

ROBERT ROLLOCK'S *TREATISE ON JUSTIFICATION*

translated by Aaron Clay Denlinger and Noah Phillips

Introduction

ROBERT ROLLOCK (1555–1599), the first Regent and Principal of the University of Edinburgh, is best known to present-day students of historical theology for the role he purportedly played in the development of Reformed federalism by virtue of the relatively unprecedented, mature treatment of a pre-Fall covenant of works discovered in his writings.¹ Indeed, it is difficult to find scholarly treatments of Rollock today that approach him from any other angle.² In his own day, however, Rollock was best known as a biblical commentator. In the decade preceding his death in 1599, Rollock published commentaries on select Psalms, Daniel, the Gospel of John, Romans, Ephesians, First and Second Thessalonians, and Philemon. Commentaries on Galatians, Colossians, and Hebrews written during the same period appeared shortly after his death. Nearly all these works saw multiple editions in Britain and on the continent, and the commentaries on Romans and Ephesians in particular garnered praise from no less a divine than Geneva's Theodore Beza.³

Rollock's theological works were relatively scarce and less popular in comparison to his biblical commentaries. In 1594 he published a very brief work on the relationship of God's will and decree to good and evil. In 1596 he published a short catechism on the subject of the covenants and the sacraments. A considerably longer treatise on effectual calling published the following year was modestly received at the time, but would become Rollock's best-known work to later generations thanks to an English translation of the work published in 1603 under the

1. See Aaron Clay Denlinger, "Introduction," in Robert Rollock, *Some Questions and Answers about God's Covenant and the Sacrament That Is a Seal of God's Covenant: With Related Texts*, trans. and ed. by Aaron Clay Denlinger (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 1–20; Robert Letham, "The *Foedus Operum*: Some Factors Accounting for Its Development," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 14/4 (1983): 457–67; Andrew Woolsey, *Unity and Continuity in Covenantal Thought: A Study in the Reformed Tradition to the Westminster Assembly* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 512–40.

2. There are notable exceptions, including: Brannon Ellis, "The Eternal Decree in the Incarnate Son: Robert Rollock on the Relationship between Christ and Election," in Aaron Clay Denlinger, ed., *Reformed Orthodoxy in Scotland: Essays on Scottish Theology 1560–1775* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 45–65; Mark Garner, "Preaching as a Communicative Event: A Discourse Analysis of Sermons by Robert Rollock (1555–1599)," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 9 (2007): 45–70.

3. See Theodore Beza, "Master Beza's Epistle," in *Select Works of Robert Rollock*, ed. William M. Gunn (repr., Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008), I: 10.

title *A Treatise of God's Effectual Calling*. Rollock's earliest biographer George Robertson attributes an unpublished treatise on excommunication to Rollock, but the work remains unknown. And, finally, there is Rollock's posthumously published *Tractatus de justificatione*, offered here in English translation for the first time.⁴

Whatever Rollock's original intention for the *Tractatus de justificatione* might have been, it was eventually printed as an appendix to his Hebrews commentary in 1605.⁵ Henry Charter, Rollock's successor as Principal at the University of Edinburgh who prepared the Hebrews commentary for publication, defended that decision on the grounds that the treatise was too short to publish on its own and that its subject matter was closely related to certain themes developed in the book of Hebrews, especially that of Christ's priesthood. Charter explained: "For that same oblation and sacrifice which Christ our Priest has offered on the cross as an expiation for our sins is the very righteousness that God imputes to us, and God pronounces us righteous from his throne according to that righteousness imputed to us."⁶

In terms of form, Rollock's treatise on justification constitutes a fairly standard specimen of early modern Protestant scholastic theology. Rollock brings the usual assortment of Aristotelian philosophical distinctions—for example, the distinction between efficient, formal, material, and final causes—to bear upon the matter of sinful man's justification by God. His insistence on defining justification as a unified "movement" that can be analyzed according to its *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* might be fruitfully compared to Thomas Aquinas's very similar teaching (cf. *Summa Theologiae* I-II, 113, 1) to illustrate how philosophical categories that informed medieval theology could be redeployed by post-Reformation Reformed scholastic thinkers in defense of Protestant theological distinctives. While Thomas identifies justification as a movement divine in origin but largely *intrinsic* to man, beginning with the infusion of grace and ending with the forgiveness of sins, Rollock identifies it as a movement divine in origin and *extrinsic* to man (that is, a movement properly occurring in God's judicial reckoning), beginning with the forgiveness of sins and ending with the imputation of righteousness to the sinner.

