempt to find the first expression of the doctrine, but

how the doctrine matured. Since Piscator raised an array of responses to the Bezan position that became a focus of debate for generations after his death, his work becomes a turning point in the history of the doctrine. It was in response to him that the doctrine developed and certain biblical passages became *loci classici* of Christ's active obedience.

It is crucial, then, to understand Piscator's view of the meritorious cause of justification accurately in order to grasp how the doctrine developed. Later respondents to Piscator, for example, do not repeat the argument that earlier opponents used concerning Christ's active obedience being necessary to resolve the problem of our sins of omission. Later Reformed adversaries, nonetheless, agreed with Piscator that remission of sins blots out our sins of omission as well. These conclusions are born out of controversies in the seventeenth century – not directly against Piscator, but against developments of his teaching proposed by others – which demonstrate the doctrinal triad that becomes a trademark of the developed doctrine of Christ's active obedience, namely, the stability of divine law within a covenantal structure, double righteousness in justification and Christ's multifaceted relationship to the law.

Furthermore, there is a series of fundamental issues raised by Piscator that continued to frame the debate over Christ's active obedience. First, his understanding of justification being synonymous with remission of sins was foundational for several of his other arguments. That is why his opponents were so repetitive on the necessity of a twofold righteousness, in view of our double obligation towards the law. Secondly, Piscator's proof-texts to link justification only to the cross or the blood raised the counter argument of synecdoche. No single text was taken as exhaustive on justification, since neither of them pointed to all actions of Christ related to justification. By pointing to the

part, and the cross was referred most often, they meant the whole of justification. Thirdly, surveying his understanding of the legal covenant and how he understands the human person's relationship to the law was also crucial. This much neglected area of his thought shows how he did not lack a covenant theology, but lacked an understanding of the stability of the law in its preceptive part along with its promise. Fourthly, his resuscitation of the Anselmian understanding of Christ's life of obedience initiated a thorough development of how to conceive Christ according to his humanity and the law. Though diverse responses were provided, all of his opponents agreed that Christ could not have rendered obedience to the law only for himself. Fifthly, his argument about the vicariousness of Christ's obedience necessitating our liberation from having to obey it ourselves, spurred the distinction between different purposes for different obediences. That is, though Christ obeyed for our justification, for the purpose of satisfaction, we obey in gratitude and for our sanctification. The third use of the law was still vigorous among the Reformed in spite of Piscator's argument of licentiousness. These were some of the elements in which Piscator motivated development of thought. Points two and five were not given much attention in this dissertation, but the others were taken as a legal triad which supported the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's active obedience.

In response to Piscator, the developed doctrine and its three foundational principles focus on the law because active obedience is about obedience to the law. The first principle deals with the stability of the preceptive part of the law along with its promise throughout the covenantal dispensations. Seventeenth century federal theology commonly stated that the law remains constant, and that the gospel is not a salvation disconnected with the pre-lapsarian dispensation. Though the covenant of works was

frustrated in us, its requirements still stand and Christ had to undergo both its requirement as well as its judgment. Thus, the character of the Judge and his law remain immutable while the glorious character of the second Adam is to have performed what the first Adam did not do (such performance cannot be the suffering of judgment, for the first Adam received it in some degree).

The second principle concerns the twofold relationship a sinner has with the law and what is required by the law in order that a sinner be justified. This is where the notion of entitlement is worked out. In a covenantal structure, the reward comes to the doers. This notion of merit, contrary to what some have claimed, does not go back to any Medieval works/righteousness structure for it is not a merit attained by us in any way (not even because of the merit of Christ and his power in us), but solely by Jesus Christ. This notion of merit also provides for a fuller understanding of what 'righteous' means in the sight of God. It is not only the criminal who has just paid his debt for transgressing the law, but it is also the honorable citizen who has kept in step with the law in every one of its details.

The third principle regards Jesus Christ's relationship to the law, whether he was obliged to fulfill it for himself because of his humanity and, if so, how he was obliged. We saw how common it was to use the argument of the hypostatical union whether a theologian was against Christ obeying the law for himself or not. The hypostatical union was often regarded as meritorious among the Reformed, a point which corrects a strand of historiography which has overlooked the arguments for active obedience imputed which result from Christ's person. The different spheres of Christ's relationship to the

law presents a much more elaborate aspect of Christology than what we normally find in the sixteenth century.

There are also areas of research for which this dissertation merely opened some avenues for further investigation. First, the progress made in the history of exegesis needs further scrutiny. Pauline passages such as Romans 5:19, 8:4, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 4:4-5, Philippians 2:8, the “do this and you will live” passages, besides several others, were looked at both in Piscator as well as in some of his opponents. However, a detailed history of exegesis could explore how the debates over Christ’s active obedience shaped the understanding of such biblical passages in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. History of exegesis could also explore the synecdoche argument, when it came about as well as its full-blown appearance.

A second avenue opened for further examination is the question of continuity and discontinuity between Medieval, Reformation and Post-Reformation theologians. This project summarized how the Medieval Scholastics already discussed the role of Christ’s life (often didactical) in our redemption and the merit of Christ occurring from the instant of his conception. While the Reformation provided a forensic model which transformed the understanding of justification, it was the Post-Reformation theologians who picked up on the merit of Christ’s conception and the vicariousness of his whole life. Hence, there was continuity with the Medievals in that Christ was considered to have merited his entire life (from conception to death and resurrection), but discontinuity in that it placed such merit within the forensic structure established by the Reformation. Some issues of continuity and discontinuity have also been shown as carrying over from the Reformation

into the Post-Reformation formulations of Christ's active obedience. Much more, however, could be explored within this perspective.

In sum, this dissertation has examined the progress of the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's active obedience with a focus on the thought of Johannes Piscator. It has shown that the earlier scholarship that regarded the doctrine as clearly present in the Reformers was mistaken (chapter 2). Rather, examination of the sources showed how the beginnings of doctrinal formulation of the issue occurred in the 1550s and 1560s, and that significant debate over the doctrine became common only in the 1580s and 1590s (chapters 1 and 3). The shift from relatively rare formulation of the doctrine (as in Beza) to significant and extended debate took its focus from the figure of Johannes Piscator, who through exegetical (chapter 4) and theological (chapter 5) arguments refuted the doctrine. In response to his arguments, and of those who followed him, the seventeenth century witnessed several disputes surrounding Christ's active obedience which arose in different parts of Europe (chapter 6). These disputes highlighted three issues – namely, the stability of the law in a covenantal framework, the twofold righteousness in justification and Christ's relation to the law according to his humanity – which became the trademarks of the matured doctrine (chapter 7), as it was formulated in response to Piscator and various of his followers.

These later formulations constituted not a departure from the Reformation doctrine of justification by grace through faith, but a development of the understanding of Christ's satisfaction in order to provide us with such gracious redemption. There was no shift in paradigm. The Reformers stressed faith and grace in order to substitute our passivity in justification for the Medieval understanding of our participation in the

process of justification. Seventeenth century Reformed theology continued the same teaching of passive justification. It maintained the same gracious element of redemption that a righteousness *extra nos* was reckoned as ours in order that we be legally proclaimed just. The very fact that the majority of the Reformed theologians of the seventeenth century hinged their understanding of justification on the idea of an alien imputed righteousness is a testimony to the continuity of grace in justification. The imputed righteousness of Christ is what made sixteenth and seventeenth century Reformed theology in contrast to the teaching of works in Medieval and Roman Catholic teachings on justification.

Whereas there was continuity of grace in teaching an alien imputed righteousness, seventeenth century Reformed theology had a more robust understanding of Christ's satisfactory work. These Reformed theologians regarded that Piscator's doctrine of satisfaction did not do justice to divine law within a federal framework. The pre-lapsarian promise of life based on perfect obedience, which even Piscator complied with, could not be abrogated after the fall. Either obedience or punishment for fallen humanity did not correspond to stability of the whole law. Since the law is primarily concerned with its precepts, the appended threats cannot be the only element of the law which remains stable. Therefore, Reformed orthodoxy considered both obedience and punishments as dividends of any fallen human being. Righteousness, in the fallen state, is twofold according to the demands of the law. Hence, Christ's vicarious righteousness also needs to be twofold. He merits for us both deliverance from punishment and right to eternal life. None can be to him alone for he is not liable to the first and entitled to the second due to

the hypostatical union. Covenantally, however, he assumes the role of representative *viator* in order to obtain the covenant promises for us.

