The Whole Obedience of Christ

Antonius Walaeus, Johannes Piscator, and the Imputation of Christ's Active and Passive Obedience

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Written for my grandson Samuel, and Drs. Maddox and Thomas in partial completion of the requirements of the PhD program at North American School of Theology

A Letter to Samuel

Dear Samuel,

As you read the following analysis, you will find the glorious truth of the gospel, the old English godspel (I like to think of it as being placed under the fascinating spell of God, but this is not the actual meaning which is “good news”). These are presented as the two-fold blessing of Christ’s imputation from his active and passive obedience. Reality is “Christ paid what we owed and kept the law we broke, and God counts both as ours”, as a friend of mine likes to put it. Another way to savor this glorious reality is in the words of the subject of this study when Antonius Walaeus said, “there is no fear that in Christ we should be made too rich.” Others have pointed out that in Christ we have gained more than we ever lost in Adam. This study shows the ground of that statement in the work of a man whose works have been muted for years because others with his same opinion had louder voices. I hope you can enjoy this for years to come, and I hope that you find a security in these beautiful truths that will stay with you in any experience of a “dark night of the soul” you may ever experience.

I love you,
your grandfather,
Milton Smith
September 26, 2026

Abstract

Is the whole obedience of Christ, his life as well as his death, imputed to believers for righteousness, and on that question did Calvin's heirs keep faith with Calvin? This paper asks Richard Muller's question of Antonius Walaeus. It traces the new opinion of Johannes Piscator, who made the holiness of Christ's life a mere condition of his sacrifice; the French synods that censured it from 1603 to 1614; the Synod of Dort, which kept the Confession's words; and Walaeus's exchange with Lubbertus in 1619. Walaeus taught that "the whole obedience of Christ, which he rendered to God the Father according to the law not only in his death but also in his life," is imputed to us. A fallen man owes a double debt, the penalty for his sin and obedience for the future. Christ bore the penalty and obeyed the law, and the two kinds of obedience, distinct in what they answer, were never separated in him. He answered Piscator while granting that the view did not overturn the foundation of our free justification. I argue that he was true to Calvin. He echoed and elaborated Calvin's teaching, and his additions, the terms active and passive, two kinds of guilt, and the covenant of works, serve that teaching rather than change it. The Reformed churches kept faith in two ways, some by censure and some, like Walaeus, by careful distinction. Later writers who say we gain more in Christ than we lost in Adam offer a fair development of his doctrine, but the claim is theirs, not his.

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1. The Question

> The relationship of the Reformation to subsequent developments in Protestant thought, particularly to the "scholastic" or "orthodox" theology of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century has, for more than a century, been an object of scrutiny by scholars and theologians in search of their Protestant heritage. In the analyses of Calvin and "Calvinism" especially there has been great interest in the question of continuity or discontinuity between the theology of the master and the doctrine of the successors. Did later writers disrupt the balance of Calvin's thought and produce a distortion of the system developed by the great Reformer of Geneva, or did they simply follow Calvin's lead as they defended and solidified the system of Reformed or Calvinist doctrine?[1]

Richard Muller put that question at the head of his study of Christology and predestination from Calvin to Perkins. The first article in this series asked it of one doctrine, God's knowledge of what free creatures would do. This article asks it of a doctrine nearer to the heart of the gospel. When God declares a sinner righteous, what is it that he counts to the sinner's account? The Reformed teachers of that age answered: the righteousness of Christ. They did not all agree on what that righteousness includes. Some said it is Christ's suffering and death, and that alone. Others said it is the whole of his obedience, the holy life he lived under the law of God as well as the death he died. The question divided men who agreed on nearly everything else, and it came to a head in the years around the Synod of Dort.

The man at the centre of this study is Antonius Walaeus (1573–1639). He sat at the Synod of Dort in 1618–1619, and from 1619 until his death he taught theology at Leiden.[2] He wrote on this question in a letter to a colleague in the summer of 1619, and again, at length, in two works printed in his collected works after his death, a short handbook of Reformed doctrine (the *Enchiridion*) and a fuller body of divinity (the *Loci communes*). He is less well known than some of the men he argued with. On this question he deserves to be heard.

Two terms need plain definitions before we go further, because the whole debate turns on them. Christ's *active obedience* is his keeping of God's law, perfectly and for his whole life, from his birth to his last breath: he did everything the law commands, as we ought to have done and have

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[1] Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 1.

[2] J. C. van Slee, "Walaeus, Antonius," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, XL (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1896), 643–644. Walaeus's works are cited from Antonius Walaeus, *Opera omnia* (Leiden: Franciscus Hackius, 1643): the *Enchiridion religionis reformatae* and the *Loci communes S. Theologiae*, both printed there after his death, in volume I; his reply to Corvinus and his *Consilia et epistolae* in volume II, which has its own title page and pagination. Long s is given as s and VV as W; abbreviations are expanded in square brackets; accents, the ligatures æ and œ, and the hooked e (ę) are kept as printed. The ampersand, and titles and references abbreviated with a full stop (such as D., Cl., Resp., vers.), are left as printed; otherwise Latin keeps the spelling and punctuation of the printed text, with [*sic*] where the print errs. Translations from Latin, French, Dutch and German are my own unless a published translation is named. Scripture is quoted from the English Standard Version (ESV).

not. Christ's *passive obedience* is his suffering of the penalty that the law threatens against sinners, above all in his death on the cross: he bore what we deserved to bear. The word "passive" does not mean that Christ was idle or unwilling. It comes from the Latin *patior*, "to suffer," and it names his obedience in suffering. The question of this article is whether God counts to believers only the second, or both.

The terms themselves were newer than the doctrine. Walaeus uses them, but he marks them as other people's words. He speaks of Christ's righteousness "active as well as passive, as they say," and of the view that Christ's passive righteousness, "as is commonly said," is properly ours.[3] That is worth noticing at the outset. It means we cannot answer Muller's question simply by looking for the words "active" and "passive" in Calvin. We have to ask whether the thing those words name is there.

Walaeus states the disagreement with care. He first sets down what all sides grant. "All agree," he writes, "that the original holiness of Christ's nature, and likewise the holiness of his life, and indeed his whole obedience, were necessary for us to be redeemed by his one sacrifice made in his death." A sacrifice that was not spotless could not please God. The dispute is over what that holiness does for us:

> Yet on this matter there is disagreement: some contend that only the merit of Christ's passion and death is imputed to us for righteousness, and that the holiness of Christ's nature and life was only a necessary condition, required beforehand in the victim to be offered; or, as is commonly said, that Christ's passive righteousness, not his active, is properly our righteousness.[4]

Then he gives his own judgment, and he gives it in a way that will matter for the end of this study:

> Although we acknowledge that this opinion, which came from learned men who have deserved well of the Church of Christ, does not overturn the foundation of our free justification, we judge that it is more agreeable to the comfort of believers and to Holy Scripture to hold that the whole obedience and righteousness of Christ, active as well as passive, as they say, is our righteousness before God, and that in the business of our

[3] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 71: "tam activam, quam passivam, ut loquuntur"; and "seu, ut communiter loquuntur, justitiam Christi passivam, non activam, esse proprie nostram justitiam." In the *Loci communes* he writes "justitiam vitæ, seu ut vocant, activam" (*Opera omnia*, I, 397) and "iustitiam activam, ut vocant, sed etiam passivam" (*Opera omnia*, I, 426).

[4] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 71: "Concedunt etiam omnes, Sanctitatem originalem naturæ Christi, item Sanctitatem vitæ, atque adeo obedientiam ipsius totam, fuisse necessariam, ut per Sacrificium unicum ipsius in morte peractum redimeremur. Nam hostia Deo placere non potuisset, nisi fuisset inculpata, & per Spiritum oblata, ut Paulus loquitur Heb.9, vers.14. Hac in re tamen dissensus est, quod nonnulli solum meritum passionis & mortis Christi ad justitiam imputari contendunt, Sanctitatem vero naturæ & vitę Christi fuisse tantum conditionem necessariam prærequisitam in hostia offerenda; seu, ut communiter loquuntur, justitiam Christi passivam, non activam, esse proprie nostram justitiam" (my translation).

> justification these two must never be torn apart; for there is no fear that in Christ we should be made too rich.[5]

Here in a few lines is the whole of Walaeus's position. The view he opposes is a mistake, and he will argue against it with every tool he has. But it is the mistake of good men, and it does not destroy the free justification of sinners. The whole obedience of Christ is ours, his life as well as his death, and the two must never be pulled apart. And the reason he gives first is not a technical one. It is the comfort of believers, and the generosity of God: in Christ there is no danger of being made too rich.

Walaeus adds a caution that shows his temper. He does not want to match each part of Christ's righteousness too anxiously against each part of our unrighteousness, as if Christ's life paid for one list of debts and his death for another; Scripture, he says, does not usually do that so scrupulously. "Nevertheless we do not allow believers to be robbed of either part of it; we maintain that the whole merit and obedience of Christ is to be set against the whole of our demerit and disobedience before the judgment seat of God."[6]

This article follows that position from its setting to its roots. Section 2 tells how the view Walaeus opposed was pressed by Johannes Piscator of Herborn, and how the Reformed churches of France met it. Section 3 shows how the question came before the Synod of Dort in the wording of the Belgic Confession. Section 4 presents a pair of letters from 1619, in which Walaeus argued the question with a colleague who took the other side. Section 5 sets out his doctrine as he taught it in his systematic works. Section 6 lays it beside Calvin and the Heidelberg Catechism. Section 7 takes up a question his words raise but do not settle, whether in Christ we gain more than Adam lost. Section 8 maps the positions, and the conclusion answers Muller.

My thesis can be stated in one sentence. Walaeus taught that God counts the whole obedience of Christ as ours, his holy life as well as his death, because a sinner owes God both the penalty for his sin and the obedience that the law still requires; on this point he kept faith with Calvin, the Heidelberg Catechism and the French synods against Piscator's new opinion, and he refined their teaching with careful distinctions and with charity toward those who disagreed.

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[5] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 71: "Etsi vero agnoscamus, hanc sententiam, à viris doctis, & de Ecclesia Christi bene meritis, profectam, fundamentum ipsius justificationis nostræ gratuitæ non evertere: tamen judicamus, consolationi fidelium & Sacræ Scripturæ convenientius esse, statuere, totam Christi obedientiam & justitiam, tam activam, quam passivam, ut loquuntur, nostram esse coram Deo justitiam, & hæc duo, in negotio justificationis nostræ, nunquam esse divellenda; cum non sit metuendum, ut in Christo nimis reddamur divites" (my translation). The margin reads: "Est justitia Christi activa, & passiva."

[6] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 71: "Etsi enim nolimus nimis anxie has partes justitiæ Christi opponere singulis partibus injustitię nostræ; quia, licet hoc no[n] sit inconveniens, tamen à Sacra Scriptura id scrupulose fieri non solet: nihilominus tamen non patimur, ut altera illius parte fideles priventur: sed totum meritum & obedientiam Christi toti demerito & inobedientiæ nostræ coram Dei tribunali opponendum asserimus" (my translation).

2. A New Opinion: Piscator and the French Synods, 1603–1614

The view Walaeus opposed did not begin with him or with Dort. It had been pressed as a system for some years by Johannes Piscator (1546–1625), professor at Herborn.[7] He was no outsider. In the German Reformed lands of Hesse and the Palatinate he had great standing, and the French churches, when they wrote to him, told him that he was the one man from whom they looked for a remedy.[8] That is part of what made his teaching on this point so troubling to them.

The Reformed churches of France were the first to meet it as a body. Their national synod gathered at Gap, in the Dauphiné, in 1603. In reading over the French Confession of Faith, the synod came to the articles on justification, and its acts record its response. I quote them in the English translation that John Quick published in 1692. The synod

> expresseth its detestation of those Errors which are now-a-days broached to the contrary, and in particular their Errors, who deny the Imputation of Christ's Active and Passive Obedience (by which he hath most perfectly fulfilled the whole Law) unto us for Righteousness.[9]

The synod did not stop at words. Provincial synods, colloquies and consistories were to watch for anyone "tainted with that Error," to silence him, and, if he stubbornly persisted, to depose him from the ministry. "And Letters shall be writ unto Master *Piscator* to intreat him not to trouble the Churches with his new-fangled Opinions." Letters were to go also to the universities of England, Scotland, Leiden, Geneva, Heidelberg, Basel and Herborn itself, asking them to join in the censure.[10]

The letter to Piscator survives. It was printed in a collection of theological letters edited by Philipp van Limborch, and it is dated at Gap in October 1603. It is courteous and direct. The synod told Piscator that "some contagion or other is creeping among us, which has taken hold of the minds of certain people who teach that the perfect obedience rendered by Christ to the law is

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[7] The dates are those in the title of Heber Carlos de Campos Jr., "Johannes Piscator (1546–1625) and the Consequent Development of the Doctrine of the Imputation of Christ's Active Obedience" (PhD diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2009). Piscator's chair at Herborn is named in the act of the synod of Gap quoted below: "*Herborne* (in which *Piscator* is Professor,)."

[8] H. H. Kuyper, *De Post-Acta of Nahandelingen van de Nationale Synode van Dordrecht in 1618 en 1619 gehouden* (Amsterdam and Pretoria: Boekhandel voorheen Höveker & Wormser, n.d. [1899]), 339: "waar Piscator groot aanzien had" (of Hesse and the Palatinate); the synod of Gap to Piscator, in Philipp van Limborch, ed., *Praestantium ac eruditorum virorum epistolae ecclesiasticae et theologicae*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: Franciscus Halma, 1704), ep. LXVII, 121: "quandoquidem tu unus es, à quo expectamus gliscentis morbi medicinam" (my translation).

[9] John Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata: or, the Acts, Decisions, Decrees, and Canons of those Famous National Councils of the Reformed Churches in France*, 2 vols. (London: T. Parkhurst and J. Robinson, 1692), I, 226–227 (Gap, 1603, ch. II, art. 2). Long s is given as s; spelling, capitals and italics are as printed. Quick's text is his English translation of the French acts.

[10] Quick, *Synodicon*, I, 227.

not imputed to us, and that his righteousness and purity do not accrue to us as the price of eternal salvation, but that this whole praise is owed to Christ's sufferings alone. And these men name you as the author of the view, and fight with your authority."[11] The letter was signed first by Chamier, the synod's moderator.

Piscator answered at length, and his answer is the clearest statement of the view Walaeus would later oppose. It is important to see what he did not say. He did not say that Christ's holy life was unimportant. He said that Christ's obedience is of two kinds: one "which he rendered to the common law by living holily according to it," and the other "which he rendered to the special command of the Father concerning suffering and dying for the elect." The first he called the obedience of life, and the second the obedience of death, "because death was, as it were, the colophon of the Lord's sufferings," its finishing stroke.[12] Both, he granted, have a place in our justification, but in different ways. The obedience of Christ's life is "a necessary requisite" for Christ "to be a pure and holy priest, who would have access to God to offer himself for us, and a holy victim, which could be acceptable to God."[13] It is the condition of the sacrifice, not a part of the payment. And so, Piscator wrote, "I teach that Christ merited for us the remission of sins, and satisfied God for them, by the obedience of death alone; and therefore that it alone, not also the obedience of life, is imputed to us by God."[14]

Piscator then put his case in the form of a logical argument, which he said would make it easier to judge. Its heart was a simple principle: whatever it is for which God forgives our sins, for that same thing he counts us righteous. But God forgives our sins for the sake of Christ's death alone. So it is for Christ's death alone that God counts us righteous.[15] Readers should hold this

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[11] The synod of Gap to Piscator, in Limborch, *Epistolae*, ep. LXVII, 121: "Serpit enim apud nos nescio quæ contagio, quæ animos quorundam occupavit, docentium, obedientiam perfectam à Christo legi præstitam, nobis non imputari, nec ejus Justitiam atque puritatem nobis cedere in pretium salutis æternæ: sed solidam hanc laudem solis Christi passionibus deberi. Atque hi te authorem perhibent sententiæ, & pugnant tua authoritate" (my translation). The letter is dated at Gap ("Vappinci") "octavo Idus Octobris 1603."