In terms of content, Rollock's account of justification is likewise largely standard Protestant fare. Perhaps the most intriguing theological feature of his treatise is his claim that Christ's sacrificial and meritorious death provided the impetus for God's eternal decree of election. This grounding of election in Christ's atoning work significantly problematizes, of course, any effort to represent Rollock as straightforwardly supralapsarian in his understanding of the divine decrees.⁷ Classical Reformed supralapsarianism insists that God's decree of Christ's incarnation and atonement is logically subsequent to God's decree of election, and so

4. In addition to his commentaries and theological works, several volumes of Rollock's sermons were also eventually published. A full bibliography of Rollock's works can be found in Rollock, *Select Works*, I: xc–xcv. It should, however, be noted that a number of editions of the works cited therein have been overlooked.

5. Robert Rollock, *Analysis logica in Epistolam ad Hebraeos. Accessit brevis et utilis tractatus de iustificatione eodem autore* (Edinburgh: Robert Charter, 1605). The *Tractatus* comprises pages 236–53.

6. *Ibid.*, A4r.

7. See for example Andrew Woolsey, who speaks of the "overwhelmingly supralapsarian character of Rollock's predestinarianism," in *Unity and Continuity*, 540.

cannot serve as a basis or ground to the same. The supralapsarian Scottish divine Samuel Rutherford's teaching on this point might be contrasted with Rollock's. In his *Examen arminianismi*, Rutherford rejects the claim that the incarnate Christ's person or work informed God's decree of election on the basis of 1 Thess. 5:9: "For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rutherford argues: "Our appointment to salvation as a certain end precedes Christ's merit, through which we obtain that salvation. If a doctor is appointed to heal a sick man by performing surgery, the performance of that surgery cannot precede his appointment."⁸

Of course, Rollock's insistence on grounding predestination in Christ's atoning work does not neatly conform to classical Reformed infralapsarian teaching either. Classical infralapsarianism, like its supralapsarian counterpart, ultimately identifies Christ's death as the means of achieving God's decree of election rather than the meritorious basis of that decree, even if it situates the decree of election logically closer (being subsequent to the Fall) to the decree of Christ's incarnation and work. Nor does Rollock's doctrine properly conform to the doctrine of the Remonstrants or Reformed Hypothetical Universalists, some of whom at least similarly situated Christ's death logically prior to God's election in the order of the decrees. Rollock—unlike, say, Arminius or Amyraut—does not, to all appearances, discern any intended or real salutary benefit from Christ's death for all persons indiscriminately. Christ's death strictly secures salvation for God's chosen people. But it does so, in his scheme, from beginning (predestination) to end (glorification).

Ultimately, then, what emerges from Rollock's treatise on justification is a version of Christological supralapsarianism—the doctrine, that is, that God's decree of Christ's incarnation (and ultimately death, resurrection, and ascension) logically preceded God's decree concerning man's fall (and, for that matter, all other decrees concerning man). Rollock's perspective on God's decrees admits no room for any hypothetical human history that does not include God becoming man in the person of Jesus Christ, suffering, dying, rising again, and ascending to glory, all with concrete implications for a people appointed as his own. In other words, Rollock's teaching here promises to inform considerably his claim elsewhere that the "first decree of God's free grace [comprised] the incarnation of his Son, and the glorifying of him, at the appointed time," while the "second decree proceeding from grace [comprised] the first creation of man after his own image, [and] then after the fall, ... [the] calling, justifying, and glorifying of man to the glory of Christ, and to the praise of his own grace in his appointed time."⁹

The translation of Rollock's work that follows is fairly straightforward. We have taken the necessary liberties with punctuation and word order that translation from Latin to English requires, but none, we hope, with meaning. We have occasionally introduced paragraph breaks where the original text contained too few for modern tastes, and we have added headings and sub-headings throughout the text to facilitate reading of the same and critical engagement with Rollock's doctrine.

8. Samuel Rutherford, *Examen Arminianismi, conscriptum et discipulis dictatum* (Utrecht: Anthony Smijtegetl, 1668), 264.