## APPENDIX

### PROPOSITIONS FOR ORAL DEFENSE

#### I. Dissertation Propositions

1. Secondary literature on the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's active obedience in the history of the Reformed tradition is seldom sensitive to its historical development and often unaware of how this locus matured. Though the forensic understanding of imputation of Christ's righteousness was consistently asserted by the Reformers, the discussion around what constituted this imputed righteousness was a Post-Reformation debate.
2. Theodore Beza was an exception among the mid-sixteenth century Reformed theologians in formulating a clear and consistent doctrine of imputation of Christ's righteousness where he described the different parts to be imputed.
3. The argument spurred by Beza and used by many Reformed writers that Christ's hypostatical union was meritorious with regards to his relationship to the law was just a new application of a previous theological concept. Medieval Scholastics referred to Christ meriting from the moment of his conception. The newness arisen in Post-Reformation occurs only as this understanding of merit is applied within a forensic framework of imputation of righteousness. Therefore, there is both continuity and discontinuity in the course of such theological idea.
4. Johannes Piscator, with the exception of the issue of Christ's active obedience, was in agreement with his Reformed counterparts concerning the doctrine of justification. Therefore any assessment regarding the place of our personal holiness in his understanding of justification as nearly being Roman Catholic is incorrect.
5. Piscator's early and long-lasting opposition to the imputation of Christ's obedience to the law, based on exegetical and theological arguments, served to make him the iconic adversary of this doctrine. Consequently, his opposition triggered the progress in the understanding of active obedience imputed.
6. The development of the doctrine of Christ's active obedience in the history of the Reformed tradition is noticeable in at least three areas: the stability of divine law within a covenantal framework, the need for a twofold righteousness based on a double debt towards the law, and the multifaceted relationship which the person of Christ has with the law.

7. A strand of historiography (Albrecht Ritschl, Robert Franks, Alister McGrath) contrasting Reformed and Lutheran arguments for the vicariousness of Christ's obedience to the law fails to notice the diversity of arguments within the Reformed camp. It is inaccurate to portray that only the Lutherans argued from the personhood of Christ, with their understanding of *communicatio idiomatum*.

## II. Coursework Propositions

1. It is arguable that John Calvin's doctrine of ecclesiastical discipline is not primarily Bucerian, since the evidence for Martin Bucer's influence upon Calvin prior to his years in Strasbourg is not substantial and before 1538 Calvin already had at least an incipient understanding of the major tenets of his matured view of ecclesiastical discipline.
2. Martin Luther's and John Calvin's understanding of work as "vocation" was heavily grounded on cultural background (Renaissance shifts in society, opposition to Monasticism, Anabaptists, and Libertines) and theological structure (two kingdoms, spiritual gifts, the priesthood of all believers) more than on biblical exegesis.
3. Stanley Grenz' three sources for theology (Scripture, tradition and culture) lacks the innovation he proposes in his project, undermines the authority of Scripture and creates a subjective and cacophonous environment in which one should do theology.
4. William Perkins' work on casuistry contains some assumptions that are helpful even today as we practice Reformed moral theology: the primacy of Holy Scripture for providing wisdom even for issues it does not directly attend to, a high regard for conscience (specially the regenerate one) as God's judge within us, and the recognition that there are certain matters of moral indifference.
5. Many textbooks inaccurately portray the Christology of Apollinaris of Laodicea to center on his trichotomous anthropology when he did, in fact, interchangeably use dichotomous formulas as well. The goal of his Christology was to substitute a unified understanding of Christ for a seemingly dyoprosopic Christology (Marcellus of Ancyra, Diodore of Tarsus), which holds in separation the divine and the human in Christ as two distinct "persons." According to Appolinaris, it was only through a "divinized" humanity that Christ would be able to accomplish our salvation.

## III. Miscellaneous Propositions

1. The "modernism" against which the Presbyterian Church of Brazil (Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil) reacted within its denominational seminaries in the 1950s

and 1960s was of a threefold nature: theological (neo-orthodoxy), socio-political (proto-liberation theology), and ecclesiological (ecumenism).

2. Preaching the inspired Word of God and teaching theology in an academic setting should not be understood as two disconnected pedagogical spheres. Aspiring at doing both in some degree is not only beneficial for the academy and the church to which one ministers, but also spiritually nourishing for the individual who ministers.

## Bibliography

- Abelard, Peter. "Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans (An excerpt from the second book)." Translated by Gerald E. Moffatt. In *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, edited by Eugene R. Fairweather, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 10, 276-287. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956.
- Allison, C. F. *The Rise of Moralism: The Proclamation of the Gospel from Hooker to Baxter*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1966.
- Alstedius, Johann Henricus. *Definitiones Theologicae Secundum Ordinem Locorum Communium Traditae*. Hanau: Conrad Eifrid, 1631.
- Althaus, Paul. *The Theology of Martin Luther*. Translated by Robert C. Schultz. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966.
- Ames, William. *Christianae Catecheseos Sciagraphia*. Franeker: Bernardus A. Berentsma, 1635.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Marrow of Theology*. Translated by John Dykstra Eusden. Durham, NC: The Labyrinth, 1968.
- Amyraut, Moïse. *Paraphrase sur l'épître de S. Paul aux Romains*. Saumur: Jean Lesnier, 1644.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Theses theologicae de tribus foederibus divinis." In Ludovicus Cappellus, Moses Amyraldus, Iosvé Placevs, *Syntagma Thesivm Theologicarvm in Academia Salmvriensi Variis Temporibus Disputatarvm*, 1:212-231. Saumur: Ioannes Lesnerivs, 1644.
- Annotations Upon all the Books of the Old and New Testament this Third, Above the First and Second, Edition so Enlarged, as They Make an Entire Commentary on the Sacred Scripture, the Like Never Before Published in English: Wherein the Text is Explained, Doubts Resolved, Scriptures Parallel'd and various readings observed*. London: Evan Tyler, 1657.
- Anselm of Canterbury. "Why God Became Man." Translated by Eugene R. Fairweather. In *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, edited by Eugene R. Fairweather, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 10, 100-183. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas*. 22 vols. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1922.

- Arminius, James. *The Works of James Arminius*. 3 vols. Translated by James Nichols and William Nichols. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.
- Armstrong, Brian. *Bibliographia Molinaei: An Alphabetical, Chronological and Descriptive Bibliography of the Works of Pierre Du Moulin (1568-1658)*. Vol. 7 of *Travaux du Grand Siècle*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy: Protestant Scholasticism and Humanism in Seventeenth-Century France*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Semper Reformanda: The Case of the French Reformed Church, 1559-1620." In *Later Calvinism: International Perspectives*, edited by W. Fred Graham, Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, vol. 22, 119-140. Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Changing Face of French Protestantism: The Influence of Pierre du Moulin." In *Calviniana: Ideas and Influence of Jean Calvin*, edited by Robert V. Schnucker, Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, vol. 10, 131-149. Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1988.
- Arnoldus, Nicolaus, ed. *Johannes Maccovius Redivivus: Sev Manuscripta Ejus Typis Exscripta*. Franeker: Idzardus Albertus, 1654.
- Asselt, Willem J. van, and Eef Dekker. *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise*. Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Thought. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Aymon, J. *Actes ecclesiastiques et civils de tous les synodes nationaux des Églises Reformées de France*. 2 Vols. La Haye: C. Delo, 1710.
- Backensto, Bruce R. "John Brown of Wamphray, Richard Baxter, and the Justification Controversy." *The Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007): 118-146.
- Barker, William S. *Puritan Profiles: 54 Influential Puritans at the Time When the Westminster Confession of Faith Was Written*. Fearn: Mentor, 1996.
- Baum, G., Eduardus Cunitz and Eduardus Reuss, eds. *Ioannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia Ad Fidem Editionum Principum et Authenticarum ex Parte Etiam Codicum Manuscriptorum, Additis Prolegomenis Literariis, Annotationibus Criticis, Annalibus Calvinianis Indicibusque Novis et Copiosissimis*. 59 vols. Brunswick: C. A. Schwetschke et filius, 1863-1900.
- Baur, D. Ferdinand Christian. *Die Christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung von der ältesten Zeit bis auf die Neueste*. Tübingen: C. F. Osiander, 1838.

Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics*. 4 vols. Edited by John Bolt. Translated by John Vriend. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003-08.

Baxter, Richard. *A Treatise of Justifying Righteousness*. London: St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1676.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Aphorismes of Justification*. Hague: Abraham Brown, 1655.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Confession of his Faith*. London: R. W., 1654.

Beach, J. Mark. *Christ and the Covenant: Francis Turretin's Federal Theology as a Defense of the Doctrine of Grace*. Reformed Historical Theology, vol. 1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007.

Bente, F. *Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965.

Berkouwer, G. C. *The Work of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965.

Bernard of Clairvaux. *De Laude Novae Militiae*. In vol. 182 of *Patrologia Latina Database*. <http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk/>

\_\_\_\_\_. *Sermones de Tempore*. In vol. 183 of *Patrologia Latina Database*. <http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk/>

Beza, Theodore. *A Booke of Christian Questions and Answers*. Translated by Arthur Golding. London: William How, 1572.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A Briefe and Pithie Summe of the Christian Faith Made in Forme of a Confession*. Translated by R. F. London: Rouland Hall, 1563.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Annotationes Maiores in Nouum Dn. Nostri Jesu Christi Testamentum. In Duas Distinctae Partes, Quarum Prior Explicationem in quatuor Evangelistas & Acta Apostolarum: posterior vero in Epistolas & Apocalypsin continet. Quibus Retiam Adiuncti sunt. Indices Rerum ac Verborum locupletissim*. Geneva: Henri Estienne, 1594.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Confession de la foy chrestienne*. Geneva: Conrad Badius, 1559.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Iesv Christi D. N. Nouum testamentum, Siue Nouum Foedus*. Geneva: H. Stephanus, 1582.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Novum D. N. Iesu Christi Testamentum: Latine Iam Olim a Veteri Interprete, Nunc Denuo a Theodoro Beza Versum; Cum Eiusdem Annotationibus, in Quibus Ratio Interpretationis Redditur*. Geneva: Oliva Robertus Stephanus, 1556.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Volumen tractationum Theologicarum*. 3 vols. Geneva: Eustathius Vignon, 1582.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The New Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ: Translated Out of Greeke by Theod. Beza*. Translated by L. Tomson. London: Christopher Barker, 1586.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Bèze a Crato." In *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze* tome 25 [1584], edited by Alain Dufour, Béatrice Nicollier and Hervé Genton, 259-268. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2003.
- Bierma, Lyle D. "How Should Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 60 Be Translated?" *Calvin Theological Journal* 26, no. 1 (Apr 1991): 125-143.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Law and Grace in Ursinus' Doctrine of the Natural Covenant: A Reappraisal." In *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment*, edited by Carl R. Trueman and R. S. Clark, 96-110. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Purpose and Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism." In *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology*, edited by Lyle D. Bierma, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought, 49-74. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age: The Covenant Theology of Caspar Olevianus*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996.
- Blake, Thomas. *Vindiciae Foederis; or, A Treatise of the Covenant of God Entered With Man-Kinde*. London: Abel Roper, 1652.
- Boersma, Hans. *A Hot Pepper Corn: Richard Baxter's Doctrine of Justification in Its Seventeenth-Century Context of Controversy*. Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1993.
- Bos, Frans Lukas. *Johann Piscator: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der reformierten Theologie*. Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1932.
- Boyd, Robert. *In Epistolam Pauli Apostoli ad Ephesios Praelectiones* London: Societatis Stationariorum, 1652.
- Bozeman, Theodore Dwight. *The Precisianist Strain: Disciplinary Religion and Antinomian Backlash in Puritanism to 1638*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004.
- Bradshaw, William. *A Treatise of Ivstification*. London: Thomas Creede, 1615.
- Brady, Thomas A., Jr. *Protestant Politics: Jacob Sturm (1489-1553) and the German*

*Reformation*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995.

Brakel, Wilhelmus à. *The Christian's Reasonable Service: in which divine truths concerning the covenant of grace are expounded, defended against opposing parties, and their practice advocated, as well as the administration of this covenant in the Old and New Testaments*. 4 vols. Translated by Bartel Elshout. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1992.

Bretschneider, Carolus Gottlieb, ed. *Corpus Reformatorum*. 101 vols. Halle: C. A. Schwetschke et filius, 1834 sqq.

Brooks, Thomas. *A Golden Key to open Hidden Treasures*. London: Dorman Newman, 1675.

Broun, John. *The Life of Justification Opened*. N.p., 1695.

Buchanan, James. *The Doctrine of Justification: An Outline of Its History in the Church and of Its Exposition from Scripture*. Birmingham: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2006.

Burchill, Christopher J. "Girolamo Zanchi: Portrait of a Reformed Theologian and His Work." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15, no. 2 (1984): 185-207.

Burgess, Anthony. *The True Doctrine of Justification*. London: Paul's Church-yard, 1654.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Vindiciae Legis: or, A Vindication of the Morall Law and the Covenants*. London: James Young for Thomas Underhill, 1646.

Burmanus, Franciscus. *Synopsis Theologiae & Speciatim Oeconomiae Foederum Dei, ab Initio Saeculorum Usque ad Consummationem Eorum*. 2 vols. Amsterdam: Joannes Wolters, 1699.

Burnett, Amy Nelson. *Teaching the Reformation: Ministers and Their Message in Basel, 1529-1629*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Burns, J. Patout. "The Concept of Satisfaction in Medieval Redemption Theory." *Theological Studies* 36, no. 2 (Jun 1975): 285-304.

Cahier, Gabriella, Matteo Campagnolo and Micheline Louis-Courvoisier, eds. *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Genève*. 13 vols. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1962-2001.

Calvin, John. *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*. Translated by John Owen. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*.