[12] Piscator to the pastors of the French churches, in Limborch, *Epistolae*, ep. LXVIII, 122: "Jam ad obedientiam Christi quod attinet, ea in Scripturis traditur duplex. Una, quam præstitit legi communi, sancte secundum eam (ultra passiones) vivendo: Altera, quam præstitit speciali mandato Patris de patiendo ac moriendo pro electis: quarum illam docendi gratia obedientiam vitæ; hanc vero obedientiam mortis κατ᾽ ἐξοχὴν (*per excellentiam*) nominare soleo: quia mors passionum Domini veluti κολοφὼν (*finis*) fuit" (my translation).

[13] Piscator, in Limborch, *Epistolae*, ep. LXVIII, 123: "Obedientia vitæ 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, quæ Deo accepta esse posset" (my translation). Piscator cites Hebrews 7:26: "For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens" (ESV).

[14] Piscator, in Limborch, *Epistolae*, ep. LXVIII, 123: "in hoc autem à me dissentitis, quod ego doceo, Christum per solam obedientiam mortis remissionem peccatorum meritum esse nobis, proque illis Deo satisfecisse; ac proinde illam solam, non etiam obedientiam vitæ, à Deo nobis imputari" (my translation).

[15] Piscator, in Limborch, *Epistolae*, ep. LXVIII, 123: "Propter quam rem Deus nobis remittit peccata, propter eam ipsam imputat nobis justitiam. Atqui propter solam obedientiam mortis Christi (quo nomine cæteras ejus passiones

argument in mind. It is the argument Walaeus answers most directly, and his answer to it, as we shall see in Section 5, is the sharpest thing he wrote on the subject.

The next national synod met at La Rochelle in 1607 and received Piscator's reply. It refused to add anything to the Confession's article on justification, since that article was "couched in the very express words of Scripture." But it answered Piscator plainly. It noted that he taught that justification is "only wrought out by Christ's Death and Passion, and not by his Life and Active Obedience," and it went on:

> This Synod in no wise approving the dividing causes so nearly conjoined in this great effect of Divine Grace, and judging those arguments produced by him for the defence of his cause weak and invalid, doth order that all the Pastors in the respective Churches of this Kingdom do wholly conform themselves in their Teaching to that form of sound words which hath been hitherto taught among us, and is contained in the Holy Scriptures, to wit: 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.[16]

Two things in that act deserve notice. The first is the phrase "the dividing causes so nearly conjoined." The synod's complaint was not that Piscator valued Christ's death too highly. It was that he pulled apart what God had joined, the life and the death of the one obedient Son. Walaeus would say the same, in nearly the same words: the two "must never be torn apart." The second is the synod's tone toward Piscator himself. It ordered that its answer be sent to him "without any vain jangling, and with that devotion as becomes the singular modesty expressed by him in his Letters to us, wherein there is not the least bitterness or provoking expression, leaving it unto God, who can when he pleaseth, reveal unto him the defects which are in the Doctrine of the said *Piscator*."[17] The French churches were firm in doctrine and gracious toward the man.

They were also determined. At Privas in 1612 the national synod required every pastor in service, and every candidate for the ministry, to sign a declaration on the article of justification. Each was to protest before God that 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."[18] Two years later, at Tonneins in 1614, after

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per Synecdochen comprehendo) Deus nobis remittit peccata; ergo propter solam obedientiam mortis Christi justitiam nobis imputat" (my translation).

[16] Quick, *Synodicon*, I, 265 (La Rochelle, 1607, ch. II, arts. 3–4). Quick prints "the eighth Article" [*sic*] for the Confession's article on justification, which is the eighteenth.

[17] Quick, *Synodicon*, I, 265.

[18] Quick, *Synodicon*, I, 348 (Privas, 1612, ch. IV, art. 2).

"mature deliberation and long debate," the synod revised the declaration into a fuller statement. Man, having no righteousness of his own before or after his calling, "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."[19]

By 1614, then, the Reformed churches of France had given their answer four times over: a public censure and a letter, a doctrinal statement, a subscribed declaration and a fuller canon. They called Piscator's teaching new, and they treated it as a departure from what had "hitherto" been taught among them. The Tonneins canon is worth noticing for one more reason. It takes up the very distinction Piscator relied on, the law common to all men and the "particular Commandment" given to Christ to suffer, and it says that Christ fulfilled both, and that we are justified by the whole.

3. Dort Keeps the Confession's Words, May 1619

In the Netherlands the question came up in a different way. The Dutch churches had no need to write a new statement. They had the Belgic Confession, and the Confession had already spoken. Article 22, on justification by faith, says that faith is only the instrument by which we embrace Christ our righteousness, and then, in the English version that Philip Schaff prints:

> But Jesus Christ, imputing to us all his merits, and so many holy works, which he hath done for us and in our stead, is our Righteousness.[20]

"So many holy works" is not a phrase anyone could easily apply to Christ's death alone. It speaks of the works of his life. When the Synod of Dort, having finished its judgment on the Remonstrants, turned in its later sessions to revising the text of the Confession, those words became the place where Piscator's teaching met the Dutch churches.

The fullest account of what happened is H. H. Kuyper's history of those later sessions. Kuyper explains that the English and Swiss theologians at the synod had urged that certain words of the article be restored in the authentic text, and that this seemingly innocent request had more behind it:

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[19] Quick, *Synodicon*, I, 401 (Tonneins, 1614, art. 19).

[20] Belgic Confession, art. XXII, in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, III, *The Evangelical Protestant Creeds, with Translations*, 4th ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, n.d.; copyright 1877), 408. The French text has "mais Jésus-Christ nous allouant tous ses mérites et tant de saintes œuvres qu'il a faites pour" (408; the sentence continues on 409). Schaff prints the French and the English together on the same pages.

> The teaching of Piscator, who denied the active obedience of Christ, had caused much commotion, and the English and French churches had openly condemned Piscator's view.[21]

The Dutch churches, Kuyper adds, had been asked before to join in condemning Piscator and had declined. Now the question was whether, by keeping or dropping the disputed words, they would oppose Piscator or side with him. The delegates from Hesse and the Palatinate, where Piscator had great standing, understood this well. They kept silent about it in the synod's sessions, fearing that the current would run against them. But when they left they placed two letters, dated 12 May 1619, in the hands of the synod's president, Johannes Bogerman, urgently asking that the Dutch churches not condemn Piscator's view. Bogerman, Kuyper says, received the request all the more favourably because "he himself stood not so very far from Piscator's view," and had declared in 1605 that if the matter came before a general synod he would take up the defence of Piscator's teaching.[22]

The Palatine letter survives. Its eighth point reads:

> Since the opinions of doctors differ in almost all Churches on the doctrine of justification as regards the obedience of Christ, we ask the Belgian brethren not to stir up quarrels with anyone or to split unity on that account, but, following the example of other Churches, to be content in the catechesis of the Church with general phrasing and with the explanation of Scripture such as Rom. 5:28 [*sic*], Phil. 2:6. In the Schools, however, let them allow each Doctor his own judgment, saving peace and charity.[23]

The Hessian letter went further. It did not only ask for tolerance. It argued that the dispute was not really about doctrine at all: "The disagreement lies in phrases and manner of speaking rather than in the thing itself and the dogma. On both sides our righteousness, which avails to stand before God, is placed not in our merits but in Christ Jesus and his obedience, and so on neither side is the foundation of our salvation overturned." The Hessians asked the brethren to bear with

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[21] Kuyper, *Post-Acta*, 339: "De leer van Piscator, die de obedientia activa van Christus loochende, had veel opschudding teweeggebracht, en de Engelsche en Fransche kerken hadden Piscator's gevoelen openlijk veroordeeld" (my translation).

[22] Kuyper, *Post-Acta*, 339: "Dit verzoek vond bij Bogerman een des te gunstiger onthaal, omdat hij zelf niet zoo heel ver van Piscator's gevoelen afstond en reeds in 1605 verklaard had, dat hij in de Generale Synode, wanneer deze over de zaak handelde, de bescherming van Piscator's leer op zich nemen zou" (my translation). Kuyper prints the date of the letters here as "12 Mei 1612" [*sic*]; he gives the Palatine letter as "De brief der Paltzische godgeleerden van 12 Mei 1619" on p. 514.

[23] Palatine theologians to the Dutch churches, monitum VIII, in Kuyper, *Post-Acta*, 514–515: "Quandoquidem de doctrinâ Justificationis quoad obedientiam Christi discrepantes sunt doctorum sententiae in omnibus pene Ecclesijs, rogamus Fratres Belgas, ne propter eas moveant cuiquam lites, aut unitatem scindant, sed aliarum Ecclesiarum exemplo in Cathechâ quidem Ecclesiasticâ generali Phraseologiâ et explicatione Scripturae, qualis est Rom. 5 : 28 [*sic*], Phil. 2 : 6, contenti sint. In Scholis autem permittant suum cuique Doctori iudicium, salvâ pace et caritate" (my translation). The letter is signed "Dordraci 2/12 Maij 1619, Abrahamus Scultetus, Paulus Tossanus, Henricus Alting."

one another where they differed a little on the matter, and to teach, with Scripture, that Christ's obedience is imputed to us for righteousness; to explain from Philippians 2 what that obedience is, since Christ became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross; and to teach that the sacrifice Christ offered on the cross was holy and free from every stain of sin.[24]

Bogerman acted on these letters. He proposed that the words of article 22, "and so many of his most holy works which he has done for us," be replaced by the more general phrase "the obedience of Christ," since that would satisfy the Palatine and Hessian theologians. He seems to have pressed the proposal hard, even warning that otherwise the Hessian and Palatine delegates might withdraw their approval of the Confession. The storm rose against him from several sides. One member, Menius, pointed out that the Palatine theologians had only meant to prevent Piscator's view from being expressly condemned, and could perfectly well accept the Confession as it stood. The colleges of delegates were asked to bring their advice in writing the next morning. "When these advices were read out, it appeared that all the colleges were against the proposed change."[25]

Then came a vote by name on whether the Confession should be left unchanged at this point. It was carried unanimously but for two votes. "Only Bogerman and Lubbertus voted against." At the request of some members the synod made one further change, and it strengthened the article rather than softening it: the words "for us" were to read "and in our stead," to cut off the Socinian reading of "for us" as meaning only "for our good," and so to bring out more clearly that Christ stood in our place.[26] That is why the English text quoted above says "for us and in our stead." Sibrandus Lubbertus, the second dissenter, was a professor at Franeker. Kuyper, drawing

[24] Hessian theologians to the synod, in Kuyper, *Post-Acta*, 515–516: "Dissensio in phrasibus potius et modo loquendi, quam in reipsa et dogmate posita est. Utrinque nostra, que coram Deo valet consistere justitia non in nostris meritis, sed in Christo Jesu, ejusque obedientia ponitur, adeoque a neutra parte fundamentum salutis nostrae evertitur"; and "ut se invicem nonnihil de dicta materia dissentientes tolerent, et cum scriptura Christi obedientiam nobis ad justitiam imputari doceant et quid per obedientiam illam intelligendum sit, ex Philipp. 2 declarent, ubi Christus dicitur factus Deo patri obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis; simulque doceant, sacrificium à Christo in ara crucis oblatum fuisse sanctum, et ab omni peccati labe immune, secundum illa 1 Pet. 1 et Heb. 7" (my translation). Philippians 2:8: "he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (ESV).

[25] Kuyper, *Post-Acta*, 341: "Bogerman stelde daarom voor de woorden in Art. XXII: „ende zooveel zijne alderheylichste wercken, die hij voor ons gedaen heeft" te vervangen door de meer algemeene uitdrukking „ghehoorsaemheyt Christi", omdat hiermede aen den wensch der Paltzische en Hessische godgeleerden zou voldaan zijn"; and "Toen deze adviezen voorgelezen werden, bleek het, dat alle colleges tegen de voorgestelde wijziging waren" (my translation).

[26] Kuyper, *Post-Acta*, 344: "Het daarop gevallen besluit is met algemeene stemmen op twee na genomen. Alleen Bogerman en Lubbertus stemden tegen. Op verzoek van enkele leden werd nog goedgevonden, dat de woorden *voor ons* zouden veranderd worden in: *ende in onse plaetse*, om daarmede af te snijden de uitlegging der Socinianen, die het woord *voor* opvatten in den zin van *ons ten goede*" (my translation).

on an older Frisian source, says that he too was not averse to Piscator's view and that he "abhorred the words *activa et passiva justitia*," active and passive righteousness.[27]

It is fair to ask why the passive-only party could still hope for support from the Confession. The answer lies in the next article. Article 23 says that we rest "upon the obedience of Christ crucified alone, which becomes ours when we believe in him," and it cites Romans 5:19 for the point.[28] Read by itself, "the obedience of Christ crucified alone" could be taken to mean the obedience of the cross and nothing else. Read with article 22, it cannot mean that Christ's holy works are excluded, for article 22 has just said that they are imputed to us. The article also recalls Adam, who, trembling, tried to cover himself with fig leaves. The believer does not need fig leaves; he is covered by another.

Walaeus's own vote is not recorded by name, but Kuyper names only two dissenters, and Walaeus was not one of them. Kuyper's note adds something more interesting: "It seems that Walaeus offered during the Synod to write to Lubbertus about this question, to bring him to another view. The beginning of that correspondence is found in the *Opera Omnia Walaei*."[29] Kuyper's "it seems" is careful, and the letters themselves tell the story a little differently, as we shall now see. But he was right that they exist, and they are the most personal evidence we have of Walaeus's mind on this question.

4. Two Letters: Walaeus Writes to Lubbertus, 1619

In the summer of 1619 the synod dispersed, and its members went home. Walaeus was then at Middelburg in Zeeland. Lubbertus went back to Franeker in Friesland. On 6 July Lubbertus wrote to him, and the letter opens by recalling an agreement: "When we left Dordrecht, it was agreed between us that we would inquire more carefully into the meaning of the twenty-second article of the Belgic Confession."[30] Kuyper, as we saw, thought that Walaeus had offered to write to Lubbertus to win him over. The letter itself describes a joint inquiry, and it was Lubbertus who wrote first.

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[27] Kuyper, *Post-Acta*, 344 n. 1: "Ook hij was, evenals Bogerman, niet afkeerig van het gevoelen van Piscator en verafschuwde de woorden activa et passiva justitia (VRIEMOET, *Athenae Frisiae*, 1725, p. 14)." Kuyper takes the vote itself from Voetius, *Politica ecclesiastica*, IV, 55, who, he says, does not name the dissenters. The same note calls Lubbertus "de Franeker Hoogleeraar."

[28] Belgic Confession, art. XXIII, in Schaff, *Creeds*, III, 409–410. The French reads "et nous nous appuyons et reposons en la seule obéissance de Christ crucifié; laquelle est nôtre, quand nous croyons en lui" (409), where Schaff's notes give Rom. v. 19 as the proof text.