9. Rollock, *Select Works*, 1:266–67. See the very thorough and illuminating discussion of Rollock's supralapsarian Christology and grounding of election in Christ's work in Ellis, "Eternal Decree."

1. A Treatise on Justification

1.1. A Preliminary Definition of Justification

The word “justification” is received two ways: physically (so to speak) and politically. Received in its physical sense, the word “justification” denotes an intrinsic change in a man from one inherent state of justice to another. The word seems to be understood this way in Rev. 22:11: “Let him who is just, be justified still.” The one called “just” in this verse is done so with reference to an inherent justice. So also in 1 John 3:7: “The one who practices righteousness is just.” Justification understood in this sense is no different than sanctification, which is itself a kind of transformation between states inherently contrary to one another. But enough concerning the word understood in this sense.

Received in its other sense the word “justification” denotes the pronouncement of someone as just by a judge according to his authority. “Who will accuse God’s elect? It is God who justifies” (Rom. 8:33). Such a pronouncement can be made of those who have their own inherent righteousness and of those who have no inherent righteousness of their own, but have the righteousness of another. For one who is righteous within himself can be declared righteous by a judge according to the inherent righteousness that he has. In this way the blessed angels are justified by God—that is, according to their own inherent righteousness. In this way too man would have been justified if he had persisted in his original righteousness. Alternatively, one can be said to be justified—that is, pronounced righteous—according to a righteousness that is not inherent to him but belongs to another, and yet becomes his in some way. In this way one who is a debtor is justified by the righteousness of a sponsor who pays—in the debtor’s name—the debt to the creditor. In this way too sinful man is justified according to the righteousness and satisfaction of Christ the mediator.

The word “imputation,” just like the word “justification,” can be used generically. For righteousness can be said to be imputed both to one who is inherently righteous within himself and to one who does not have his own inherent righteousness, but has another’s, even Christ’s. And it is sufficiently clear that the word “justification” is applied generically even to those who have their own inherent righteousness from that phrase of the Apostle in Romans 3:28 and Galatians 2:16, in which he says that man is not justified according to works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ. For by this manner of speaking the Apostle clearly intimates that man could be justified—that is, pronounced righteous—according to his own righteousness and works if in fact such works really existed. And in the same way someone can be said to be justified through faith—that is, by means of another’s righteousness, even Christ’s. The verb “impute” can also be used generically, as is seen from those words of the Apostle in Romans 4:4, when he says: “To the one who works, wages are not imputed according to grace, but according to debt.” By these words Paul indicates that the righteousness of works—that is, inherent righteousness—could be said to be imputed to a man, if in fact such righteousness really existed in any man.

1.2. The Order of Justification

The kind of justification whereby one is pronounced righteous according to the righteousness of another (that is, Christ)—which particular species of justification we must now discuss—proceeds in the following order. First, there is effectual calling, in which God offers Christ with his righteousness, and the sinner apprehends that which is offered by faith. In effectual calling there is, in truth, a twofold work of application: there is, first of all, God's offering of Christ with his righteousness; there is, secondly, sinful man's apprehension and application to himself—through faith—of Christ who has been offered to him.

After effectual calling follows justification, which consists in God's imputation of the righteousness of Christ, who has already been apprehended by faith in effectual calling, to the sinner, just as if that righteousness were the sinner's own. That is, God pronounces the sinner righteous according to the righteousness of Christ. And the sinner accepts by faith that righteousness imputed to him by God. In justification there is similarly a twofold work of application: there is, first of all, God's imputation of righteousness to the sinner; there is, secondly, the sinner's apprehension and application to himself—through faith—of that righteousness which belongs to another and has been imputed to him by God. The twofold work of application that exists in justification differs from the twofold work of application that exists in effectual calling. For in effectual calling God's work of application is described wholly as an offer or a call. But in justification God's work of application is described as imputation. Moreover, man's work of application in effectual calling is the apprehension through faith of that righteousness offered; man's work, in other words, is faith in that righteousness offered. But in justification, man's work of application is described as faith in that righteousness imputed.

On the basis of these considerations, take note that faith has a twofold function: the first in effectual calling, when it accepts Christ with his righteousness as such is offered to man; the second in justification, when it accepts Christ with his righteousness as such is imputed to man. It should be noted, moreover, that when man is said to be justified through faith, the faith in question is that which has already played a role in effectual calling—a role, that is, in apprehending Christ and his righteousness as such is offered to man. But salvation is more appropriately attributed to that faith that apprehends the righteousness of Christ imputed to man in justification. "By grace you have been saved through faith" (Eph. 2.8). Indeed, eternal salvation follows upon justification. Let these few words suffice regarding the order in which the justification of sinners proceeds from God.