Translated by William Pringle. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses*. Translated by Charles William Bingham. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. 2 vols. Translated by William Pringle. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Commentary on The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*. 2 vols. Translated by John Pringle. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. 2 vols. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles and edited by John T. McNeill, The Library of Christian Classics, vols. 20 and 21. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sermons on Galatians*. Translated by Kathy Childress. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sermons on Melchizedek & Abraham: Justification, Faith & Obedience*. Translated by Thomas Stocker. Willow Street, PA: Old Paths Publications, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Sermons of M. Iohn Calvin Upon the Fifth Booke of Moses Called Deuteronomie*. Translated by Arthur Golding. London: Henry Middleton, 1583.
- Campagnolo, Matteo. "Deux lettres du synode national de Gap aux Églises soeurs (1603)." *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 135 (April-May-June 1989): 261-279.
- Campos, Heber Carlos de. *A União das Naturezas do Redentor*. Coleção Fé Evangélica. São Paulo: Editora Cultura Cristã, 2005.
- Campos, Heber Carlos de, Jr. "O Lugar da Fé e da Obediência na Justificação: Um apanhado Histórico das discussões Reformadas do Século XVII." *Fides Reformata* 13, no. 1 (Jan-Jun 2008): 53-69.
- Cappel, Louis. "Theses Theologicae De Christo Mediatore." In Ludovicus Cappellus, Moses Amyraldus, Iosvé Placevs, *Syntagma Thesisv Theologicarvm in Academia Salmvriensi Variis Temporibvs Dispvatarvm*, 1:244-250. Saumur: Ioannes Lesnerivs, 1644.
- Cappellus, Ludovicus, Moses Amyraldus, Iosvé Placevs. *Syntagma Thesisv Theologicarvm in Academia Salmvriensi Variis Temporibvs Dispvatarvm*. Saumur: Ioannes Lesnerivs, 1644.
- Chemnitz, Martin. *Examination of the Council of Trent part I*, trans. Fred Kramer. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Judgment on Certain Controversies concerning Certain Articles of the Augsburg Confession Which Have Recently Arisen and Caused Controversy." Translated by J. A. O. Preus and Robert Kolb. In *Sources and Contexts of The Book of Concord*, edited by Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen, 197-219. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Loci Theologici*. 2 vols. Translated by J. A. O. Preus. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989.
- Clark, R. Scott. *Caspar Olevian and the Substance of the Covenant: The Double Benefit of Christ*. Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology. Edited by David F. Wright and Donald Macleod. Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Do This and Live: Christ's Active Obedience as the Ground of Justification." In *Covenant, Justification, and Pastoral Ministry: Essays by the Faculty of Westminster Seminary California*, edited by R. Scott Clark, 229-265. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Iustitia Imputata Christi: Alien or Proper to Luther's Doctrine of Justification?" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (2006): 269-310.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Benefits of Christ: Double Justification in Protestant Theology before the Westminster Assembly." In *The Faith Once Delivered: Essays in Honor of Dr. Wayne R. Spear*. Edited by Anthony T. Selvaggio, 107-134. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007.
- Clark, Samuel. *Scripture-Justification: or a Discourse of Justification, According to the Evidence of Scripture-Light*. London: S. Bridge, 1698.
- Clarkson, David. *The Practical Works of David Clarkson*. 3 vols. Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1864.
- Clifford, Alan C. *Atonement and Justification: English Evangelical Theology 1640-1790; An Evaluation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "John Calvin and the *Confessio Fidei Gallicana*." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (July 1986): 195-206.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Justification: The Calvin-Saumur perspective." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 79, no. 4 (Oct 2007): 331-348.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Gospel and justification." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (July 1985): 247-267.
- Coccejus, Johannes. *Heydelbergensis Catechesis Religionis Christianae ex S. Scriptura*

- Explicata & Illustrata*. Leiden: Felicem Lopez de Haro, 1671.
- Cochrane, Arthur C. *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century*. Louisville/London: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2003.
- Como, David R. *Blown By The Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil-War England*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- Cooper, Tim. *Fear and Polemic in Seventeenth-Century England: Richard Baxter and Antinomianism*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2001.
- Crisp, Tobias. *Christ Alone Exalted: in Seventeene Sermons*. 2 vols. N.p., 1643.
- Cunningham, William. *Historical Theology*. 2 Vols. London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1960.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*. London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967.
- Cyprian, Ernst Salomon, ed. *Clarorum virorum epistolae CXVII e Bibliothecae Gothanae autographis*. Leipzig: Io. Frider. Gleditsch & filius, 1714.
- Davenant, John. *A Treatise on Justification*. 2 vols. Translated by Josiah Allport. London: Hamilton, Adams, 1844-1846.
- Dennison, James T., Jr. "Johannes Piscator and the Doctrine of Justification." *The Outlook* 53, no. 10 (Dec 2003): 8-11.
- Diodati, John. *Pious and Learned Annotations Upon the Holy Bible*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Miles Flesher, 1648.
- Döllinger, Johann. *Die Reformation: Ihre innere Entwicklung und ihre Wirkungen im Umfange des Lutherischen Bekenntnisses*. 3 vols. Regensburg: Georg Joseph Manz, 1848.
- Dorner, J. A. *History of Protestant Theology*. 2 vols. Translated by George Robson and Sophia Taylor. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871.
- Downame, George. *A Treatise of Ivstification*. London: Felix Kyngston, 1634.
- Dufour, Alain, Béatrice Nicollier and Hervé Genton, eds. *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*. 30 vols. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1960-.
- Duhamel, Pierre Albert. "The Logic and Rhetoric of Peter Ramus." *Modern Philology* 46, no. 3 (Feb. 1949): 163-171.

- Fatio, Olivier. "Note sur les quaestiones et responsiones de Bèze." In *Théodore de Bèze (1519-1605): Actes du Colloque de Geneve (septembre 2005)*, edited by Irena Backus, 177-183. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Présence de Calvin à l'époque de l'orthodoxie réformée: Les abrégés de Calvin à la fin du 16<sup>e</sup> et au 17<sup>e</sup> siècle." In *Calvinus Ecclesiae Doctor: Die Referate des Internationalen Kongresses für Calvinforschung vom 25. bis 28. September 1978 in Amsterdam*, edited by W. H. Neuser, 171-207. Kampen: Kok, 1980.
- Featley, Daniel. *Sacra Nemesis, The Levites Scourge*. Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, 1644.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Dippers Dipt, or, The Anabaptists Duck'd and Plung'd Over Head and Ears, at a Disputation in Southwark*. London: N. B. and Richard Royston, 1647.
- Fesko, J. V. "Calvin on Justification and Recent Misinterpretations of His View." *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, no. 16 (2005): 83-114.
- Feuardent, François, Jean Dadré and Jacques de Cuilly. *Bibliorum Sacrorum cum Glossa Ordinaria iam ante quidem a Strabo Fvlgensi collecta: nunc autem novis, cum graecorum, tum latinorum patrum expositionibus locupletata: Annotatis etiam ijs, quae confuse antea citabantur, locis: Et Postilla Nicolai Lyrani: Additionibus Pauli Burgensis ad ipsum Lyranum: ac ad easdem Matthiae Toringi Replicis*. 6 volumes. Venice: n.p., 1601.
- Forbes, John. *A Treatise Tending to Cleare the Doctrine of Ivstification*. Middelbvrgh: Richard Schilders, 1616.
- Franks, Robert S. *A History of The Doctrine of the Work of Christ*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001.
- Fuller, Thomas, et al. *Abel Redevivus: or, The dead yet speaking. The Lives and Deaths of the Moderne Divines*. London: Tho. Brudenell, 1651.
- Gataker, Thomas. *An Antidote Against Error, Concerning Justification*. Edited by Charles Gataker. London: J.C., 1670.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *D. Ioannis Piscatoris Herbonensis; et M. Ludovici Lucij Basiliensis, Scripta quaedam adversaria; de Causâ meritoriâ nostrî coram Deo Justificationis: unâ cum Thomae Gatakeri Londinatis Animadversionibus in utraque*. London: G. M., 1641.
- Gibbon, John. "The Nature of Justification Opened." In vol. 5 of *Puritan Sermons 1659-1689: Being the Morning Exercises at Cripplegate, St. Giles in the Fields, and in Southwark by Seventy-Five Ministers of the Gospel in or near London; with notes*

and translations by James Nichols, 304-327. Wheaton: Richard Owen Roberts, 1981.

Gomarus, F. *Opera Theologica Omnia*. Amsterdam: Joannes Jansson, 1644.

Good, James I. *History of the Swiss Reformed Church Since the Reformation*. Philadelphia: Publication and Sunday School Board of the Reformed Church in the United States, 1913.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Origin of the Reformed Church in Germany*. Reading, PA: Daniel Miller, 1887.

Goodwin, John. *Banner of Justification Displayed: or; A Discourse, Concerning the Deep, and Important Mystery of the Justification of a Sinner*. London: E.C., 1659.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Imputatio Fidei, or A Treatise of Justification*. London: R.O. and G. D., 1642.

Goodwin, Thomas. *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*. 12 vols. 1861-1866. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006.

Gootjes, Nicolaas H. "Christ's Obedience and Covenant Obedience." *Koinonía* 19, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 2-22.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Belgic Confession: Its History and Sources*. Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Thought. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.

Green, Lowell C. "Faith, Righteousness, and Justification: New Light on Their Development Under Luther and Melancthon." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 4, no. 1 (Apr 1973): 65-86.

\_\_\_\_\_. *How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel: The Doctrine of Justification in the Reformation*. Fallbrook, California: Verdict Publications, 1980.