[29] Kuyper, *Post-Acta*, 344 n. 1: "Het schijnt, dat Walaeus tijdens de Synode heeft aangeboden met Lubbertus over deze quaestie te schrijven, om hem tot een ander gevoelen te brengen. Het begin van die correspondentie vindt men in de *Opera Omnia Walaei*, II, p. 420 en vv." (my translation).

[30] Sibrandus Lubbertus to Walaeus, headed "Antonio Walæo Sibrandus Lubberti. Middelburgum.", dated at the end "Fran. A. 1619. 6. Iulij.", in Walaeus, *Consilia et epistolae*, in *Opera omnia*, II, 420: "CVm Dordrechto discederemus, conveniebat inter nos, ut in sententiam vigesimi secundi articuli confessionis Belgicæ diligentius inquireremus" (my translation). Kuyper cites these pages as "*Opera Omnia Walaei*, II, p. 420."

Lubbertus took charge of the method. “I will make the beginning,” he wrote, “and so that we may proceed without error, I will propose a method which in my judgment is right, and which I am persuaded you cannot disapprove.” There would be five steps. First, what the prophets of the Old Testament teach on the matter. Second, what the apostles teach in the New. Third, what the Palatine and Belgic Catechism says, by which he meant the Heidelberg Catechism as the Dutch churches used it. Fourth, what “our doctors, Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, Ursinus, Beza, and others” think. Fifth, what the Confession itself means. Each step would be a separate disputation, and none would stray into another’s ground.[31]

Then he began with the first. Moses, he said, teaches that the sins of the saints under the Old Testament were expiated by sacrifices: Leviticus sets out, chapter by chapter, how sins of ignorance, sins done wilfully, the sins of the priest and the sins of the whole people were to be atoned for, and the manner is always the same. So the lawful way of expiating sins in the Old Testament was by sacrifice. And Leviticus 17:11 adds that God gave the Israelites the blood to make atonement for their souls. “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.”[32] In that verse, Lubbertus thought, there is “a tacit exclusive”: no way of expiation except by the shedding of blood. He then set Walaeus a task. “Weigh these things carefully, most distinguished man, and see whether you can find in the prophets of the Old Testament any other way of expiating sins.” And since they were speaking for now only of expiation under the Old Testament, he asked Walaeus to bring his view “from the Old Testament alone.” Such doctrines, he reminded him, when they are disputed, “must be proved by the authority of the Scriptures alone.”[33]

The letter does not use the words “active” or “passive.” It does not need to. Its thesis, that sin is expiated by blood and by nothing else, is the passive-only position, and Walaeus’s reply takes it that way.

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[31] Lubbertus to Walaeus, 420: “Vt hoc à nobis commode fieri possit, ego initium faciam, & ut sine errore progrediamur, proponam methodum, quæ meo judicio recta est, & quam à te improbari non posse mihi persuadeo. Illa est hujusmodi. Primo loco inquiremus quæ sit de ea re sententia Prophetarum in Vet. Testamento? 2. Quid Apostoli in N. Test. de ea docuerint? 3. Quid tradat de hac re Catechesis Palatino-Belgica? 4. Quid de eadem sentiant Doctores nostri, Lutherus, Melanchthon, Calvinus, Vrsinus, Beza, & alii? 5. Quæ sit mens confessionis nostræ?” (my translation).

[32] Leviticus 17:11 (ESV).

[33] Lubbertus to Walaeus, 420: “Vbi puto tacitam exclusivam esse, quod scilicet nulla sit ratio expiandi, nisi quæ est per sanguinis effusionem, sive per sacrificia. Tu vir clarissime hæc diligenter expende, & vide an apud Prophetas V. Test. ullam aliam rationem expiandorum peccatorum invenire possis”; “hujusmodi dogmata, si controversa sunt, sola Scripturarum auctoritate probari debent”; and “rogo, ut ex solo Vet. Testamento hac vice tuam sententiam afferre velis” (my translation).

Walaeus received the letter only in the middle of August; he did not know, he said, where it had been held up so long. He answered on 3 September 1619. After a greeting, he came straight to the point, and he stated his own view before he stated Lubbertus's:

> As to the question of the matter of our justification before God, I hold that the whole obedience of Christ, which he rendered to God the Father according to the law not only in his death but also in his life, is imputed to us for righteousness, or is the meritorious cause of our reconciliation before God. For that our reconciliation before God may be full, the guilt owed to sins must be taken away, and the reward of righteousness must be assigned to us; though I admit that in the Scriptures the one is sometimes contained under the other by synecdoche, because these two, though distinct in themselves, yet by God's decree always cohere necessarily with each other.[34]

Several things are already here that will appear again in Walaeus's systematic works. Reconciliation has two sides: guilt taken away and a reward of righteousness given. The two are distinct, but they always go together, and they go together "by God's decree." Because they always go together, Scripture can name one and mean both, which is what a synecdoche is, a figure of speech in which a part stands for the whole. That last point is Walaeus's answer, given in advance, to every text that speaks only of Christ's blood.

He then stated Lubbertus's view fairly: "You, distinguished Sir, if I understand your mind well enough, think that full satisfaction was made for us by the passion and death of Christ alone, and that the holy and righteous life of Christ is not imputed to us for righteousness." And he accepted Lubbertus's ground rule. Lubbertus had asked him to stay, for now, within the bounds of the Old Testament, and he kept to it, though he used the New Testament to show what the Old Testament figures meant.[35]

His first answer came from the sacrifice itself. The perfection of an offering required that the victim be whole and pure, and that wholeness and purity were offered in the sacrifice and with it. "Therefore not only the death of Christ, but also his whole holiness and righteousness was necessary for our full reconciliation, and not only as some quality or condition required in the

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[34] Walaeus to Lubbertus, headed "Sibrando Lubberto A. Walæus. Franequeram.", dated at the end "3. Sept. 1619.", in *Consilia et epistolae*, in *Opera omnia*, II, 420: "Literas tuas 6. Iulii datas ad mediam Augusti demum accepi; ubi tam diu hæserint nescio"; and "Quod quæstionem attinet de materia justificationis nostræ coram Deo, ego totam Christi obedientiam, quam non tantum in morte, sed etiam in vita sua Deo Patri juxta legem præstitit, ad justitiam nobis imputari, seu causam esse meritoriam nostræ coram Deo reconciliationis, sentio: nam ut plena sit reconciliatio nostra coram Deo, oportet reatum peccatis debitum tolli, & justitiæ præmium nobis assignari: quorum alterum tamen in Scripturis sub altero synecdochice nonnunquam fateor contineri, quia hæc duo etsi in se distincta, ex Dei decreto tamen inter se necessario semper cohære[n]t" (my translation).

[35] Walaeus to Lubbertus, 420: "Tu, Clar. Vir, si mentem tuam satis intelligo, sola Christi passione & morte pro nobis plene satisfactum esse existimas, nec sanctam & justam Christi vitam nobis ad justitiam imputari"; and "Et ut me hac vice intra ejusdem Vet. Test. terminos contineam postulas" (my translation).

sacrifice, but also as something to be offered to God for an odour of sweet fragrance."[36] Here Walaeus met Piscator's distinction head-on. Piscator had called the holiness of Christ's life a "necessary requisite," a condition of the sacrifice. Walaeus answered that it was more than a condition. It was itself offered. He appealed to Hebrews 9:14, where the blood of Christ purifies the conscience because he "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God," and to 1 Peter 3:18, where Christ suffered, "the righteous for the unrighteous." Christ offered to the Father, Walaeus concluded, "not only himself but all that was his, for our full reconciliation."[37]

His second answer came from the priest. In a sacrifice one must consider not only the victim but the priest, without whom the victim could not be rightly offered. The washings of the priest, his garments and his other ceremonial sanctifications figured the holiness and righteousness of Christ, as all agreed; therefore that holiness and righteousness was necessary to obtain the reward of righteousness. Walaeus foresaw the reply that this was a condition required in the priest and not a part of the priestly offering. He answered that he judged the holiness and righteousness of our priest to be part of the offering presented to God together with the blood of the victim, and he gave three proofs.[38]

The first proof was Psalm 40, which Hebrews 10 applies to Christ. The psalmist sets aside sacrifice and offering, and says, "Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."[39] Hebrews says that "by that will we have been sanctified."[40] So the doing of God's will takes the place of the old sacrifices, and is the ground of our sanctification and the matter of Christ's satisfaction. Walaeus knew the objection: that "doing God's will" means only the willing obedience Christ showed in his death. "But the word 'law' resists this explanation, and where Scripture does not restrict, we

[36] Walaeus to Lubbertus, 420: "Primo enim ad perfectionem oblationis necessaria erat ipsius victimæ integritas & puritas, quæ in ipso sacrificio & cum ipso sacrificio oblata fuit: ergo non tantum mors Christi, sed & tota ipsius sanctitas & justitia ad plenam nostram reconciliationem fuit necessaria, nec tantum ut qualitas aliqua seu conditio in sacrificio requisita, sed etiam ut Deo in odorem bonæ fragrantiæ offerenda" (my translation).

[37] Walaeus to Lubbertus, 420: "obtulit ergo Deo Patri non tantum se, sed etiam omnia sua pro nobis ad plenam nostri reconciliationem" (my translation). Hebrews 9:14 and 1 Peter 3:18 (ESV).

[38] Walaeus to Lubbertus, 420–421: "Deinde in sacrificio non tantum victima, sed & Sacerdos considerandus est, sine quo victima rite offerri non potuit: cujus Sacerdotis lotiones, & vestimenta, & aliæ Typicæ sanctificationes, sanctitatem & justitiam Christi (prout extra controversiam est) figurabant; ac proinde ea ad justitiæ præmium obtinendum necessaria fuit"; and (421) "Respondeo, me omnino judicare, sanctitatem & justitiam Sacerdotis nostri Christi fuisse partem oblationis quæ una cum sanguine victimæ Deo fuit præsentata" (my translation).

[39] Psalm 40:7–8 (ESV).

[40] Hebrews 10:10 (ESV).

must not restrict." David speaks of the whole doing of God's will for which Christ came, "not of some part of it only."[41]

The second proof was the high priest on the Day of Atonement. He entered the Most Holy Place not only with the blood of the victim offered at the door but also in the full dress of his office, in his ceremonial holiness, and with the incense he offered in the censer. From this Walaeus concluded that "not only the blood of Christ, but also his righteousness and holy prayers, were the matter and cause of our reconciliation."[42]

The third proof gathered other types. The ark of the covenant was a type of Christ, and its mercy seat covered the tables of the law, "whole and entire." "From this I conclude that Christ appeared not only to take away the curse of the law, but also to supply and cover our disobedience against the laws by his obedience."[43] In Zechariah 3 the high priest Joshua, standing before the angel, is not only stripped of his filthy garments but clothed in clean ones: "Remove the filthy garments from him. … Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments."[44] Walaeus called this "a notable type of both parts of our justification": the taking away of the filthy garments is the removal of guilt, and the clothing in pure garments is the gift of righteousness.[45]

Last, he turned to two texts on which, he said, the apostle Paul built his whole doctrine of justification. The first is Genesis 15:6: Abraham "believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness."[46] "Therefore," Walaeus wrote, "the whole obedience of Christ which is received by faith is imputed for righteousness; for Abraham embraced by faith not a part of Christ's righteousness, but the whole." He joined to it Christ's word in John 8:56, that Abraham rejoiced to see his day. The second is Habakkuk 2:4, "the righteous shall live by his faith."[47] If life is owed to the one justified by faith, Walaeus reasoned, then Christ obtained for us not only

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[41] Walaeus to Lubbertus, 421: "Vnde necessario sequitur, quod illa præstatio voluntatis Dei sit nostræ sanctificationis causa προκαταρκτικὴ & satisfactionis materia, quia sacrificiorum typicorum loco hic substituitur"; and "Sed vox legis huic explicationi repugnat, & ubi Scriptura non restringit, nobis restringendum non est. David loquitur de tota præstatione divinæ voluntatis, propter quam Christus advenit, & de qua in volumine libri scriptum est, non de aliqua tantum illius parte" (my translation). The Greek word describes a cause that goes before and sets a thing in motion.

[42] Walaeus to Lubbertus, 421: "unde concludo, non tantum sanguinem Christi, sed ejus etiam justitiam & preces sanctas, fuisse reconciliationis materiam & causam" (my translation).

[43] Walaeus to Lubbertus, 421: "Arca fœderis fuit Christi typus, propitiatorium texit tabulas legis totas & integras: unde concludo, Christum comparuisse no[n] tantum ut maledictionem legis tolleret, sed ut etiam nostram inobedientiam adversus leges sua obedientia suppleret ac tegeret" (my translation).

[44] Zechariah 3:4 (ESV).

[45] Walaeus to Lubbertus, 421: "Insignis typus utriusque partis justificationis nostræ" (my translation).

[46] Genesis 15:6 (ESV).

[47] Habakkuk 2:4 (ESV).

deliverance from guilt and redemption from death by his passion, but also a righteousness by obedience to the law, "to which alone life is promised. 'For he who does these things shall live in them.'"[48] The words are those of Leviticus 18:5, which Paul quotes in Galatians 3:12, "The one who does them shall live by them,"[49] and again in Romans 10:5.

The letter ends with an apology. "These few things, distinguished Sir, I have answered to your letter, which was full of kindness, shut in by lack of time." In two weeks, God willing, he would move with his family to Leiden. He asked God to lead them both further into his truth by his Spirit, and he sent greetings to Bogerman and Florentius.[50]

Three things about this exchange should be kept in view. First, it is the only statement of Walaeus's doctrine that can be dated. The *Enchiridion* and the *Loci communes* were printed after his death, and I do not know when he wrote the pages on this subject. So I do not claim that his view developed between the letter and the books. What can be said is that the doctrine of the letter and the doctrine of the books are the same. Second, only the first of Lubbertus's five steps is answered on these pages, and the volume prints no reply from Lubbertus. We do not know whether the inquiry went further. Third, the tone is that of a brother writing to a brother. Lubbertus had voted against the synod only weeks before. Walaeus did not threaten him or lecture him on the synod's authority. He answered his argument, on his terms, from his chosen ground, and he asked God to lead them both into the truth.

5. The Debt Owed Twice

The letter to Lubbertus gives Walaeus's view in the space of a few pages. His two systematic works give it at length. The *Enchiridion*, a handbook of Reformed doctrine, treats the question twice: first under the satisfaction of Christ, and again, more fully, under justification. The *Loci communes*, his longer set of theological topics, does the same, and adds the objections of the other side one by one, with his answers. In this section I set out the argument as he built it. It rests on one simple idea, which he never tired of repeating: a sinner owes God two things, not one.

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[48] Walaeus to Lubbertus, 421: "imputatur ergo ad justitiam tota obedientia Christi quæ fide recipitur; non enim partem justitiæ Christi, sed totam, fide amplexus est Abraham"; and "Si vita debetur justificato ex fide; ergo non tantum liberatio à reatu, redemptio à morte per passione[m] Christi, sed etia[m] justitia per obedientia[m] legis parta est: cui vita demu[m] est promissa. *Qui fecerit enim hæc, vivet in iis*" (my translation). Walaeus says that Paul "tota[m] justificationis doctrinam ubique superstruit" on these two texts.

[49] Galatians 3:12 (ESV); compare Leviticus 18:5 and Romans 10:5 (ESV).