It may be asked: If in effectual calling Christ's righteousness is apprehended through faith, then cannot someone be said to be justified already by that righteousness? I answer, no. For justification is the pronouncement of a sentence. But in effectual calling there is no pronouncement of a sentence. Therefore, one cannot be called justified as a result of effectual calling alone. It is asked further: But since through faith the righteousness of Christ belongs to him who has been effectually called, cannot one be at least denominated righteous according to that righteousness which belongs to him through faith? I would not, indeed, completely deny that one who has been effectually called is already righteous through faith. But I would not admit that he can be called and named righteous, because the Judge's

sentence—which sentence evidently arises from some further grace—has not yet been delivered and pronounced concerning him. For it is entirely of grace that God pronounces righteous those who are already (in accordance with effectual calling) righteous through faith, and imputes to them another’s righteousness as if it were their own.

1.3. The Causes of Justification

There are four causes of justification: an efficient cause, a material cause, a formal cause, and a final cause.

1.3.1. The Efficient Cause of Justification

The efficient cause of justification is God. “It is God who justifies” (Rom. 8:33). There are diverse ways of effecting something, and God can be described as the one who justifies according to each of them. First of all, God can be said to justify according to one’s works and inherent righteousness. Thus he justifies the blessed angels. Thus he would have justified man, if man had remained in his primitive and original righteousness. The Jews pursued this way of justification, which is according to works of the law (Rom. 9:31-32).

Secondly, God can be said to justify according to faith, or through faith. By the word “faith” I understand Christ with his righteousness—that is, his satisfaction, or his obedience, or his merit—apprehended by means of faith. Two things are comprehended in this second way in which God is the efficient cause of justification: first, Christ, or Christ’s merit; second, our faith, without which Christ’s merit, which is effective for our justification, is not applied. For Christ’s merit—to develop this point—is the cause, in one way or another, of every spiritual blessing that God communicates to us. Christ with his merit is the cause of our predestination, without regard to our faith, whether present, or future, or foreseen. “He has chosen us in him,” that is, in Christ (Eph. 1:4). Again, Christ with his merit is the cause of our effectual calling, which occurs in time, without regard to our faith, because faith as such is given at length in effectual calling, and is the second part of effectual calling. Again, Christ with his merit is the cause of our justification, but not apart from that faith by which we apprehend Christ himself with his merit in effectual calling. Finally, Christ with his merit is the cause of our glorification, but this with that faith which apprehends the imputed righteousness of Christ in justification.

From these things, we see that man is justified through Christ’s merit, as though Christ’s merit were the method by which God justifies him, but not apart from faith apprehending that merit offered to man in effectual calling. Thus in Romans and Galatians, when Paul refers to the method by which man is justified—which method properly comprises both faith and Christ—by the single word faith, he generally conjoins the word faith with the name Jesus Christ. See for example Romans 3:22, where he speaks of the righteousness of God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Similarly, in Galatians 2:16 he says that we are justified through faith in Jesus Christ, and in Romans 3:25 he speaks about faith in Christ’s blood.

God’s grace and mercy is seen in the contrast between these ways in which God might justify a man. Grace agrees very well with faith. But there is utmost dissension

between grace and works (Rom. 11:6; Eph. 2:8-9). Therefore, the statement that "God justifies by faith" agrees with the statement that "God justifies according to grace." But a question remains about the order of these—whether grace or faith is prior, whether faith is the cause of grace, or whether grace is rather the cause of faith? I respond that faith precedes, while grace follows after.¹⁰ That is, faith—or rather Christ with his merit apprehended by faith in effectual calling—is the cause of that new grace by virtue of which God justifies man.