Grew, Obadiah. *A Sinner's Justification: or, The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Our Righteousness*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: S. Bridge, 1698.

Grohman, Donald Davis. "The Genevan Reactions to the Saumur doctrine of Hypothetical Universalism, 1635-1685." Ph.D. diss., Knox College/Toronto School of Theology, 1971.

Grotius, Hugo. *Defensus Fidei Catholicae de Satisfactione Christi, Adversus Faustum Socinum Senensem: Scripta ab Hugone Grotio. Cum Gerardi Iohannis Vossii ad Iudicium Hermanni Ravenspergeri de Hoc Libro Responsione*. Oxford: Guilielmus Webb, 1636.

- Grynaeus, Johann Jakob, Amandus Polanus von Polansdorf and Ludwig Lucius. *Triga Basileensivm Theologorum. Hoc Est: Disputatio Tripartita, Johan. Jacobi Grynaei, Amandi Polani, Ludowici Lucij: De Perfectae Obedientiae Servatoris nostri Jesu Christi imputation: In Gratiam Pietatis [et] veritatis studiosorum conjunctim edita. Apprimè utilis, & digna, quae hoc tempore, ob controversiam Socinianam consideretur.* Amberg: Johann Schönfeld, 1613.
- Gunnoe, Charles D., Jr. "The Reformation of the Palatine and the Origins of the Heidelberg Catechism, 1500-1562." In *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology*, edited by Lyle D. Bierma, Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Thought, 15-47. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.
- Hartsoeker, Christian, and Philip van Limborch, eds. *Praestantium ac eruditorum virorum epistolae ecclesiasticae et theologicae*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Amsterdam: H. Wetstenius, 1684.
- Heidegger, Johann Heinrich. *Commentarius in Epistolam St. Pauli Ad Romanos*. Zurich: David Gessner, 1699.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Corpus Theologiae Christianae*. 2 Vols. Zurich: David Gessner, 1700.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Dissertationum Selectarum, Sacram Theologiam Dogmaticam, Historicam & Moralem illustrantium, TRIAKAS*. Zürich: David Gesner, 1674.
- Heinrich, Eckhard. *Joannis Piscatoris... De Meritoria Causa Nostrae Justificationis Nova & inaudita opinio succinctè & perspicuè refutata: Addita etiam est Theologia Calvinistarum in Articulis symboli Apostolici...; Accessit item disputatio Theologica, ad cujus Themata pro consequendo Gradu Doctoratus in Academia Marpurgensi responsarius erat autor hujus libelli*. Jena: Cristoph Lippoldt, 1607.
- Heppe, Heinrich. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Edited by Ernst Bizer. Translated by G. T. Thomson. N.p.: Wakeman Great Reprints, n.d.
- Herrmann, Erik. "The Righteousness of God and the Obedience of Christ: Revisiting the Theology of Luther and His Disciples." Unpublished paper.
- Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology*. 3 Vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.
- Hollweg, Walter. "Die beiden Konfessionen Theodor von Bezas: Zwei bisher unbeachtete quellen zum Heidelberger Katechismus." In vol. 1 of *Neue Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Lehre des Heidelberger Katechismus*, 86-123. Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961.
- Hotson, Howard. *Commonplace Learning: Ramism and its German Ramifications, 1543-*

1630. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Hugh of Saint Victor. *De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei*. In vol. 176 of *Patrologia Latina Database*. <http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk/>

Isbell, R. Sherman. "The Origin of the Concept of the Covenant of Works." Master's thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1976.

Jackson, Thomas. *The Life of John Goodwin*. London: Longman, 1822.

Jacomb, Thomas. *Several Sermons Preach'd on the whole Eighth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: Eighteen of Which Preach'd on the First, Second, Third, Fourth Verses are here Published*. London: W. Godbid, 1672.

Jue, Jeffrey K. "The Active Obedience of Christ and the Theology of the Westminster Standards: A Historical Investigation." In *Justified in Christ: God's Plan for Us in Justification*, edited by K. Scott Oliphint, 99-130. Geanies House, Fearn: Mentor, 2007.

Junius, Franciscus. *D. Francisci Junii Opuscula Theologica Selecta*. Edited by Abraham Kuyper. Amsterdam: Fredericus Muller Cum Soc. Et Joannes Hermannus Kruyt, 1882.

Kapic, Kelly M. *Communion with God: The Divine and the Human in the Theology of John Owen*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.

Kevan, Ernest F. *The Grace of Law: A Study in Puritan Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965.

Kirk, J. R. Daniel. "The Sufficiency of the Cross (I): The Crucifixion as Jesus' Act of Obedience." *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 24, no. 1 (2006): 36-60.

Kittelson, James M. "Marbach vs. Zanchi: The Resolution of Controversy in Late Reformation Strasbourg." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 8, no. 3 (1977): 31-44.

Klauber, Martin I. "The Helvetic Formula Consensus (1675): An Introduction and Translation." *Trinity Journal* 11, no. 1 (1990): 103-123.

Kolb, Robert. "Human Performance and the Righteousness of Faith: Martin Chemnitz's Anti-Roman Polemic in Formula of Concord III." In *By Faith Alone: Essays on Justification in Honor of Gerhard O. Forde*, edited by Joseph A. Burgess and Marc Kolden, 125-139. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

---

\_\_\_\_\_. "Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness." In *Harvesting Martin Luther's Reflections on Theology, Ethics, and the Church*, edited by Timothy J. Wengert, 38-55. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Not Without the Satisfaction of God's Righteousness: The Atonement and the Generation Gap between Luther and His Students." In *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte: Sonderband: Die Reformation in Deutschland und Europa, Interpretation und Debatten*, edited by Hans R. Guggisberg and Gottfried G. Krodel, 136-156. Güttersloh: Verlaghaus, 1993.
- Köstlin, Julius. *The Theology of Luther in its Historical Development and Inner Harmony*. 2 vols. Translated by Charles E. Hay. Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1897.
- Kuyper, H. H. *De Post-Acta of Nahandelingen van de Nationale Synode van Dordrecht in 1618 en 1619 Gehouden*. Amsterdam: Hoveker & Wormser, 1899.
- Lake, Peter. *The Boxmaker's Revenge: 'Orthodoxy', 'Heterodoxy' and the Politics of the Parish in Early Stuart London*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2001.
- Landis, R. W. "What Were the Views Entertained by the Early Reformers, on the Doctrine of Justification, Faith, and the Active Obedience of Christ? Part I." *The American Biblical Repository* 11, no. 30 (April 1838): 448-481.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "What Were the Views Entertained by the Early Reformers, on the Doctrine of Justification, Faith, and the Active Obedience of Christ? Part II." *The American Biblical Repository* 12, no.31 (July 1838): 179-197.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "What Were the Views Entertained by the Early Reformers, on the Doctrine of Justification, Faith, and the Active Obedience of Christ? Part III." *The American Biblical Repository* 12, no. 32 (Oct 1838): 420-457.
- Lane, A. N. S. "Bernard of Clairvaux: A Forerunner of John Calvin?" In *Bernardus Magister*, edited by John R. Sommerfeldt, 533-545. Spencer, MA: Cistercian Publications, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Calvin and Bernard of Clairvaux*. Studies in Reformed Theology and History, no. 1, New Series. Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Role of Scripture in Calvin's Doctrine of Justification." In *John Calvin and the Interpretation of Scripture*, Calvin Studies, vol. 11, 368-384. Grand Rapids: CRC Product Services, 2006.
- Lenker, John Nicholas, ed. and trans. *Sermons of Martin Luther*. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983.
- Letham, Robert. "Amandus Polanus: A Neglected Theologian?" *Sixteenth Century Journal* 21, no. 3 (1990): 463-476.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Foedus Operum: Some Factors Accounting for Its Development." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 14, no. 4 (1983): 457-467.
- Liber Sententiarum*. In vol. 184 of *Patrologia Latina Database*.  
<http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk/>
- Lillback, Peter A. "Ursinus' Development of the Covenant of Creation: A Debt to Melancthon or Calvin?" *Westminster Theological Journal* 43, no. 2 (Spring 1981): 247-288.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Binding of God: Calvin's Role in the Development of Covenant Theology*. Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Thought. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.
- Lombardus, Petrus. *Sententiarum Libri Quatuor*. In vol. 192 of *Patrologia Latina Database*. <http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk/>
- Lubbertus, Sibrandus. *Commentarius in Catechesin Paltino-Belgicam*. Franeker: n.p., 1618.
- Luther, Martin. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. 93 vols. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1883 sqq.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Luther's Works*. 55 vols. Edited by Jaroslav J. Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Smalcald Articles." In *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, edited and translated by Theodore G. Tappert, 287-318. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959.
- Lynn, William D. *Christ's Redemptive Merit: The Nature of Its Causality According to St. Thomas*. *Analecta Gregoriana Series Facultatis Theologicae*, vol. 115. Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1962.
- Manton, Thomas. *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton*. 22 vols. Worthington, PA: Maranatha, n.d.
- Marckius, Johannis. *Christianae Theologiae Medulla Didactico-Elenctica*. Philadelphia: J. Anderson, 1824.
- Mastricht, Petrus van. *Theoretico-Practica Theologia: Qua, Per Singula Capita Theologica, Pars Exegetica, Dogmatica, Elenctica & Practica, Perpetua Successione Coniungantur*. Amsterdam: n.p., 1724.
- McGiffert, Michael. "From Moses to Adam: The Making of the Covenant of Works." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 131-155.