[50] Walaeus to Lubbertus, 421: "Hæc pauca, cl. vir, ad literas tuas, humanitatis plenas, angustia temporis exclusus, respondi. Statui per Dei gratiam post duas septimanas Lugdunum Bat. cum familia mea migrare"; "Deum rogans, ut nos in veritatem suam magis & magis ducat per Spiritum suum"; and "Salveant à me Bogermannus & Florētius, ubi aderunt" (my translation).

5.1 What a Sinner Owes

The objection that Walaeus had to meet first was Piscator's main premise. He states it in the *Enchiridion* in its shortest form: "Man owed God either the obedience of the law, or the penalty if he transgressed, not both; therefore the satisfaction of Christ consists only in the penalty which he bore for us." His answer turns on a distinction between man before the fall and man after it:

> The antecedent is true of man not fallen. For if man, not yet fallen, had remained in his obedience, he would not have owed God the penalty; but of fallen man it is false, because fallen man owes the penalty on account of the sin already committed, and besides that, obedience for the future. For by sinning he could not take away from God his right, and the obligation to the obedience owed to him. Christ therefore bore the penalty to free us from the penalty, and became obedient to the law to acquire for us the right of the sons of God.[51]

The *Loci communes* says the same thing in fewer words. "The law obliges to penalty or obedience, not to both," says the objector. "That is false in a sinful man," Walaeus replies. "It obliges a righteous man to obedience alone, a sinner to both."[52]

The point is plain enough when it is put in ordinary terms. A man who breaks his neighbor's window owes him the cost of the window. But paying for the window does not release him from the duty not to break the next one. His obligation to keep the law did not end when he broke it. In the same way, when Adam sinned, God did not lose his right to Adam's obedience. The sinner now owed a penalty for what he had done, and he still owed obedience for all that he was bound to do. If a surety was to pay what the sinner owed, he had to pay both. That is why Walaeus says in the *Loci communes*: "The satisfaction of justice required that what we owed should be fulfilled by our surety. But we owed not only penalty for sin, but also obedience for the fault."[53] And it is why, in the *Enchiridion*, he calls the active obedience "the second part of the satisfaction of Christ": "For a full satisfaction made for others requires that everything be done which is owed

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[51] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 40: "At objicitur à nonnullis; Homo debuit Deo vel obedientia[m] legis, vel pœna[m] si transgrederetur, non utramque; Ergo satisfactio Christi consistit ta[n]tum in pœna quam pro nobis tulit. Respondeo. Antecedens verum est de homine non lapso. Nam si homo nondum lapsus, permansisset in sua obedientia, pœnam Deo non debuisset; sed de homine lapso falsum est: quia homo lapsus pœnam debet ob peccatum jam admissum, & præterea obedientiam in futurum. Nam peccando non potuit Deo adimere jus suu[m], & obligationem ad obedientiam illi debitam. Christus ergo pœnam tulit, ut nos à pœna liberaret; & legi obediens factus est, ut jus filiorum Dei nobis acquireret" (my translation).

[52] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 399: "Lex obligat ad pœnam aut obedientiam, non ad utrumque"; "Falsum id in homine peccatore, ut supra visum: hominem justum obligat ad solam obedientiam, peccatorem ad utrumque" (my translation).

[53] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 397: "Satisfactio justitiæ exigebat, ut quod nos debebamus, impleretur à nostro sponsore. At nos debebamus non tantum pœnam pro peccato, sed etiam obedientiam pro culpa" (my translation).

by the other; but man owed God perfect obedience to the law, and besides, penalties for his transgressions."[54]

Walaeus had laid the ground for this much earlier in the *Enchiridion*, in his account of the first man. To the objection that eating the fruit of the forbidden tree does not seem so great a sin, he answered that the tree was not to be regarded "simply as a tree, but as a sacrament of the whole obedience which man owed to God."[55] What Adam owed was the whole obedience of the law, and the tree was the test of it. In the same place he says that original sin includes, first, a guilt to which all Adam's descendants are born liable, "on account of the just imputation of Adam's sin."[56] Imputation, then, runs through Walaeus's whole account of salvation. Adam's disobedience was reckoned to his children; Christ's obedience is reckoned to his.

5.2 What Scripture Says

Walaeus did not rest his case on a principle of justice alone. He argued from Scripture, and his arguments in the two books overlap with those in the letter.

The first text is Romans 5:19: "For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous."[57] Piscator took "obedience" here to mean Christ's obedience in his death. Walaeus answered that the text sets Christ's obedience against Adam's disobedience, and Adam's disobedience was not the breaking of one rule only. "The disobedience of Adam was a transgression of the whole law, which was violated in that one transgression; therefore the obedience which is set against it must also be taken for the whole obedience of Christ which he rendered to the Father."[58] In the *Loci communes* he answers the opponents' claim that the obedience of Romans 5:19 means the passion alone: "It is denied that it means that alone, because it is set against the disobedience of Adam, which was against the whole law." Then he adds a remark on words: "The passion alone

[54] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 40: "Secunda pars satisfactionis Christi, consistit in activa & habituali illa obedientia, qua Christus legi perfecte obedivit. Nam plena satisfactio quæ pro aliis præstatur requirit, ut omnia fiant quæ ab alio debentur; homo autem debuit Deo obedientiam perfectam legis, & præterea pœnas propter transgressiones suas" (my translation).

[55] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, fol. 12: "Object. At comedere de fructu arboris vetitæ, non videtur tantum peccatum. Respondeo. Hanc arborem, quæcunque fuerit, non simpliciter debere spectari ut arbore[m]: sed ut Sacramentu[m] totius obedientiæ, quam homo Deo debebat" (my translation).

[56] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, fol. 12: "Complectitur autem hoc peccatum, I. Reatum, cui omnes posteri Adami nascuntur obnoxii, propter justam peccati Adami imputationem" (my translation).

[57] Romans 5:19 (ESV).

[58] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 71: "nam inobedientia Adami fuit transgressio totius legis, quæ una illa transgressione violabatur; ergo obedientia, quæ huic opponitur, pro tota obedientia Christi, quam patri præstitit, etiam sumenda est" (my translation).

cannot be called righteousness, and the passion cannot be called the whole righteousness of Christ."[59] Suffering is not, by itself, righteousness. Righteousness is doing what the law requires.

The second text is Romans 8:3–4: God sent his own Son and "condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us."[60] Walaeus asked what that righteous requirement was. "If he condemned or abolished sin, so that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, then surely we must find in Christ that righteousness which the law contained in itself and could not give. But the law contained in itself active righteousness, and the righteous requirement of the law is, Do this and live."[61] The law's demand was not only "suffer if you sin." It was "do this, and you will live."[62]

The third is Galatians 4:4–5, where the Son was "born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law."[63] To be "under the law," says Walaeus, does not mean only to be under its curse, "but also under the exact obedience of the law."[64] The opponents replied that being made under the law signifies "only the curse of the law, not the obedience of the law." Walaeus answered that they did not wish to join to the law only its curse, but its blessing: "Do this and live."[65]

The fourth is Psalm 40, read with Hebrews 10, which Walaeus had already used in his letter. When Christ comes into the world, he says, "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book."[66] In the *Enchiridion* Walaeus points to the words that the psalm adds, "your law is within my heart," and he reads the earlier phrase "you have given me an open ear" (in his Latin, "you have pierced my ears") to mean "you have prepared me to obey you

[59] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 397: "Negatur solam intelligi; quia opponitur inobedientiæ Adami quæ contra legem totam fuit"; "Iustitia autem sola passio vocari non potest, & passio tota Christi justitia non potest vocari" (my translation).

[60] Romans 8:3–4 (ESV).

[61] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 398: "Si condemnavit aut abolevit peccatum, ut justificamen legis in nobis impleretur; tum sane eam justitiam oportet in Christo à nobis reperiri, quam lex in se continebat & communicare non poterat. At lex continebat in se justitiam activam, & justificamen legis est, Hoc fac & vives" (my translation).

[62] Luke 10:28 (ESV).

[63] Galatians 4:4–5 (ESV).

[64] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 40: "Fieri autem sub lege, hic non significat tantum sub maledictione legis esse; sed etiam sub obedientia exacta legis" (my translation).

[65] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 398: "At per factum esse sub lege, significatur tantum legis maledictio, non legis obedientia"; "At non volebant conjungere maledictionem legis, sed benedictionem, hoc fac & vives" (my translation).

[66] Hebrews 10:7 (ESV); compare Psalm 40:6–8 (ESV).

in all things."[67] In the *Loci communes* he gives his objection to the narrow reading of the passage in four words: "They limit what the word of God does not limit."[68]

The fifth argument rests on the promise of life. "Since we were not only to be freed from death, but also the right to life was to be restored to us, it follows that Christ not only had to suffer for us, but also by his obedience to merit for us the right to life." And Walaeus names the law's condition for life, "Do this and live," citing Romans 10:5 and Galatians 3:12.[69] Suffering could pay a penalty. It could not earn a reward. Only obedience could do that.

Last, Walaeus appealed to the types of the Old Testament, as he had in the letter. "Christ made satisfaction for us in the manner in which it was foreshadowed that he would make satisfaction, in the Old Testament. But in the Old Testament not only the passive but also the active obedience was foreshadowed." In the priest a ceremonial purity was required, in his garments and washings; in the sacrifice, wholeness; and then incense was offered too, "which did not figure the passion, but the actions and prayers of the high priest."[70]

5.3 The Objections Answered

The *Enchiridion* and the *Loci communes* both take up the arguments of the other side. Walaeus called one of them "the most difficult of all." I take them in turn.

The first objection was that Christ, as a man, was bound to keep the law for himself. As a creature of God in his human nature he was obliged to keep the moral law, "therefore he did not keep it for us, that is, to justify us." Walaeus answered that the Son of God was not made man for his own sake. "For Christ, properly speaking, was not made man for himself, but for us, as the prophet Isaiah testifies, chapter 9, verse 6. As then he was born for us and given to us, so also he was made subject to the law for us."[71] The verse he had in mind is this: "For to us a child is

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[67] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 71: "Nam vers. 9 dicit, venio, Deus mi, ut faciam voluntatem tuam, & lex tua est in visceribus meis"; and "quemadmodum etiam illud ostendit quod antecedit, Aures perfodisti mihi, id est, ad obediendum tibi in omnibus me comparasti" (my translation).

[68] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 398: "Limitatur quod verbum Dei non limitat" (my translation).

[69] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 71: "Denique, cum non tantum à morte fuerimus liberandi, sed etiam vitæ jus nobis fuerit restituendum, sequitur, Christum non tantum pro nobis debuisse pati; sed etiam obedientia jus vitę pro nobis mereri"; and "Iustificatio autem legis hæc est, hoc fac & vives. Rom.10, 5. Galat.3,12." (my translation).

[70] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 397: "Eo modo Christus pro nobis satisfecit, quo præfiguratum fuit, ut satisfaceret, in Vet. Test. Atqui in Vet. Test. præfigurata fuit non tantum passiva, sed etiam activa obedientia"; and "Quia in Sacerdote typica puritas requirebatur, in vestibus & lotionibus, in sacrificio integritas, … deinde offerebatur quoque thymiama, quod non figurabat passionem, sed actiones, & preces summi Sacerdotis" (my translation).

[71] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 72: "Christus tanquam creatura Dei secundum humanam naturam fuit obligatus ad legem moralem observandam; ergo eam pro nobis, id est, ad nos justificandos, non observavit"; and "Nam Christus non sibi proprie loquendo est homo factus, sed nobis; quemadmodum Propheta Esaias testatur, c.9, vers.6. Quemadmodum ergo pro nobis est natus, & nobis datus, ita etiam nobis legi est subjectus" (my translation).

born, to us a son is given."[72] In the *Loci communes* he adds that "great theologians deny" the objection, because Christ was God and man, a divine person, "above the law." He also cites Christ's word to John the Baptist, "thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness," and once more Galatians 4:4.[73]

A second objection came close behind. Christ, the opponents said, by living holily and righteously, had to earn the glory of the life to come for himself, under the law's promise, "Do this and live." So his obedience earned life for him, not for us. Walaeus replied that the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom belonged to Christ "by a stronger right": "inasmuch as he was the Son of God also according to his human nature, because of the hypostatic union with the divine," and "to a son, inasmuch as he is a son, and by the very fact that he is a son, the inheritance is owed."[74] The "hypostatic union" is the union of the divine and human natures in the one person of Christ. Christ did not need to earn heaven for himself. It was his by birthright. What he earned by his obedience, he earned for others.

A third objection was that Scripture so often ascribes our salvation to Christ's death and blood. Walaeus's answer was twofold. First, Scripture often calls us back to the death of Christ, "but not always: it often calls us back also to the whole obedience of Christ."[75] Second, when Scripture does name the death, it names the part for the whole. The opponents themselves, he pointed out, must admit a figure of speech here, "because they include under death the sufferings that went before it."[76] No one supposed that Christ's hunger, his weariness, his scourging and his agony in the garden did nothing for us simply because the texts say "blood." If "death" must be stretched to cover the sufferings that led up to it, it can cover the obedience as well. And there is a reason why the death is named so often. In the *Enchiridion* Walaeus calls Christ's death the "colophon" of both kinds of obedience, the finishing stroke that completes a work. It was, he said, "as it were the colophon of both obediences: for his death contained in itself both the

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[72] Isaiah 9:6 (ESV).

[73] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 398: "Negant id magni Theologi: quia Christus fuit Deus & homo, ac proinde persona divina, lege superior"; and "Et sane Christus ipse dicit, Ita oportet nos implere omnem justitiam, Matth.3.v.15." (my translation). Matthew 3:15 (ESV). The *Loci communes* prints the reference to Galatians 4:4 in this place as "Hebr.4.v.4." [*sic*].

[74] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 72: "Quod vero addunt, Christum, sancte & juste vivendo, gloriam vitæ futuræ sibi debuisse acquirere, secundum sententiam legis, hoc fac, & vives"; and "tamen asserimus, hæreditatem regni cœlestis illi potiori jure etiam competivisse: nempe quatenus erat Dei filius etiam secundum humanam naturam, propter unionem hypostaticam cum divina; filio autem, quatenus filius est, & eo ipso, quod filius est, debetur hæreditas" (my translation).

[75] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 40: "Sæpe quidem Scriptura nos ad mortem Christi revocat, non tamen semper: sæpe nos etiam revocat ad totam Christi obedientiam" (my translation).

[76] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 398: "Synecdochen autem hic esse, ipsi coguntur agnoscere, quia pœnas antegressas sub morte co[m]prehendunt. Causa vero cur frequenter mentionem faciat sanguinis & mortis Christi, est, quia in voluntaria illa Christi oblatione utriusque justitiæ est κολοφών" (my translation).

highest degree of punishment, and the highest degree of love, which he showed to God the Father and to us."[77] On the cross Christ suffered most and obeyed most. Paul's own words in Philippians 2:8, that Christ "humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death," are a way of speaking, Walaeus says, that "embraces the whole obedience of Christ which he rendered to the Father."[78]

The fourth objection is the one Walaeus called "the most difficult of all." "If Christ made satisfaction for us by living righteously, then there was no need of his death and passion. And the reason is that he who has lived righteously, or who is held as if he had lived righteously, is not liable to penalty, and so not to the curse of the law either."[79] This was Piscator's argument turned around. If Christ's life is imputed to me, I am counted as one who has kept the law; and one who has kept the law cannot be punished. Walaeus's answer is worth giving in full:

> But I answer that it does not follow: because Christ, by living righteously, made satisfaction indeed for the fault, but not for the penalty; that is, he satisfied the command of the law, not the curse of the law. Now it has already been shown that the sinner is liable to both, both to the curse because of sin, and to obedience, because he still remains God's creature. Both therefore were necessary, both that we should be freed from the curse by the punishment of our surety, and that we should satisfy the command of the law by his obedience. Christ therefore had not only to live righteously, but also to die righteously, and in death itself to render the obedience owed to the law. Wrongly therefore do some limit the active obedience to the life of Christ that went before his passion.[80]

This answer does two things. It shows that the life does not make the death needless, because the life answers the command and the death answers the curse, and the sinner is under both. And it corrects a mistake that some had made. They spoke as if Christ obeyed in his life and suffered in his death, so that the two could be laid out one after the other. Walaeus would not have that.

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[77] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 40: "& illa utriusque obedientiæ quasi κολοφὼν fuit: nam mors ejus & summum gradum pœnæ in se continuit, & summum gradum amoris, quem Deo Patri & nobis exhibuit" (my translation). A colophon, from the Greek, is the finishing touch that completes a work.

[78] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 40: "quæ ratio loquendi totam Christi obedientiam quam Patri præstitit, complectitur" (my translation). Philippians 2:8 (ESV).

[79] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 398: "Si Christus juste vivendo pro nobis satisfecit, tum non opus fuit morte & passione ejus; & ratio est, quod is qui juste vixit, vel qui habetur ac si juste vixisset, non est obnoxius pœnæ, ac proinde nec legis maledictioni. Hæc objectio est omnium difficillima" (my translation).

[80] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 399: "Sed resp. non sequi: quia Christus juste vivendo satisfecit quidem pro culpa, sed non pro pœna; seu satisfecit legis mandato, non legis maledicto. Iam vero demonstratum est, peccatorem utrique esse obnoxium, & maledicto propter peccatum, & obedientiæ, quia nihilominus manet Dei creatura: utrumque ergo fuit necessarium, & ut à maledicto liberaremur per pœnam nostri sponsoris, & ut mandato legis satisfaceremus, per ejusdem obedientiam. Christus ergo non debuit tantum juste vivere, sed etiam juste mori, & in ipsa morte obedientiam legi debitam præstare. Male ergo à quibusdam terminatur obedientia activa in vita Christi, passionem antecedente" (my translation).

Christ obeyed in his death too. The cross was his greatest act of obedience. We distinguish the two kinds of obedience by what they answer, not by the calendar.

A fifth objection concerned the sins of omission, the good we have left undone. "If satisfaction was made for all sins by the passion of Christ, then satisfaction was made for sins of commission and of omission, and so nothing remains to be expiated. For he who has committed nothing against the law and omitted nothing of the law is held as if he had fulfilled the law: the active obedience is therefore superfluous." Walaeus noted that some on his own side met this by denying that the sins of omission were expiated by the passion as such, and by saying that they are covered by the active righteousness. He took a different road. "We gladly confess that in every sin there is something of commission and something of omission: in respect of omission the right to life is taken away, in respect of commission death is inflicted; and so all sins, both of commission and of omission, are expiated by the death of Christ." He cited 1 John 1:7: "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."[81] But, he went on, "we say that by the death and blood of Christ both righteousnesses are understood, as noted above, which can indeed be distinguished in thought, but could never be separated in Christ. Therefore the whole righteousness or obedience of Christ is the cause of the remission of sins, both of commission and of omission."[82] In the *Enchiridion* he answers in the same way: the death of Christ is the colophon of both his active and passive righteousness, "in respect of both of which sins both of commission and of omission are remitted."[83] This fits a remark he had made at the start. He did not wish, he said, to set the parts of Christ's righteousness against the several parts of our unrighteousness "too anxiously," though it is not wrong to do so, because Scripture does not usually do it with such care.[84] He held the whole Christ against the whole of our sin.

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[81] 1 John 1:7 (ESV).

[82] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 399: "Si per passionem Christi pro omnibus peccatis est satisfactum, tum pro peccatis commissionis & omissionis est satisfactum, ac proinde nihil superest expiandum. Qui enim nihil adversus legem commisit, & nihil legis omisit, is eo loco habetur ac si legem implesset: supervacua ergo obedientia activa"; "Sunt qui negant, per passionem Christi, qua passio est, peccata omissionis esse expiata, sed omissionis peccata tegi per activam justitiam volunt"; "Sed nos libenter fatemur, in omni peccato esse aliquid commissionis & aliquid omissionis: respectu omissionis jus vitæ adimi, respectu commissionis mortem infligi; atque ita omnia peccata, tam commissionis, quam omissionis, esse expiata per mortem Christi: *Sanguis enim Christi, purgat nos ab omnibus peccatis*. Sed dicimus per mortem & sanguinem Christi utramque justitiam intelligi, ut supra adnotatum, quæ ratione quidem distingui, nunquam in Christo disjungi potuit. Tota ergo justitia seu obedientia Christi est causa remissionis peccatorum, tam commissionis, quam omissionis" (my translation). The words in italics are Walaeus's Latin of 1 John 1:7.

[83] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 72: "Negatur consequentia, quia mors Christi, ut ante diximus, colophon est tum activæ tum passivæ Christi justitiæ, cujus utriusque respectu tum commissionis tum omissionis peccata remittuntur" (my translation).

[84] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 71, quoted in full in Section 1: "Etsi enim nolimus nimis anxie has partes justitiæ Christi opponere singulis partibus injustitię nostræ; quia, licet hoc no[n] sit inconveniens, tamen à Sacra Scriptura id scrupulose fieri non solet."

A last objection was practical. "If Christ fulfilled the law for us, then we are not bound to obey the law." Walaeus denied that this follows. What follows is that "we are not bound to obey to the end for which Christ obeyed, namely to merit eternal life, nor in that measure; just as we also die, though Christ died for us, though not to the end for which Christ died."[85] Christ's obedience does not free us from obedience. It frees us from obeying in order to earn life.

5.4 Two Kinds of Guilt

Walaeus gave his doctrine one more refinement, and it is the one that sets him apart most clearly. He distinguished two kinds of guilt in every sin. In the *Enchiridion* he puts it this way:

> A twofold guilt is to be considered: namely, the guilt by which a sinful man, first, becomes worthy to be shut out of heaven, and second, that by which he is besides to be afflicted with the pain of sense in hell. For the guilt of the pain of sense was to be taken away by the passion; but the guilt of the pain of loss, as they call it, by the active righteousness, to which the promise was made, Do this and live.[86]

"The pain of loss" and "the pain of sense" were familiar terms in the schools. The first means losing heaven. The second means suffering in hell. Walaeus assigned the first to the active obedience, because heaven is the reward of righteousness, and the second to the passive, because suffering is the penalty of sin. He adds at once that the two kinds of guilt always go together in a sinner, and that by God's decree the remission of one brings with it the remission of the other; yet it is plain, he says, that they are distinct.[87]

The *Loci communes* uses different terms for the same distinction. In every sin, of commission as well as omission, "a twofold guilt is to be distinguished, namely the guilt of fault and the guilt of penalty: the guilt of penalty is taken away by the passion, the guilt of fault by contrary action." And he explains why: "For even if someone has borne every penalty, he is not therefore righteous with that righteousness to which the promise of life is made, for the obtaining of which the taking away of the fault is necessary, which is not covered or taken away except by contrary

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[85] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 399: "Si Christus pro nobis implevit legem, ergo nos non tenemur obedire legi"; "Negatur consequentia: quia hoc quidem sequitur, non tenemur obedire in eum finem in quem Christus obedivit, nempe ut mereamur vitam æternam, nec ea mensura: sicuti etiam morimur, etsi Christus pro nobis sit mortuus, licet non in eum finem, in quem Christus est mortuus" (my translation).

[86] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 72: "duplex consideretur reatus; nempe quo homo peccator primo dignus fit qui excludatur è cœlo; secundo, qui præterea etiam pœna sensus afficiatur in inferno. Reatus enim pœnæ sensus tollendus fuit per passionem; reatus vero pœnæ damni, ut vocant, per justitiam activam, cui promissio facta est, hoc fac, & vives" (my translation).

[87] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 72, continuing the passage in the previous note: "Nam, licet hi duo reatus semper concurrant in homine peccatore, & remissio unius, ex Dei decreto, etiam inferat remissionem alterius: tamen, eos esse distinctos, & absolute posse sejungi, manifestum est" (my translation). Walaeus adds that the two can be separated "absolutely," that is, in principle.

obedience."[88] Here is the heart of it. A man who has served his whole sentence is free, but that does not make him a righteous man. The prisoner who walks out of jail has paid his debt to the law; he has not thereby earned a medal. To stand before God as righteous, one needs more than pardon for the past. One needs a righteousness. Elsewhere in the *Loci communes* Walaeus puts the same point in his own way: sins are of commission and of omission, each with a double guilt, of exclusion from heaven and of the pains of hell, and the whole obedience of Christ takes away both kinds of sin and both kinds of guilt.[89]

5.5 Piscator's Argument Answered

With these distinctions in hand, Walaeus could meet Piscator's argument at its root. In the *Loci communes* he sets out an argument of the same shape in logical form: "That on account of which sins are remitted is the only matter of satisfaction before God. But sins are remitted on account of the passive righteousness of Christ alone. Therefore," and so on.[90] Walaeus notes that some on his side answered this by denying the first premise. They made the remission of sins only one part of justification and put the imputation of righteousness in a second part, so that there was something in justification beyond remission. "This answer has great authors," he says. But he did not take it. "Let us grant the major premise with Calvin; I deny the minor."

> For sins are remitted to us not on account of the passive obedience alone, but on account of both. For that sins may be fully remitted, it is necessary that both righteousnesses be imputed to us: the passive, that the guilt of penalty may be taken away; the active, that the fault may be covered, and the reward of righteousness assigned to us. Hence also the Apostle, Rom. 5, verse 18 [*sic*], says openly, "By the obedience of one man many are made righteous, through which grace reigned to righteousness."[91]

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[88] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 399: "quia in peccato omni tam commissionis, quam omissionis duplex reatus est distinguendus, nempe reatus culpæ & reatus pœnæ: reatus pœnæ per passionem tollitur, reatus culpæ per actionem contrariam. Etsi enim quis omnem pœnam sustinuit, non ideo tamen justus est ea justitia cui vitæ promissio est facta, ad cujus consecutionem necessaria est ablatio culpæ, quæ non nisi per obedientiam contrariam tegitur aut tollitur" (my translation).

[89] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 426: "Cum autem peccata sint commissionis & omissionis, & utrorumque geminus reatus, nempe exclusionis è cœlo & reatus pœnarum infernalium; utraque sua obedientia, utraque peccata & utrumque reatum tollit" (my translation).

[90] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 399: "Illud propter quod peccata remittuntur, est sola materia satisfactionis coram Deo. At propter solam Christi justitiam passivam peccata remittuntur. Ergo, &c."; and "Quidam hic negant maj. quia peccatorum remissionem unam tantum justificationis partem esse volunt, alteram vero in imputatione justitiæ consistere"; "Hæc responsio magnos authores habet" (my translation).

[91] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 399: "Sed concedamus nos maiorem cum Calvino; nego minorem. Non enim propter solam obedientiam passivam, sed propter utramque nobis peccata remittuntur: ut enim peccata plene remittantur utramque justitiam nobis imputari necesse est, passivam ut reatus pœnæ tollatur; activam ut culpa tegatur, ac præmium justitiæ nobis assignetur: unde & Apostolus, Rom.5. vers.18. exerte ait, Propter unius hominis obedientiam multos constitui justos, per quam gratia regnavit ad justitiam" (my translation). The words quoted are from Romans 5:19 and 5:21; compare Romans 5:19–21 (ESV).

This is the most important sentence Walaeus wrote on the subject, and I will come back to it in Section 6. He accepted Calvin's teaching that justification may be summed up as the remission of sins. He denied Piscator's claim that the remission of sins rests on the passive obedience alone. Remission, fully understood, takes away both the penalty and the fault, and so it rests on both the death and the life of Christ. Walaeus beat Piscator by using Calvin's definition against him.

5.6 The Covenant Behind the Debt

Why was the reward of eternal life tied to obedience at all? Walaeus's answer lies in his teaching on the first covenant. When he defends the active obedience in the *Loci communes*, he foresees one escape. "I see nothing that can be objected here, unless perhaps that the justice of God required this under the former covenant, but not under the later: under the later it required, of the Testament, the death of the testator, and of us, the laying hold of it." He shuts that door: "But that is refuted, because Christ made satisfaction to the justice of God which had been injured under the former covenant."[92] God's justice was injured under the first covenant, when Adam broke it, and it was that justice, with all its demands, that Christ satisfied.

The same view of the first covenant appears elsewhere. The law, says Walaeus, has no such promise as "if anyone does what he can, he will be saved," but only the one that Paul cites from Moses in Romans 10:5: "the person who does the commandments shall live by them."[93] In his reply to the Remonstrant Johannes Corvinus he asked, "Is the legal covenant then for you a new covenant, when the Apostle in Hebrews 8, verses 9 and 13, calls the evangelical covenant new, but the legal covenant and the covenant of works old, which is made obsolete by the new and vanishes away?"[94] The "covenant of works" is the covenant in which life was promised on the condition of obedience. Once that covenant is in view, the imputation of Christ's active obedience is no longer strange. The promise of life on condition of obedience was never cancelled. It was kept, by the one man who could keep it, and his keeping of it is reckoned to those who believe.

I should add one caution. In one place in the *Loci communes* an opponent argues that God first set life before man in a legal covenant on the condition of works, and afterward, having changed that covenant after the fall, set life before him on the condition of faith. Walaeus does not deny

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[92] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 397: "Nihil video, quid hic possit excipi, nisi forte justitiam Dei sub priore fædere hoc exegisse, sed non sub posteriore: sub posteriore, à Testamento, mortem testatoris, atque à nobis, ejus apprehensionem. Sed id refutatur, quia Christus satisfecit justitiæ Dei, quæ sub priore fædere erat læsa" (my translation).

[93] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 117: "Nec enim est legale, quia lex nullam talem promissionem habet, Si quis fecerit quod poterit, ille salvabitur, aut Christus ei revelabitur; sed hanc, Qui fecerit ea vivet in eis Rom.10.v.5." (my translation). Romans 10:5 (ESV).

[94] Walaeus, reply to Corvinus, in *Opera omnia*, II, 149: "an ergo fædus legale vobis fædus est novum; quum Apostolus Hebr.8.vers.9. & 13. fædus Euangelicum novum vocet; fædus vero legale & operum fædus vetus, quod per novum antiquatur & evanescit?" (my translation).

the two covenants in his answer. He denies only the inference the opponent drew from them, "because God decreed from eternity to do both, one after the other."[95] That passage shows that the two covenants were common ground. It does not, by itself, show more than that, and I do not lean on it.

5.7 The Leiden *Synopsis*

In 1625 the four professors of theology at Leiden, Walaeus among them, published the *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, a set of fifty-two disputations covering the whole of theology. It was used and reprinted for generations; the edition I use is the sixth, edited by Herman Bavinck in 1881. The *Synopsis* is not Walaeus's own book, and I must be careful here. The two disputations that bear on our subject, the twenty-ninth, on the satisfaction of Christ, and the thirty-third, on justification, were held under the presidency of Dr. Antonius Thysius, not Walaeus. The student who defended the thirty-third was Jacobus Dissius.[96] But the *Synopsis* went out under the names of all four professors, and it shows the teaching of the Leiden faculty in Walaeus's time.