- McGrath, Alister E. *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- McIntyre, John. *St. Anselm and His Critics: A Re-Interpretation of the Cur Deus Homo*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1954.
- McLahlan, H. John. *Socinianism in Seventeenth-Century England*. Oxford: Oxford University, 1951.
- McKim, Donald K. *Ramism in William Perkins' Theology*. American University Studies, series VII, Theology and Religion, vol. 15. New York: Peter Lang, 1987.
- McMillan, Samuel, ed. *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend Thomas Boston of Ettrick*. 12 vols. Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1848-1852.
- McWilliams, David B. "The Covenant Theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Recent Criticism." *The Westminster Theological Journal* 53, no. 1 (1991): 109-124.
- Meij, J. van der. "Pierre du Moulin in Leiden, 1592-1598." *Lias* 14, no. 1 (1987): 15-40.
- Melanchthon, Philip. *Commentary on Romans*. Translated by Fred Kramer. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Epistolarum Librum XII (1555), no. 5847." Vol. 8 of *Corpus Reformatorum*, edited by Carolus Gottlieb Bretschneider, 546-578. Halle: C. A. Schwetschke et filius, 1834 sqq.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Loci Communes 1543*. Translated by J. A. O. Preus. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Loci Communes Theologici*. In Wilhelm Pauck, ed. *Melanchthon and Bucer*, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 19. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Melanchthon on Christian Doctrine: Loci Communes 1555*. Translated by Clyde L. Manschreck. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Menk, Gerhard. *Die Hohe Schule Herborn in ihrer Frühzeit (1584-1660): ein Beitrag zum Hochschulwesen des deutschen Calvinismus im Zeitalter der Gegenreformation*. Wiesbaden: Selbstverlag der historischen Kommission für Nassau, 1981.
- Mentzer, Balthasar, and Joachim Veget. *De Iustificatione Hominis Peccatoris Coram Deo, Et Inprimis Causa Eius Meritoria, Disputatio Theologica & Scholastica*. In

*Qua Simul Iudicium Exponitur De libro cuiusdam Politici, novae Johannes Piscatoris opinion opposito; De cuius subiectis Thesisibus, Duce Rege Regum: Sub Praesidio Balthasaris Mentzeri, SS. Theologiae D. Professoris, Et Hoc Tempore Prorectoris in Academia Giessena, Publice respondebit M. Joachimus Vaquetius Hamburgensis.* Giessen: Hampelius, 1610.

Migne, J. P., ed. *Patrologia Latina Database*. <http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk/>

Miller, Perry. *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Puritans*. New York: American Book Company, 1938.

Mitchell, Alexander F. *The Westminster Assembly: Its History and Standards, The Baird Lecture for 1882*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1897.

Mitchell, Alex F., and John Struthers, eds. *Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874.

Moeller, Bernd. "Imperial Cities and the Reformation." In *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays*, translated by H. C. Erik Midelfort and Mark U. Edwards, Jr., 41-115. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972.

Moltmann, Jürgen. "Gnadenbund und Gnadenwahl: die Prädestinationslehre des Moyse Amyraut, dargestellt im Zusammenhang der Heilsgeschichtlich-föderaltheologischen Tradition der Akademie von Saumur." Ph.D. diss., Theologischen Fakultät der Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, 1951.

More, Ellen. "John Goodwin and the Origins of the New Arminianism." *The Journal of British Studies* 22, no. 1 (Autumn, 1982): 50-70.

Muller, Richard A. *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*. 4 vols. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Covenant of Works and the Stability of Divine Law in Seventeenth-Century Reformed Orthodoxy: A Study in the Theology of Herman Witsius and Wilhelmus à Brakel." *Calvin Theological Journal* 29, no. 1 (1994): 75-100.

Musculus, Wolfgang. *Common Places of Christian Religion*. Translated by John Man. London: Henry Bynneman, 1578.