That teaching is the same as his. The twenty-ninth disputation, having treated satisfaction "insofar as it consists in the payment of the penalty for sins," says that "in the manner of Scripture," because of their kinship and necessary cohesion, it includes under satisfaction "its other part also, by which Christ both had for us, and performed through the whole course of his life, the holiness and righteousness that was required in us and which we were bound to render, so that in him we might be conformed in all things to the Law of God, and he might acquire for us the right to eternal life."[97]

The thirty-third disputation defines justification as God's judgment by which, of his mere grace and mercy, "on account of the perfect obedience and righteousness of Christ, performed for us and received by faith," he pronounces righteous one who is in himself ungodly: "that is, he acquits him of sin and the curse, imputes to him the righteousness of his Son, and so adjudges eternal life to him."[98] Then it names two parts:

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[95] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 169. The objection: "At Deus primo in fœdere legali proposuit homini vitam sub conditione operum legis, postea eo fœdere post lapsum mutato, proposuit homini vitam sub conditione fidei in Christum." The answer: "Negatur consequi: quia Deus utrumque ab æterno successive agere decrevit" (my translation).

[96] *Synopsis purioris theologiae, disputationibus quinquaginta duabus comprehensa*, ed. H. Bavinck, 6th ed. (Leiden: D. Donner, 1881), 330, at the head of disputation 33: "Praeside D. ANTONIO THYSIO. Respondente JACOBO DISSIO." Disputation 29, *De Satisfactione Jesu Christi*, begins on p. 281 and was also held under Thysius.

[97] *Synopsis*, disp. 29, th. XXXV, pp. 290–291: "Ceterum de Satisfactione quidem hic egimus, qua est in poenae pro peccatis persolutione; at vero more Scripturae, propter συγγένειαν, cognationem, et necessariam cohaesionem, sub ea comprehendimus et alteram ejus partem; qua Christus sanctitatem et justitiam, quae in nobis requirebatur, et ad quam praestandam tenebamur, pro nobis et habuit, et toto vitae curriculo praestitit, ut in ipso Legi Dei per omnia essemus conformes, ac jus vitae aeternae nobis acquireret" (my translation).

[98] *Synopsis*, disp. 33, th. VII, p. 332: "Est vero in foro divino hominis peccatoris Justificatio, Dei judicium, quo impium et peccatorem in sese et obnoxium irae suae, ex mera sua gratia et misericordia, propter perfectam Christi

> Its parts are two: the imputation of passive righteousness, or absolution from sins, and the imputation of active righteousness. By the first we are freed from guilt and condemnation and exempted from eternal death; by the second we are also counted worthy of the reward and receive the right to eternal life, and it is adjudged to us. But because of their very close kinship the one includes the other by synecdoche. And so justification is often placed, above all, in the remission of sins.[99]

The disputation goes on to say that the righteousness by which we are justified is that of Christ, "considered in its full extent, both passive and active, in the sense in which obedience is opposed to disobedience."[100] And it says that the law is not simply opposed to this righteousness. "For we are not justified against the law, since Christ fulfilled it: both by suffering the penalties owed for our sins, by which he blotted out the guilt, and by performing all righteousness and obedience to the law, by which he established the condition of eternal life."[101] In its list of errors rejected, the disputation charges the Roman side with denying the imputed righteousness by which God, "in place of the legal righteousness which ought to have been in us," imputes to us "the obedience and righteousness of Christ performed by him for us."[102]

There is one small difference of arrangement. The *Synopsis* names the imputation of passive and active righteousness as the two parts of justification. Walaeus, as we shall see, preferred to put the imputation first, as the cause, and the remission of sins after it, as the effect. But the *Synopsis* itself adds that each part includes the other and that justification is often placed in the remission of sins. The substance is the same: the whole obedience of Christ, passive and active, is reckoned to the believer, and by it he is both freed from condemnation and given the right to eternal life.

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obedientiam et justitiam, pro nobis praestitam, ac fide acceptam, justum pronunciat, id est, absolvit a peccato et maledicto, et Filii sui justitiam imputat, atque ita ei vitam aeternam adjudicat" (my translation).

[99] *Synopsis*, disp. 33, th. VIII, p. 332: "Ejus partes duae sunt, Imputatio justitiae passivae seu absolutio a peccatis, et justitiae activae imputatio. Quarum illa a reatu et condemnatione liberamur, morteque aeterna eximimur; hac etiam praemio digni censemur, ac jus vitae aeternae accipimus, eaque nobis adjudicatur"; "At propter arctissimam συγγένειαν una alteram complectitur συνεκδοχικῶς"; "Quamvis justificatio κατ' ἐξοχήν, in peccatorum remissione saepe constituatur" (my translation).

[100] *Synopsis*, disp. 33, th. XIX, p. 334: "Quae est illa ipsa justitia ex satisfactione Filii Dei, in sua amplitudine considerata, et passiva et activa, prout ὑπακοή, obedientia, παρακοῇ, inobedientiae, opponitur" (my translation).

[101] *Synopsis*, disp. 33, th. XX, pp. 334–335: "Non enim justificamur contra legem; ut quam Christus implevit, tum patiendo poenas peccatis nostris debitas, quo culpam delevit, tum praestando omnem justitiam ac legis obedientiam, quo conditionem vitae aeternae posuit" (my translation).

[102] *Synopsis*, disp. 33, "Antithesis Pontificia et Sociniana," XV, p. 342: "Imputationem justitiae, seu fidei in justitiam, non intelligunt de reputatione Dei, qua loco Legalis justitiae, quae nobis inesse debebat, Christi obedientiam et justitiam ab illo pro nobis praestitam, nobis imputat, ac ita reputat pro justis (quam imputatam justitiam plane negant)" (my translation).

6. Walaeus, Calvin and the Catechism

Walaeus names Calvin again and again on this subject. He does so in both of his systematic works, and each time he claimed Calvin for his own side. Were his claims fair? To answer that, we must first hear Calvin himself, and we must be careful not to make him say more than he said.

6.1 What Calvin Taught

Calvin did not use the terms "active" and "passive" obedience, and he did not face the question as Piscator put it. What he wrote on justification and on the obedience of Christ, he wrote before the quarrel reached the synods. Five passages of the *Institutes* bear on it.

The first is his definition of justification in the third book. "A man is justified by faith who, shut out from the righteousness of works, lays hold of the righteousness of Christ by faith, and, clothed in it, appears in the sight of God not as a sinner but as righteous." And then the definition itself: "So we explain justification simply as the acceptance by which God receives us into his favor and holds us as righteous. And we say that it consists in the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ."[103] Two things are named here: forgiveness, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

The second passage appears to name only one. Calvin sets out to show that the righteousness of faith "is reconciliation with God, which consists in the remission of sins alone." God cannot receive a sinner into his favor, Calvin says, without making him righteous, and "we add that this is done through the remission of sins." Those whom God embraces are made righteous only "because they are purified when the stains are wiped away by the remission of sins," so that "such righteousness can be called, in one word, the remission of sins."[104]

The third passage explains how the two statements fit. From 2 Corinthians 5:19–21 Calvin shows that Paul names righteousness and reconciliation interchangeably, "that we may understand that each is contained in the other." When David pronounces blessed the man whose sins are forgiven, Paul takes that blessedness for righteousness; "since he asserts that it consists in the remission of sins, there is no reason why we should define it otherwise."[105]

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[103] John Calvin, *Institutio christianae religionis* (Geneva, 1559), III.xi.2, in *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz and Eduardus Reuss, 59 vols. (Brunswick and Berlin: C. A. Schwetschke, 1863–1900), hereafter CO, 2:533–534: "Contra iustificabitur ille fide, qui operum iustitia exclusus Christi iustitiam per fidem apprehendit, qua vestitus in Dei conspectu non ut peccator, sed tanquam iustus apparet. Ita nos iustificationem simpliciter interpretamur acceptionem qua nos Deus in gratiam receptos pro iustis habet. Eamque in peccatorum remissione ac iustitiae Christi imputatione positam esse dicimus" (my translation).

[104] Calvin, *Institutio*, III.xi.21, CO 2:550–551: "iustitiam fidei esse reconciliationem cum Deo, quae sola peccatorum remissione constet"; "Istud addimus fieri per peccatorum remissionem"; "Constat itaque, quos Deus amplectitur, non aliter fieri iustos nisi quod abstersis peccatorum remissione maculis purificantur: ut talis iustitia uno verbo appellari queat peccatorum remissio" (my translation).

[105] Calvin, *Institutio*, III.xi.22, CO 2:551: "Iustitiam et reconciliationem hic promiscue nominat, ut alterum sub altero vicissim contineri intelligamus"; "Beatitudinem procul dubio pro iustitia illic ponit. Eam quum asserat in

The fourth passage tells us what the righteousness is. We obtain justification before God "by the intercession of Christ's righteousness alone." That is, "man is not righteous in himself, but because the righteousness of Christ is communicated to him by imputation." And then Calvin reaches Romans 5:19, the text on which the later debate would turn: "What else is it to place our righteousness in the obedience of Christ, but to assert that we are held righteous only because the obedience of Christ is credited to us as if it were our own?" He closes with an image from Ambrose. As Jacob, who did not deserve the birthright, hid himself in his brother's clothes, which gave off a sweet smell, and so received the blessing, "so we hide under the precious purity of Christ, our first-born brother, that we may obtain from God's presence a testimony of righteousness."[106]

The fifth passage, in the second book, asks directly how Christ took away the enmity between God and us and acquired a righteousness to make God favorable to us. Calvin's first answer is general: "that he accomplished this for us by the whole course of his obedience." He proves it from Romans 5:19. He adds that Paul "extends the ground of the pardon that frees us from the curse of the law to the whole life of Christ," quoting Galatians 4:4, and that Christ said at his baptism that a part of righteousness was fulfilled when he obediently carried out his Father's command. "In short, from the time when he put on the form of a servant, he began to pay the price of liberation to redeem us." Then Calvin turns: "Scripture, however, to define the way of salvation more certainly, ascribes this to the death of Christ as its peculiar and proper work." But even so, "the rest of the obedience which he performed in his life is not excluded."[107]

What, then, did Calvin teach? He taught that we are righteous before God because Christ's righteousness, his obedience, is imputed to us as if it were our own. He taught that Christ won our pardon by the whole course of his obedience, from the day he took the form of a servant, and that the obedience of his life is not excluded, though Scripture fixes our eyes on his death. And he taught that justification may be summed up as the remission of sins, because righteousness and reconciliation each contain the other. In these passages he does not divide Christ's obedience

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remissione peccatorum consistere, non est cur aliter ipsam definiamus" (my translation). Compare 2 Corinthians 5:19–21 and Romans 4:6–8 (ESV).

[106] Calvin, *Institutio*, III.xi.23, CO 2:552: "Hinc et illud conficitur, sola intercessione iustitiae Christi nos obtinere, ut coram Deo iustificemur. Quod perinde valet ac si diceretur, hominem non in se ipso iustum esse, sed quia Christi iustitia imputatione cum illo communicatur"; "Quid aliud est in Christi obedientia collocare nostram iustitiam, nisi asserere eo solo nos haberi iustos, quia Christi obedientia nobis accepta fertur, ac si nostra esset?"; "ita nos sub Christi primogeniti nostri fratris pretiosa puritate delitescere, ut testimonium iustitiae a conspectu Dei referamus" (my translation).

[107] Calvin, *Institutio*, II.xvi.5, CO 2:370–371: "generaliter responderi potest, toto obedientiae suae cursu hoc nobis praestitisse"; "Et sane alibi causam veniae quae nos eximit a maledictione legis, extendit ad totam Christi vitam"; "Ita in ipso quoque baptismo asseruit impleri iustitiae partem quod obedienter patris mandatum perageret (Matth. 3, 15). Denique ex quo induit personam servi, coepit ad nos redimendos pretium liberationis solvere. Scriptura tamen, quo certius definiat modum salutis, hoc morti Christi quasi peculiare ac proprium adscribit"; and "Neque tamen excluditur reliqua pars obedientiae qua defunctus est in vita" (my translation). Compare Romans 5:19, Galatians 4:4–5 and Matthew 3:15 (ESV).

into two kinds, and he does not assign one kind to pardon and the other to life. That was a later refinement. But he plainly did not teach what Piscator taught. Piscator made the holiness of Christ's life a mere condition of his sacrifice. Calvin made the whole course of Christ's obedience the price of our redemption.

6.2 What Walaeus Took from Calvin

Walaeus claimed Calvin five times, and each claim is precise.

In the *Enchiridion*, when he comes to the form of justification, he first sets out the scheme of those Reformed writers who make the remission of sins the first formal part of justification and the imputation of Christ's righteousness the second, the one freeing us from penalty and the other giving us the right to life.[108] That, it will be remembered, is the same scheme the *Synopsis* uses. Walaeus's comment is gentle but clear: "This view, though it is true in itself, yet, saving the judgment of others, Calvin's view seems to us more agreeable to the sayings of Holy Scripture, who teaches that our whole justification, if the word justification is taken passively, lies in the remission of sins, from plain places of Scripture."[109] He cites Luke 1:77, where Zechariah speaks of "the forgiveness of their sins"; the publican of Luke 18, who asked God to be merciful to him and went home justified; Romans 4:6–8; and Ephesians 1:7. The phrase "if the word justification is taken passively" means justification as we receive it, what happens to us when God justifies us.

He then explains why he does not follow the other scheme. "For what some reply to these passages, that they are taken by synecdoche, does not seem firm enough in the sense in which others say it. For the remission of sins presupposes the imputation of righteousness as its cause; it does not follow remission, nor supply it."[110] Sins are remitted only on account of the righteousness and obedience of Christ, and they are remitted in such a way that the one whose sins are remitted "is not only free from penalty, but also obtains the right to life; since sins are not only the cause of penalty and condemnation, but also of the loss of that right and of the

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[108] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 72: "Formam ergo nostræ justificationis statuimus, remissionem peccatorum, & imputationem justitiæ Christi. Quæ tamen à quibusdam Reformatæ Ecclesiæ scriptoribus diversimode considerantur. Quidam enim statuunt, remissionem peccatorum, esse primam partem formalem nostræ justificationis; imputationem vero justitiæ, alteram: remissionem peccatorum, per quam à pœna liberamur; imputationem justitiæ Christi, per quam re ipsa jus vitæ nobis assignatur."

[109] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 72: "Hæc sententia licet sit in sese vera, tamen, salvo aliorum judicio, videtur nobis Calvini sententia Sacræ Scripturæ dictis convenientior, qui totam nostri justificationem si vox justificationis passive sumatur, in remissione peccatorum sitam docet, ex locis manifestis Scripturæ" (my translation). Luke 1:77 (ESV).

[110] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 72–73: "Nam quod quidam ad hæc loca excipiunt, synecdochice sumi; non videtur satis firmum eo sensu quo id ab aliis dicitur. Nam remissio peccatorum præsupponit imputationem justitiæ, tanquam causam suam, non sequitur remissionem nec supplet eam; cum peccata non nisi propter justitiam & obedientiam Christi nobis remittantur, & quidem peccata tam commissionis, quam omissionis; adeo ut, cui hoc pacto peccata remissa sunt, eo ipso is, cui ita remissa sunt peccata, non tantum liber sit à pœna, sed etiam jus vitæ obtineat; cum peccata non tantum sint causa pœnæ & condemnationis, sed etiam privationis illius juris & hæreditatis cœlestis" (my translation).

heavenly inheritance." So Walaeus is willing to speak of two parts of justification, "distinct, but always joined," "one as it were the cause, the other as it were its fruit and effect": the imputation of the whole righteousness of Christ, active and passive, and, by virtue of that imputation, the full remission of sins, "or our reconciliation," which includes "absolution from penalty, and the assigning of the right to life."[111]

In the *Loci communes* he says the same in four places. In the answer we met in Section 5, he says it has "rightly been said by Calvin and others" that "the remission of sin includes in itself our whole justification."[112] In the place where he answers Piscator's syllogism, he grants the major premise "with Calvin."[113] Where he treats the form of justification, he writes: "Although some among the Reformed speak so as to set two parts of justification, namely the remission of sins and the imputation of righteousness, by which they understand the active righteousness only, we nevertheless, with Calvin and some others, prefer to put the imputation of righteousness first, because it is the cause of the remission of sins."[114] And a few pages later, asked whether the imputation of Christ's righteousness is the whole form of justification, he says that some recent writers contend that it is, and others add the remission of sins as a second part; "but we, with Calvin and most of the great Reformers of the Church, contend that both are necessary to our justification," as the freeing of a captive consists both in the paying of the ransom and in his actual release.[115] He sums up the matter this way: "This then is the whole and full form of our justification: the imputation of the whole obedience of Christ, both of his death and of his life,

[111] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 73: "Hoc modo ergo concedimus, duas esse partes nostræ justificationis distinctas: unam, nempe, activam; alteram, passivam: sed tamen semper conjunctas: quarum; una, sit tanquam causa; altera, tanquam illius fructus & effectus, nempe imputationem totius Christi justitiæ, tam activæ, quam passivæ; & ex vi illius imputationis peccatorum plenariam remissionem, seu non imputationem, seu nostri reconciliationem; quæ duos hos respectus seu terminos comprehendit, nempe absolutionem à pœna, & assignationem juris vitæ, quum reconciliatus cum Deo nemo dici possit, nisi & à pœna liber sit, & regni cælestis hæres" (my translation).

[112] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 399: "atque ideo recte à Calvino & aliis dictum est, *Remissionem peccati complecti in se totam iustificationem nostram*" (my translation).

[113] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 399: "Sed concedamus nos maiorem cum Calvino; nego minorem."

[114] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 426: "Etsi vero quidam inter Reformatos sic loquantur, ut statuant duas justificationis partes, nempe remissionem peccatorum & imputationem justitiæ, per quam activam tantum justitiam intelligunt; nos tamen cum Calvino & aliis nonnullis malumus imputationem justitiæ præponere, quia est remissionis peccatorum causa" (my translation).

[115] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 428: "Quæritur vero, An hæc sit tota forma justificationis? Quidam recentiores hoc contendunt: Alii remissionem peccatorum tanquam alteram partem adjungunt, quam illi potius effectum esse volunt. Nos vero cum Calvino & plærisque magnis Ecclesiæ Reformatoribus, utrumque ad nostram justific. necessarium esse contendimus: quemadmodum forma liberationis captivi, in applicatione lytri & actuali liberatione consistit" (my translation).

and the remission of all sins that answers to it; that is, freedom from penalty, and acceptance to eternal life."[116]

Were these claims fair? I think they were, and for a reason worth stating carefully. Walaeus took three things from Calvin. He took Calvin's twofold definition of justification, forgiveness and imputation, and kept both. He took Calvin's statement that justification may be summed up as the remission of sins, and he explained how that is true: remission is the effect of imputation, and remission, fully understood, includes both freedom from penalty and the right to life. And he took Calvin's statement that each is contained in the other, and made it the ground of his own rule that the two are distinct but never separated. What he added to Calvin was the distinction of two kinds of obedience and two kinds of guilt, and the assignment of each to each. That is an addition, and he knew it; he says so when he calls the terms "active" and "passive" other men's words. But it is an addition that serves Calvin's definition rather than changing it.

Here, too, is the sharpest point in Walaeus's use of Calvin. The first premise of the argument he answered in the *Loci communes* took for granted what Calvin had said, that justification may be summed up as the remission of sins. That is why some of Walaeus's allies, who made remission only one part of justification, denied it. Walaeus did not quarrel with Calvin's summary. He granted it, "with Calvin," and denied only that remission rests on Christ's suffering alone. Calvin himself had said that Christ acquired our pardon "by the whole course of his obedience." Walaeus, in effect, held Calvin's two statements together, and in doing so he showed that Calvin's definition, rightly read, answered Piscator's argument.

6.3 The Heidelberg Catechism

Lubbertus's third step, it will be remembered, was to ask what the Catechism teaches. The letters that survive never reach that step. But the Catechism belongs in this account, because it was one of the standards of the Dutch churches and because its words bear directly on the dispute.

The sixtieth question asks, "How are you righteous before God?" The first edition of 1563 answers:

> Only by true faith in Jesus Christ: that although my conscience accuses me that I have grievously sinned against all God's commandments, and have never kept any of them, and am still always inclined to all evil, yet God, without any merit of mine, of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ, as if I had never had nor committed any sin, and had myself accomplished all

[116] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 428: "Hæc est ergo forma integra & plena nostræ justificationis, imputatio totius obedientiæ Christi tum mortis tum vitæ ejus, & ei respondens remissio omnium peccatorum; seu liberatio à pœna, & acceptatio ad vitam æternam" (my translation).

> the obedience which Christ has rendered for me, if only I accept such a benefit with a believing heart.[117]

And the sixty-first question adds that "only the satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God."[118]

Three things in this answer matter here. First, the Catechism names three things that are imputed: the satisfaction, the righteousness and the holiness of Christ. It does not reduce what is imputed to Christ's suffering. Second, the believer is regarded "as if I had never had nor committed any sin." That is pardon, the removal of guilt. Third, he is regarded as if he "had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has rendered for me." That is more than pardon. It is the reckoning of Christ's obedience to the believer's account, and the Catechism calls it "all the obedience."

The Catechism does not use the terms of the later debate, and it would be too much to say that it settled the debate in advance. The Palatine delegates at Dort, who came from the church that first issued the Catechism, advised that in catechizing it was enough to hold to "general phrasing." Yet it is hard to read "all the obedience which Christ has rendered for me" as meaning only his death. The words fit Walaeus's doctrine better than Piscator's. When Walaeus taught that God counts the whole obedience of Christ as ours, he was teaching what the Catechism's words say.

7. "The Same Thing, though Not in the Same Way"

Walaeus's doctrine raises a question that his opponents raised too, though in a different form. If Christ's obedience earns for us the right to eternal life, what exactly do we receive? Do we get back what Adam lost, or something more? Later Reformed writers, and at least one great hymn, answered that we gain more in Christ than we lost in Adam. Walaeus did not say that, and I want to be careful here not to put words in his mouth. But his distinctions show how the later claim can be held without confusion, and why it is not a departure from his teaching.

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[117] Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 60, from the reprint of the first edition (1563) in *Der Heidelberger Katechismus in seiner ursprünglichen Gestalt, herausgegeben nebst der Geschichte seines Textes im Jahre 1563*, ed. Albrecht Wolters (Bonn: Adolph Marcus, 1864), reproducing pp. 41–42 of the first edition: "Frag. Wie bistu gerecht für Gott? Antwort. Allein durch waren glauben in Jesum Christum: Also / daß ob mich schon mein gewissen anklagt / daß ich wider alle Gebot Gottes schwerlich gesündiget / vnd derselben keines nie gehalten habe / auch noch jmmerdar zu allem bösen geneigt bin: doch Gott ohn alle meine verdienst / auß lauter gnadē / mir die volkommene gnugthuung / gerechtigkeit vnd heiligkeit Christi schencket vñ zurechnet / als hette ich nie kein sünde begangen noch gehabt / vnd selbst alle den gehorsam volbracht / den Christus für mich hat geleistet / wenn ich allein solche wolthat mit glaubigē hertzen anneme" (my translation; the marginal letters for proof texts are omitted). Schaff prints the German in modern spelling with an English version in *Creeds*, III, 326–327.

[118] Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 61, in Wolters, reproducing pp. 42–43 of the first edition: "sondern darumb das allein die gnugthuung / gerechtigkeit vnd heiligkeit Christi / meine gerechtigkeit für Gott ist" (my translation).

7.1 What Walaeus Said

The question comes up in the *Loci communes* among the objections raised against the imputation of Christ's righteousness, a doctrine which, Walaeus notes, the Roman theologians stubbornly denied.[119] "Christ restored to us what we had lost in Adam. But in Adam we had lost not an imputed but an inherent righteousness. Therefore it is that which we recovered in Christ." The argument was aimed at the Reformed doctrine that we are justified by a righteousness outside us. If Adam lost a righteousness that was in him, then Christ must restore a righteousness that is in us, and justification must consist in that.

Walaeus answered in two ways. First, he granted the premise and showed that it does not reach the conclusion. "I grant the whole, because in Christ we recover that too, here in its beginning, in the future life perfectly; or, we receive the same thing through Christ, but not in the same way; and imputation concerns the way." Second, he denied the premise if it means that justification alone restores everything, "because we recover it not only by justification, but also by sanctification. By justification also we receive the same thing that we lost in Adam, namely righteousness and the right to life, though not in that way." And to the second premise he answered: "We had not lost an imputed righteousness; but we had lost the right to life, which is restored to us through imputed righteousness."[120]

This is careful, and it should be read carefully. Walaeus says that we receive in Christ "the same thing" that we lost in Adam: righteousness and the right to life. He does not say we receive more. What differs is the way. Adam's righteousness was his own, planted in him at creation. Ours, for justification, is Christ's, reckoned to us. And the inherent righteousness that Adam lost is restored too, but by another of God's gifts, sanctification, begun in this life and finished in the next. The distinction between justification and sanctification lets Walaeus answer the objection without denying anything the objector truly cared about.

He uses two images for what justification gives. Having stated the whole and full form of justification, the imputation of Christ's whole obedience and the remission of all sins that answers to it, he writes: "As a captive who had been set in a place of dignity is freed from prison and restored to his dignity; or a son is freed from his father's anger, and by that reconciliation

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[119] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 426; the objections follow on p. 427.

[120] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 427–428: "Christus id nobis restituit, quod perdideramus in Adamo. At in Adamo perdideramus non imputatam, sed inhærentem justitiam. Ergo & eam in Christo recuperavimus"; "Concedo totum, quia in Christo etiam illam recuperamus, hic inchoate, in futura vita perfecte: vel, idem quidem recipimus per Christum. sed non eodem modo; imputatio autem ad modum spectat. 2. Ad Ma. addendum, Christus id nobis restituit per solam justificationem omne quod perdideramus in Adamo; tum negamus majorem: quia id non tantum per justificationem, sed etiam per sanctificationem recuperamus. Per justificationem recipimus quoq[ue] idem, quod in Adamo amisimus, nempe justitiam, & vitæ jus, etsi non eo modo. Ad Mi. Non perdideramus imputatam justitiam; sed tamen perdideramus jus vitæ, quod nobis per imputatam justitiam restituitur" (my translation).

receives the right of inheritance."[121] The captive is not only let out of jail; he is given back his office. The son is not only spared his father's anger; he is made heir again. Both images speak of restoration, and both show that pardon alone is not enough. Something must be given as well as taken away.

The same thought lies behind a phrase in the *Enchiridion* that we have already met. Christ "bore the penalty to free us from the penalty, and became obedient to the law to acquire for us the right of the sons of God."[122] The right of sons is an inheritance, and an inheritance is something given, not merely a debt cancelled.

Walaeus also set a limit on how rich we are made in Christ. To another objection he answered that Christ's merit is infinite and of infinite worth, but "it is applied to us so far as we need it for our redemption, not so far as would be needed for us to be redeemers." He gives an image: if someone offered a pearl of immense price to redeem many captives, the price would be paid in full for each one, "and yet not for that reason do each of them equal in riches the author of the payment."[123] We are made rich in Christ. We are not made Christ.

7.2 What Later Writers Said

Some later Reformed writers went further in their words than Walaeus did, and they are worth hearing, because they show where his doctrine can lead.

Meredith G. Kline, writing in 1994 in defense of the imputation of the active obedience, put it this way:

> The active obedience of Jesus is his fulfilling the demands of the covenant probation. By the passive obedience of his atoning sacrifice he secures for us the forgiveness of sins. But he does more than clear the slate and reinstate us in Adam's original condition, still facing probation and able to fail. … By this achievement of active obedience he merits for us a position beyond probation, secure forever in God's love and the prospect of God's eternal home.[124]

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[121] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 428: "Quemadmodum captivus qui in dignitate fuerat constitutus, liberatur à carcere, & dignitati suæ restituitur: aut filius liberatur ab ira patris, & jus hæreditatis, per reconciliationem illam recipit" (my translation).

[122] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 40: "Christus ergo pœnam tulit, ut nos à pœna liberaret; & legi obediens factus est, ut jus filiorum Dei nobis acquireret."

[123] Walaeus, *Loci communes*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 427: "Denique Christi meritum est infinitum, atque infinitæ dignitatis, quod nobis in tantum applicatur, quantum nobis est opus ad nostram redemptionem, non quantum opus est ut simus redemptores; quemadmodum si quis margaritam immensi pretii offerret ad multos captivos redimendos, pro singulis perfecte solvitur, & tamen, non ideo singuli divitiis ipsum authore[m] solutionis æquant" (my translation).

[124] Meredith G. Kline, "Covenant Theology under Attack," *New Horizons* (February 1994), as posted by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at https://www.opc.org/new_horizons/Kline_cov_theo.html.

A "probation" is a period of testing, and Kline's point is that Adam in the garden was on trial. He was righteous, but he could still fall, and he did. If Christ had only paid for our sins, we would be put back where Adam stood, innocent but still on trial. Because Christ also obeyed, he earned for us what Adam would have earned if he had stood the test: a place beyond the trial, where we can no longer fall. In the same article Kline recalls a telegram sent by the dying J. Gresham Machen: "I'm so thankful for active obedience of Christ. No hope without it."[125]

Kline was careful to add, in another place, that what is secured through Christ is the goal already set before Adam:

> Essentially the same eschatological goal that is secured through the second Adam was already envisaged as the reward for a successful probation of the first Adam. … the eschatological kingdom goal is not merely offered; its attainment is assured.[126]

The word "eschatological" refers to the last things, the final state of glory. Kline's two statements fit together. We receive more than Adam had, because Adam had innocence on trial and we receive confirmed glory. But we do not receive more than Adam was promised. What is new is that the promise is now sure, because Christ has already kept its condition.

Arthur W. Pink, in his popular *Gleanings in Genesis* (the copyright is dated 1922), said it more boldly: "The redeemed have gained more through the last Adam than they lost through the first Adam." He gave several reasons, and one of them bears directly on our subject: "Adam was merely innocent, which is a negative condition, but believers in Christ are righteous, which is a positive state." That through Christ man should actually be "the *gainer*," Pink wrote, "is a transcendent miracle of Divine wisdom and grace."[127]

And Isaac Watts, in his version of Psalm 72 published in 1719, the hymn we know as "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun," wrote a stanza that says the same in two lines:

> Where he displays his healing Power, Death and the Curse are known no more; In him the Tribes of *Adam* boast More Blessings than their Father lost.[128]

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[125] Kline, "Covenant Theology under Attack," as posted by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

[126] Meredith G. Kline, *Two Adams, Two Covenants of Works: Selections from Kingdom Prologue (2000)* (2007), 28, at https://www.upper-register.com/papers/two_adams.pdf, under "b. Grace."