\_\_\_\_\_. *In Divi Pavli Epistolas ad Philippenses, Colossenses, Thessalonicenses Ambas, & Primam ad Timotheum, Commentarii*. Basel: Officina Herungiana, 1565.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *In Epistolas Apostoli Pauli, ad Galatas & Ephesios, Commentarij*. Basel: Officina Heruagiana, 1561.
- Newman, Albert Henry. *Modern Church History, A.D. 1517-1932*. Vol. 2 of *A Manual of Church History*. Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1933.
- Niesel, Wilhelm. *The Theology of Calvin*. Translated by Harold Knight. London: Lutterworth, 1956.
- Oberman, Heiko A. "Iustitia Christi' and 'Iustitia Dei': Luther and the Scholastic Doctrines of Justification." *Harvard Theological Review* 59, no. 1 (Jan 1966): 1-26.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Offor, George, ed. *The Works of John Bunyan: with an introduction to each treatise, notes, and a sketch of his life, times, and contemporaries*. 3 vols. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1991.
- Olevianus, Caspar. *A Firm Foundation: An Aid to Interpreting the Heidelberg Catechism*. Translated and edited by Lyle D. Bierma. Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Protestant Thought. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *An Exposition of the Symbole of the Apostles*. Translated by Iohn Fielde. London: H. Middleton, 1581.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *In Epistolam D. Pauli Apost. ad Galatas Notae*. Geneva: Eustathivs Vignon, 1578.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *In Epistolam D. Pavli Apostoli ad Romanos Notae*. Geneva: Evstathivs Vignon, 1579.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *In Epistolas D. Pavli Apostoli ad Philippenses & Colossenses, Notae*. Geneva: Evstathivs Vignon, 1585.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Institutionis Christianae religionis epitome*. Herborn: Christophorus Coruinus, 1586.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Notae Gasparis Oleuiani in Evangelia*. Herborn: Christophorus Coruinus, 1589.
- Ong, Walter J. Ong. "Johannes Piscator: One Man or a Ramist Dichotomy?" *Harvard Library Bulletin* 8, no. 2 (Spring 1954): 151-162.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958.
- Owen, John. *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith, through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ Explained, Confirmed, and Vindicated*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Works of John Owen*. 24 vols. Edited by William H. Goold. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1862.
- Packer, J. I. *The Redemption & Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter: A Study in Puritan Theology*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2003.
- Pareus, David. "The Epistle of D. David Parie to the Illustrious and Noble Count, Lord Ludovick Witgenstenius, &c. Concerning Christs Active and Passive Justice." In *The Summe of Christian Religion, delivered by Zacharias Ursinus: first, by way of catechism, and then afterwards more enlarged by a sound and judicious exposition, and application of the same*, 791-806. London: James Young, 1645.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *In divinam ad Romanos S. Pauli Apostoli Epistolam Commentarius*. Frankfurt: n.p., 1608.
- Parker, T. H. L. "Calvin's Doctrine of Justification." *The Evangelical Quarterly* 24 (Apr 1952): 101-107.
- Pasore, Georgio. *Oratio Funebris in Obitum Reverendi et Clarissimi Theologi Johannis Piscatoris Beatae Memoriae, Communis Nostril Praeceptoris*. Herborn: Johannis –Georgius Muderspachius & Georgius Corvinus, 1625.
- Patterson, W. Brown. "James I and the Huguenot Synod of Tonneins of 1614." *Harvard Theological Review* 65, no. 2 (Apr. 1972): 241-270.
- Perkins, William. *The whole works of that famous and worthy minister of Christ in the Vniversitie of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*. 3 vols. London: John Legatt, 1631.
- Piscator, Johannes. *A Learned and Profitable Treatise of Mans Iustification. Two Bookes. Opposed to the Sophismes of Robert Bellarmine, Iesuite*. London: Thomas Creede, 1599.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Analysis Logica Evangelii Secundum Lucam*. London, 1596.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Analysis Logica Evangelii Secundum Mathaeum*. London: R. F., 1594.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Analysis Logica Omnium Epistolarum Pauli*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Georg. Bishop, 1608.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Animadversiones Joan. Piscator Arg. In Dialecticam P. Rami: Exemplis Sacr. Literarum passim illustratae*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Henrici Bynnemani, 1581.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Aphorismes of Christian Religion*. Translated by H. Holland. London: Richard Field and Robert Dexter, 1596.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Aphorismi doctrinae christianae ex Institutione Calvinii excerpti*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Richard Field, 1595.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Apologia Disputationis de Causâ Meritoriâ Justificationis Hominis Coram Deo*. Herborn: n.p., 1618.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Epistle 68 – Reverendis Amplissimis & Doctissimis viris Dominis Pastoribus Ecclesiarum Gallicarum.” In *Praestantium ac eruditorum virorum epistolae ecclesiasticae et theologicae*. Edited by Christian Hartsoeker and Philip van Limborch. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Amsterdam: H. Wetstenius, 1684.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Examen sententiae Domini Theodori Bezae, De justificatione Hominis coram Deo, quae habetur in annotatione ad Rom. 8, v. 2.” In vol. 27 of *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*. Edited by Alain Dufour, Béatrice Nicollier and Hervé Genton, 49-63. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *In Prophetam Ezechielem Commentarius*. Herborn: n.p., 1614.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Johannis Piscatoris Comentariorum in Omnes Libros Veteris Testamenti*. Herborn: n.p., 1646.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Johannis Piscatoris Commentariorum in Omnes Libros Veteris Testamenti: Quo Continentur Pentateuchus Mosaica*. Herborn: n.p., 1643.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Literae Io. Piscatoris ad Fratres de Controversia iustificationis.” In *Clarorum Virorum Epistolae CXVII e Bibliothecae Gothanae Autographis*. Edited by Ernst Salomon Cyprian, 74-76. Leipzig: Gleditsch & Filius, 1714.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Theses Theologicae De Christo ΘΕΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΟ*. Herborn: Christophorus Corvinus, 1607.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Theses Theologicae De Justificatione Hominis Coram Deo*. Herborn: Christophorus Corvinus, 1612.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Theses Theologicae De Lege Dei*. Herborn: Christophorus Corvinus, 1607.
- Piscator, Johann, and Ludovicus Lucius. *De causa Meritoria nostri coram Deo Justificationis inter J. Piscatorem et L. Lucium amica disceptatio*. Basel: Genathius, 1630.

- Pitkin, Barbara. *What Pure Eyes Could See: Calvin's Doctrine of Faith in Its Exegetical Context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Place, Josue de la. "Theses Theologicae de Iustificacione Hominis coram Deo." In Ludovicus Cappellus, Moses Amyraldus, Iosvé Placevs, *Syntagma Thesivm Theologicarvm in Academia Salmvriensi Variis Temporibvs Dispytatarvm*, 1.29-36. Saumur: Ioannes Lesnerivs, 1644.
- Polanus, Amandus. *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae*. Genevae: Petri Alberti, 1617.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Svbstance of Christian Religion*. Translated by Elijah Wilcocks. London: R. F., 1595.
- Polyandrum, Johannem, Andream Rivetum, Antonium Walaeum and Antonium Thysium. *Synopsis Purioris Theologiae, Disputationibus Quinquaginta Duabus Comprehensa ac Conscripta*, 6th ed. Edited by H. Bavinck. Lugdunum: Didericum Donner, 1881.
- Poole, David N. J. *The History of the Covenant Concept from the Bible to Johannes Cloppenburg's De Foedere Dei*. San Francisco: Mellen Research University, 1992.
- Preus, Jacob A. O. *The Second Martin: The Life and Theology of Martin Chemnitz*. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994.
- Priebe, Victor Lewis. "The Covenant Theology of William Perkins." Ph.D diss., Drew University, 1967.
- Quick, John. *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata: or, The Acts, Decisions, Decrees, and Canons of those Famous National Councils of the Reformed Churches in France*. London: Printed for T. Parkhurst and J. Robinson, 1692.
- Reid, J. K. S. *Calvin: Theological Treatises*. The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 22. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.
- Ritschl, Albrecht. *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*. Translated by John S. Black. Edinburgh: Edmonton and Douglas, 1872.
- Rollock, Robert. *Select Works of Robert Rollock*. 2 vols. Edited by William M. Gunn. Edinburgh: Woodrow Society, 1849.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Tractatus De Iustificacione." In Roberto Rolloco. *Analysis Logica in Epistolam Ad Hebraeos*, 236-253. Edinbvrgi: Robertvs Charteris, 1605.
- Rolston, Holmes, III. "Responsible Man in Reformed Theology: Calvin versus The

- Westminster Confession." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23, no. 2 (May 1970): 129-156.
- Rutherford, Samuel. *The Covenant of Life Opened, or, A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace*. Edinburgh: Andro Anderson, 1654.
- Schaff, Philip. *The Creeds of Christendom* 3 Vols. 4th ed. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1919.
- Schorfbaum, K. "Aus dem Briefwechsel G. Karg's." *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 16 (1919): 79-83.
- Slater, William. *A Key to the Key of Scripture: or An Exposition with Notes, Vpon the Epistle to the Romanes; The Three First Chapters*. London: T. S., 1611.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *An Exposition with Notes on the Whole Fourth Chapter to the Romanes*. London: J. L., 1650.
- Sedgwick, Obadiah. *The Bowels of Tender Mercy Sealed in the Everlasting Covenant*. London: Edward Mottershed, 1661.
- Seeberg, Reinhold. *Text-Book of the History of Doctrines*. 2 vols. Translated by Charles E. Hay. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958.
- Shedd, William G. T. *A History of Christian Doctrine*. 2 vols. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, [n.d.].
- Shepherd, Norman. "Justification by Works in Reformed Theology." In *Backbone of the Bible*, edited by P. Andrew Sandlin, 103-120. Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 2004.
- Sinnema, Donald W. "The Issue of Reprobation at the Synod of Dort (1618-19) in Light of the History of This Doctrine." Ph.D. diss., University of St. Michael's College, 1985.
- Spitz, Lewis W., and Barbara Sher Tinsley. *Johann Sturm on Education: The Reformation and Humanist Learning*. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995.
- Stam, F. P. van. *The Controversy Over the Theology of Saumur, 1635-1650: Disrupting Debates Among the Huguenots in Complicated Circumstances*. Amsterdam: APA-Holland University, 1988.
- Steinmetz, David Curtis. *Misericordia Dei: The Theology of Johannes Von Staupitz in Its Late Medieval Setting*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968.

- Stephens, W. P. *The Theology of Huldreich Zwingli*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.
- Steubing, Johann Hermann. *Caspar Olevian; Johannes Piscator*. Leipzig: Carl Cnobloch, 1841.
- Strehle, Stephen. *Calvinism, Federalism, and Scholasticism: A Study of the Reformed Doctrine of Covenant*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Imputatio iustitiae: Its Origin in Melanchthon, Its Opposition in Osiander." *Theologische Zeitschrift* 50, no. 3 (1994): 201-219.
- Strong, William. *A Discourse of the Two Covenants*. London: J. M., 1678.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *XXXI Select Sermons*. London: R. W., 1656.
- Synod of the Reformed Churches of France. "Epistle 67 – Johanni Piscatori Synodus Gallica S.P.D." In *Praestantium ac eruditorum virorum epistolae ecclesiasticae et theologicae*, edited by Christian Hartsoeker and Philip van Limborch, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Amstelaedami: H. Wetstenium, 1684.
- Tappert, Theodore G., ed. *The Book of Concord*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959.
- The Confession of Faith; the Larger and Shorter Catechisms: With the Scripture Proofs at large; Together With The Sum of Saving Knowledge*. Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1985.
- Thomasius, Gottfried. *Natalia Sacra Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*. Part 1 of *Historiae Dogmatis de Obedientia Christi Activa*. Erlangae: Adolphi Ernesti Junge, 1845.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sacra Paschalia Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*. Part 2 of *Historiae Dogmatis de Obedientia Christi Activa*. Erlangae: Adolphi Ernesti Junge, 1846.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sacra Pentecostalia Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*. Part 3 of *Historiae Dogmatis de Obedientia Christi Activa*. Erlangae: Adolphi Ernesti Junge, 1846.
- Toon, Peter. *Puritans and Calvinism*. Swengel: Reiner Publications, 1973.
- Toon, Peter, ed. *The Correspondence of John Owen (1616-1683): With an account of his life and Work*. Cambridge: James Clarke, 1970.
- Torrance, James B. "Covenant or Contract? A Study of the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth-Century Scotland." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23, no. 1 (Fall 1970): 51-76.
- Trinterud, Leonard. "The Origins of Puritanism." *Church History* 20 (1951): 37-57.

- Trueman, Carl. "John Owen on Justification." In John Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith, through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ Explained, Confirmed, and Vindicated*, iii-xxii. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006.
- Turretin, Francis. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. 3 vols. Edited by James T. Dennison, Jr. Translated by George Musgrave Giger. Phillipsburg: P&R, 1992-94.
- Ursinus, Zacharias. *Corpus Doctrinae Christianae*. Hanoviae: Estherae Rosae, 1634.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *De Libro Concordiae: Quem Vocant, a Quibusdam Theologis, Nomine Quorundam Ordinum Augustanae Confessionis, Editio, Admonitio Christiana*. Neustadt: M. Harnisch, 1581.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Doctrinae Christianae Compendium*. Londini: Henricus Midletonus, 1586.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Opera Theologica*. 3 vols. Heidelberg: Johannis Lanceloti, 1612.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Larger Catechism." In *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology*, edited by Lyle D. Bierma, 163-223, Texts & Studies in Reformation & Post-Reformation Thought. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*. Translated by G. W. Williard. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, n.d.
- Usher, James. *Eighteen Sermons Preached in Oxford, 1640, of Conversion, unto God, of Redemption, & Justification, by Christ*. London: S. Griffin, 1660.
- van Buren, Paul. *Christ in Our Place: The Substitutionary Character of Calvin's Doctrine of Reconciliation*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957.
- Van Dixhoorn, Chad B. "Reforming the Reformation: theological debate at the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1652." 7 vols. PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2004.
- VanDrunen, David. "To Obey is Better than Sacrifice: A Defense of the Active Obedience of Christ in the Light of Recent Criticism." In *By Faith Alone: Answering the Challenges to the Doctrine of Justification*, edited by Gary L. W. Johnson and Guy Prentiss Waters, 127-146. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007.
- Venema, Cornelis P. "Calvin's Understanding of the 'Twofold Grace of God' and Contemporary Ecumenical Discussion of the Gospel." *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 18 (2007): 67-105.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Recent Criticisms of the 'Covenant of Works' in the Westminster Confession of Faith." *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 9, no. 2 (1993): 165-198.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "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.
- Vermigli, Peter Martyr. *Most learned and Fruitfull Commentaries of D. Peter Martir Vermilius Florentine, Professor of Diuinitie in the Schole of Tigure, Vpon the Epistle of S. Paul to the Romanes*. Translated by H. B. London: Iohn Daye, 1568.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Predestination and Justification, Two Theological Loci*. Vol. 8 of *The Peter Martyr Library*. Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies 58. Translated by Frank A. James III. Kirksville, MO: Truman State University, 2003.
- Vickers, Brian. *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Imputation*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006.
- Visser, Derk. "The Covenant in Zacharias Ursinus." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 531-544.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Zacharias Ursinus: The Reluctant Reformer*. New York: United Church Press, 1983.
- Voetius, Gisbertus. *Selectarum Disputationum Theologicarum*. 5 vols. Utrecht: Johannes à Waesberge, 1655.
- Vos, Gerhardus. "The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology." In *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, edited by Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., 234-267. Phillipsburg: P&R, 1980.
- Walker, George. *A True Relation of the chiefe passages betweene Mr. Anthony Wotton, and Mr. George Walker, in the yeare of our Lord 1611 and in the yeares next following until 1615*. London: William Branch, 1642.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Socinianisme in the Fundamentall Point of Justification Discovered, and Confuted*. London: R.O., 1641.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Manifold Wisedome of God in The Divers Dispensation of Grace by Jesus Christ*. London: John Bartlet, 1641.
- Walton, Craig. "Ramus and Socrates." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 114, no. 2 (Apr. 13, 1970): 119-139.
- Weingart, Richard E. *The Logic of Divine Love: A Critical Analysis of the Soteriology of Peter Abailard*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.
- Weir, David A. *The Origins of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth-Century Reformation*

- Thought*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1990.
- Wendelini, Marci-Friderici. *Christianae Theologiae Libri Duo*. Amsterdam: Joannem Janssonium, 1657.
- Wengert, Timothy J. *Law and Gospel: Philip Melancthon's Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over Poenitentia*. Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997.
- White, J. Wesley. "The Denial of the Imputation of the Active Obedience of Christ: Piscator on Justification." *The Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007): 147-154.
- Wilke, Georg. *Georg Karg (Parsimonius), sein Katechismus und sein doppelter Lehrstreit, University of Erlangen dissertation*. Scheinfeld: Max Ille, 1904.
- Willet, Andrew. *Hexapla: That is, A Six-Fold Commentarie vpon the Most Diuine Epistle of the Holy Apostle S. Pavl to the Romanes*. Cambridge: Cantrell Legge, 1620.
- Wilson, James R. *A Historical Sketch of Opinions on the Atonement*. Philadelphia: Edward Earle, 1817.
- Winship, Michael P. "Contesting Control of Orthodoxy among the Godly: William Pynchon Reexamined." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (Oct. 1997): 795-822.
- Witsius, Herman. *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*. 2 vols. Translated by William Crookshank. Kingsburg, CA: den Dulk Christian Foundation, 1990.
- Wollebius, Johannes. *Compendium Christianae Theologiae*. Londini: J. Y. sumptibus Dan. Frere, 1647.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Abridgment of Christian Divinitie*. Translated by Alexander Ross. London: T. Mab and A. Coles, 1650.
- Wotton, Samuel, ed. *Mr. Anthony Wotton's Defence against Mr. George Walker's Charge, Accusing Him of Socinian Heresie and Blasphemie*. Cambridge: Roger Daniel, 1641.
- Zwingli, Huldrych. *In Search of True Religion: Reformation, Pastoral and Eucharistic Writings*. Vol. 2 of *Huldrych Zwingli Writings*, translated by H. Wayne Pipkin. Allison Park: Pickwick Publications, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Commentary on True and False Religion*. Edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson and Clarence Nevin Heller. Durham: The Labyrinth Press, 1981.