[127] A. W. Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis* (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.; copyright 1922), 54–55.

[128] Isaac Watts, *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament* (London: J. Clark, R. Ford and R. Cruttenden, 1719), Psalm LXXII, second part, stanza VII, 187. Long s is given as s.

Watts himself printed this stanza in brackets, which in his book marked verses that could be left out in singing without disturbing the sense, and it is not among the stanzas printed in at least one modern hymnal.[129] It deserves to be sung.

7.3 How the Two Fit Together

Do these later writers contradict Walaeus? I do not think so, though they say something he did not say. The difference is largely one of what is being compared.

Walaeus compared what we receive in Christ with what Adam lost. Adam lost righteousness and the right to life, and in Christ we receive righteousness and the right to life: "the same thing," though "not in the same way." Pink compared what believers have in Christ with what Adam had in the garden. Adam had innocence; the believer has a positive righteousness, and not his own but Christ's. Kline compared the believer's standing with Adam's state before the fall. Adam was on trial; the believer is past the trial. These are different comparisons, and all three can be true at once.

Walaeus's own distinctions make room for the later claim. He insisted that pardon and the right to life are distinct, even though they always go together. He insisted that the righteousness which gives the right to life is Christ's own obedience, reckoned to us. And he insisted that we receive it in a different way from Adam, by imputation rather than by creation. From there it is a short step to say that a righteousness which is Christ's, perfect and finished and reckoned to us by God, is a surer possession than an innocence that could be lost. Walaeus himself did not take that step. But nothing he said forbids it, and his doctrine of the whole obedience of Christ is the ground on which it stands. When he wrote that "there is no fear that in Christ we should be made too rich," he left the door open to the hymn.

8. Where Walaeus Stands

The positions traced in this article can now be set out side by side. The table gives, for each party, what it held to be imputed to the believer for justification, and how it dealt with the opposite view. The references are to the sections above, where the sources are cited in full.

[129] Watts, *Psalms of David Imitated*, Preface, xxxi: "you may leave out those Verses which are included in Crotchets [ ] without disturbing the Sense." Stanzas II–III and VII–VIII of this psalm are so marked. The stanza is not among the five given for this hymn from the 1987 *Psalter Hymnal* of the Christian Reformed Church at https://hymnary.org/text/jesus_shall_reign_whereer_the_sun.

Party	What is imputed for justification	How the other view was treated	See §
Calvin, *Institutes* (1559)	Christ's righteousness, his obedience "credited to us as if it were our own"; pardon won "by the whole course of his obedience," the obedience of his life "not excluded"; justification summed up as the remission of sins	Wrote before the dispute; no terms "active" and "passive"	6.1
Heidelberg Catechism (1563)	"The perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ," as if the believer had "accomplished all the obedience which Christ has rendered for me"	Wrote before the dispute	6.3
Belgic Confession, art. 22	"All his merits, and so many holy works, which he hath done for us"	Wrote before the dispute; art. 23's "obedience of Christ crucified alone" later read both ways	3
Piscator (reply to the synod of Gap)	The obedience of Christ's death alone; the holiness of his life a "necessary requisite" of priest and victim	Answered the French synods courteously; his followers cited his authority	2
French national synods (Gap 1603 to Tonneins 1614)	The whole obedience of Christ, in life and death, "active and passive"	Condemned the new opinion; wrote to Piscator; ordered conformity, then required subscription; courteous toward Piscator himself	2
Palatine delegates at Dort (1619)	No position stated; opinions "differ in almost all Churches"	Asked that the view not be condemned; general phrasing in catechizing, freedom in the schools	3
Hessian delegates at Dort (1619)	Christ's obedience imputed, explained from Philippians 2	Called the dispute one of "phrases and manner of speaking," not dogma; asked for mutual toleration	3

Party	What is imputed for justification	How the other view was treated	See §
Bogerman and Lubbertus (1619)	Inclined to Piscator's view; Lubbertus: expiation by blood alone	Bogerman proposed replacing "so many holy works" with "the obedience of Christ"; both voted against keeping the article unchanged	3, 4
Synod of Dort, majority (1619)	Kept "so many holy works" and added "in our stead"	Rejected the change Bogerman proposed to satisfy the Palatine and Hessian delegates	3
Leiden *Synopsis* (1625; Dr. Thysius presiding)	Passive and active righteousness, two parts of justification, each including the other	Its list of rejected errors is aimed at Rome and the Socinians, not at Piscator	5.7
Walaeus (letter of 1619; *Enchiridion*; *Loci communes*)	"The whole obedience of Christ," in life and death; imputation the cause, remission of sins (with the right to life) the effect	Judged the opposite view mistaken but not destructive of the foundation; argued with Lubbertus on his own ground; "no fear that in Christ we should be made too rich"	4, 5, 6

The dates can be set out in the same way.

Date	Event
1546	Johannes Piscator born
1559	Calvin's *Institutes*, Latin edition of Geneva
1563	Heidelberg Catechism, first edition
1573	Antonius Walaeus born
1603	National synod of Gap condemns the denial of the imputation of Christ's active and passive obedience; letter to Piscator (October)
1605	Bogerman declares that he would defend Piscator's teaching before a general synod (as reported by Kuyper)
1607	National synod of La Rochelle answers Piscator and orders conformity to "the whole Obedience of Christ both in his Life and Death"
1612	National synod of Privas requires pastors and candidates to sign a declaration
1614	National synod of Tonneins revises the declaration into a fuller canon
1618–1619	Synod of Dort; Walaeus a delegate
12 May 1619	Palatine and Hessian letters left with Bogerman

Date	Event
1619	Dort keeps “so many holy works” in art. 22 and adds “in our stead”; only Bogerman and Lubbertus vote against
6 July 1619	Lubbertus writes to Walaeus from Franeker
3 September 1619	Walaeus replies, about to move with his family to Leiden
1625	*Synopsis purioris theologiae* published at Leiden; Piscator dies
1639	Walaeus dies
1643	Walaeus’s *Opera omnia* printed at Leiden, with the *Enchiridion* and the *Loci communes*

Three patterns stand out.

The first is that on the substance of the doctrine the great majority stood together. Calvin, the Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the French synods, the Synod of Dort, the Leiden faculty and Walaeus all taught that God reckons to the believer the obedience of Christ’s life as well as his death. Piscator’s view was the new one. The French synods called it new in 1603, and nothing in these sources contradicts them.

The second is that, apart from Piscator and those who leaned toward him, the parties differed less over the substance than over how to treat the dissenters. The French synods condemned the view and required their pastors to subscribe against it. The Palatine and Hessian delegates wanted it left free. The Synod of Dort kept the Confession’s words, and even strengthened them, rejecting the change that Bogerman proposed to satisfy the Palatine and Hessian delegates. Walaeus’s own judgment was of a piece with Dort’s. He held firmly that the opposite view was mistaken, and he answered it point by point. But he said plainly that it did not overturn “the foundation of our free justification,” and he wrote to Lubbertus as a brother.

The third is that Walaeus refined the common doctrine in ways that the others did not. He did not simply repeat the Confession. He showed why a sinner owes two things, why Christ’s death is the “colophon” of both kinds of obedience, why the active obedience does not end where the passion begins, how pardon and the right to life are distinct but never separated, and how Calvin’s summary of justification as the remission of sins, rightly understood, answers Piscator instead of supporting him. Those refinements are what make him worth reading today.

9. Conclusion

This series asks one question of the Reformed theologians who came after Calvin, doctrine by doctrine: were they true to him? Richard Muller put the question in a form that fits the present case exactly: “The question that needs to be asked is not whether Calvin is a scriptural theologian and the Reformed scholastics unscriptural rationalists, but whether the doctrinal motifs drawn by Calvin from scripture are echoed, elaborated, developed, or neglected and set aside by the

systems of the 'orthodox' or 'scholastic' thinkers of subsequent generations."[130] On the imputation of Christ's obedience, the answer for Walaeus can now be given plainly.

What did Walaeus teach? He taught that "the whole obedience of Christ, which he rendered to God the Father according to the law not only in his death but also in his life," is imputed to us for righteousness. He gave the reason in a single sentence of the *Enchiridion*: a fallen man owes God the penalty for the sin he has committed, "and besides that, obedience for the future," because by sinning he could not take away God's right to his obedience. Christ bore the penalty to free us from the penalty, and obeyed the law to win for us the right of the sons of God. Walaeus held that the two kinds of obedience are distinct in what they answer, the passive to the curse and the active to the command, but that they were never separated in Christ, whose death was the colophon of both. And he held that the imputation of Christ's whole righteousness is the cause of the remission of sins, a remission that brings with it not only freedom from penalty but the right to eternal life.

How did he treat those who disagreed? Firmly on the doctrine and gently toward the men. He judged Piscator's view to be mistaken, and answered each of its arguments, including the one he called "the most difficult of all." But he granted that the view came from learned men who had served the church well, and that it did not overturn the foundation of our free justification. When Lubbertus, who had voted against the synod only weeks before, asked him to argue from the Old Testament alone, he did so, and closed by asking God to lead them both further into his truth.

Was he true to Calvin? Yes. Calvin taught that we are righteous before God only because Christ's obedience is credited to us as if it were our own. He taught that Christ won our pardon "by the whole course of his obedience," from the time he took the form of a servant, and that the obedience of his life is not excluded from our redemption, though Scripture fixes our eyes on his death. And he taught that justification can be summed up in one word as the remission of sins, because righteousness and reconciliation each contain the other. Walaeus kept all three. He named Calvin as his authority on the point where Piscator's argument was strongest, granting "with Calvin" that justification may be summed up as the remission of sins, and then showing that remission rests on Christ's whole obedience, not on his suffering alone. In Muller's terms, Walaeus echoed Calvin's teaching and elaborated it. He did not neglect it or set it aside. The one who set part of it aside was Piscator, who made the holiness of Christ's life a mere condition of his sacrifice, where Calvin had made the whole course of Christ's obedience the price of our pardon.

What Walaeus added to Calvin should also be named honestly. Calvin did not speak of "active" and "passive" obedience. Walaeus used those terms, while marking them as other men's words. Calvin did not distinguish two kinds of guilt, or assign the pain of loss to one kind of obedience and the pain of sense to the other. Walaeus did. Calvin did not frame the matter in terms of a

[130] Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 17.

covenant of works, under which God's justice was injured and must be satisfied. Walaeus did. These are real additions. But each serves Calvin's teaching rather than changing it. Each helps to explain why Christ's whole obedience is needed, which Calvin affirmed, against a new opinion that Calvin never had to meet.

Two ways of keeping faith. The evidence of this article suggests that the Reformed churches kept faith with Calvin on this doctrine in two ways. Some kept faith by rejecting the novelty outright. The French national synods are the clearest example. From Gap in 1603 to Tonneins in 1614 they censured Piscator's view, wrote to him, ordered their pastors to keep to the form of sound words "hitherto taught among us," and finally required every pastor to subscribe a declaration against it. The Synod of Dort, in its own way, belongs with them. It refused to soften the Confession's words, and it strengthened them with "in our stead." This first camp defended Calvin's teaching by holding the line: the old doctrine stands, and the new opinion is not to be taught.

Others kept faith by refining Calvin's teaching with careful distinctions, so that it could meet the new opinion on its own ground. On imputation, Walaeus belongs to this second camp. He agreed in substance with the French synods and with Dort. He held, as firmly as they did, that the whole obedience of Christ is imputed to us. But what marks his work is not a censure. It is an argument. He showed why a sinner owes a double debt. He answered Piscator's syllogism by granting its first premise with Calvin and denying the second. He corrected those who confined the active obedience to Christ's life before the passion. He declined to set the parts of Christ's righteousness against the parts of our sin "too anxiously." He preferred Calvin's order, imputation first as the cause and remission after as the effect, to the tidier scheme of two parts used even in his own faculty's *Synopsis*. And he did all this while judging his opponents' error to fall short of the foundation.

The two camps did not differ in doctrine. They differed in method and tone. The first guarded the doctrine by discipline; the second guarded it by explanation. Both were needed. A church that only censures may win the vote and lose the argument, and a church that only explains may never say plainly what must not be taught. The Palatine and Hessian delegates at Dort stood in a third place, holding that the dispute was over words rather than substance and that it should be left open in the schools. Walaeus did not join them. He treated the dispute as one of substance, however charitably he treated the men who took the other side.

The "more" that came later. Walaeus did not say that we gain more in Christ than we lost in Adam. He said that we receive "the same thing," righteousness and the right to life, "though not in the same way." Later Reformed writers, such as Kline and Pink, and Watts in his hymn, went further in their words. I have argued that their claim is a fair development of Walaeus's doctrine, not a departure from it. What Adam had was an innocence that could be lost; what the believer has is the finished obedience of Christ, reckoned to him by God. Walaeus's distinctions show

how both statements can be true. But the later claim is theirs, not his, and it should not be read back into him.

Muller asked whether Calvin's heirs echoed and elaborated his teaching or set it aside. On the imputation of Christ's obedience, Antonius Walaeus echoed it, elaborated it with care, and used it to answer a serious challenge that arose within the Reformed churches themselves. He is a witness to continuity, and a model of how to keep it.

What This Teaches

Walaeus's teaching on this subject leaves three lessons for a Christian reader today.

The first is that Christ's life matters for our salvation, not only his death. It is easy to think of the gospel as the news that Jesus died for our sins, and that is true. But a sinner needs more than pardon. He needs a righteousness he does not have. Walaeus saw this clearly. The prisoner who has served his sentence is free, but he is not thereby a righteous man. When God justifies us, he does not merely wipe our record clean and leave us to earn heaven for ourselves. He counts to us the obedience of his Son, who kept the law perfectly in our place, from his birth to his death on the cross. Every day of Christ's obedient life was lived for us. As the Catechism puts it, God regards the believer as if he "had myself accomplished all the obedience which Christ has rendered for me."

The second is that one can hold a doctrine firmly and still treat a brother fairly. Walaeus never softened his teaching. He thought Piscator was wrong, and he said why at length. Yet he granted that Piscator's view came from good and learned men and did not overturn the foundation of the gospel, and he wrote to Lubbertus with patience and respect. The French synods, for their part, were firm in doctrine and courteous to Piscator himself. There is a lesson here for every age of the church. Truth matters too much to be given up for peace, and brothers matter too much to be treated as enemies over an error that does not touch the foundation.

The third is the one Walaeus himself gave. In defending the imputation of Christ's whole obedience, he wrote that he preferred it because it agrees better with Scripture and with "the comfort of the faithful," and he added: "there is no fear that in Christ we should be made too rich."[131] A believer who is troubled by his sins can look to Christ's death and know that the penalty is paid. A believer who is troubled by his failures, by all the good he has left undone, can look to Christ's life and know that the obedience is rendered. Nothing is lacking. The whole Christ is given to us, and in him we are as rich as God's grace can make us.

Walaeus did not claim to have said the last word on this doctrine. But he shows how a careful Christian thinker can receive what the church has taught, meet a new challenge to it with

[131] Walaeus, *Enchiridion*, in *Opera omnia*, I, 71: "tamen judicamus, consolationi fidelium & Sacræ Scripturæ convenientius esse, statuere, totam Christi obedientiam & justitiam, tam activam, quam passivam, ut loquuntur, nostram esse coram Deo justitiam"; "cum non sit metuendum, ut in Christo nimis reddamur divites" (my translation).

patience and precision, and hold out to ordinary believers the comfort that was always its purpose.