On this point let us repeat what we have said above, that every spiritual blessing—predestination, effectual calling, justification, and glorification—is a result of God's grace. God's grace, moreover, is a result of Christ and his own merit. In the predestination of man to life, for example, there is, first of all, Christ with his merit, and from that the grace of God follows. The grace of God is the effect, as it were, of Christ and his merit, and predestination follows from that grace. In effectual calling there is, first of all, Christ's merit, then there is the grace of God from which effectual calling follows. Similarly, in justification, there is, first of all, Christ's merit which has been apprehended in effectual calling, then there is God's grace, from which justification in turn follows. So, finally, in glorification there is, first of all, Christ's merit which has been apprehended through faith and imputed to man in justification, and then there is the grace of God from which glorification follows. But there is a distinction to be noted among these spiritual blessings. In predestination and effectual calling Christ's merit by itself—without our faith—is the cause of God's grace. In justification and glorification Christ's merit as such has been apprehended by our faith is the cause of God's grace.

From what we have just said it is apparent that faith, or rather Christ with his own merit apprehended by faith, is the cause of that grace by which God justifies man. Thus in Romans 3:24, after Paul has said "being justified freely, that is, by grace," he immediately adds, "through the redemption that has been made in Jesus Christ." By these words he identifies the cause of that grace by which men are justified—namely, Christ's redemption apprehended by faith in effectual calling. In Romans 4:16, also, he says, "therefore the inheritance is according to faith, so that it might be by grace," by which words he shows that eternal life is according to faith in order to demonstrate its grounding in grace, which grace is the effect of that righteousness of Christ imputed to man and apprehended by faith in justification.

You might ask in this place: how can God's grace, or God's free favor which is contrary to merit, coexist with Christ's merit? I reply that it is Christ's merit, not indeed our own, that coexists with God's grace. For Christ's satisfaction, which has satisfied the justice of the Father, is the very thing that merits God's grace towards us. But if you speak about our own merit, then of course our merit and the grace of God cannot coexist. For these, according to their own inherent natures, are in conflict with one another. Thus far concerning the efficient cause of justification.

10. Faith precedes grace with particular reference to justification, insofar as faith is exercised in the context of effectual calling prior to God's gracious imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner. Rollock makes it clear as he continues that faith (as such is exercised in effectual calling) is ultimately preceded by grace.

1.3.2. The Material Cause of Justification

The matter of justification is, first of all, sinful man. Thus in Romans 4:5 God is said to justify the ungodly. The matter of justification is, secondly, believing man. Thus Romans 3:22 refers to the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ in and upon all who believe. By the word “matter” I understand the subject concerning which God as judge pronounces his sentence of absolution. The word “matter” being accepted thus, Christ cannot be called the material cause of justification. For one who is the matter or subject of justice cannot likewise be called the matter of justification. Thus far concerning the material cause of justification.

1.3.3. The Formal Cause of Justification

The form or formal cause of justification is that righteousness credited to the believing man and introduced to him by the movement of justification. For the formal cause is also called the movement of something by which the form is introduced. Indeed, it is true that Christ’s own righteousness is also the efficient and meritorious cause of justification, but it is that efficient cause insofar as it is offered in effectual calling and apprehended by faith. However, Christ’s righteousness is the form of justification insofar as it is imputed in justification and apprehended by faith. Scripture speaks about Christ’s righteousness as the formal cause of justification when it says that God imputes righteousness apart from works (Rom. 4:6), when it calls Christ’s righteousness the righteousness of God (Rom. 3:22), when it calls Christ’s righteousness the gift of righteousness (Rom. 5:17), and when it calls Christ’s righteousness that which is from God (Phil. 3:9). In this last text, Christ’s righteousness is opposed to that righteousness which is named as our own, and which is defined as righteousness by the law. I acknowledge a righteousness which is inherent—for instance, that which belonged to the first man or belongs to the blessed angels—which can also be called the righteousness of God, since it is from God and is the gift of God. But God specifically identifies that righteousness which he imputes to the sinner according to grace as his own, not that righteousness which is inherent in a creature by virtue of creation. Thus far concerning the formal cause of justification.

1.3.4. The Final Cause of Justification

It follows now to talk about the end or goal of justification, which is twofold, proximate and ultimate. The proximate end of justification is indeed our salvation. But the ultimate and particular end of justification is God’s glory as discovered in his righteousness being imputed to man. “For the declaration of his righteousness at the present time” (Rom. 3:26). For just as God is glorified in that righteousness which is essential to him, so also he is glorified in the righteousness of Christ his Son, which is itself also called the righteousness of God.

1.4. The Parts of Justification

There are two aspects to justification: the first is the remission of sins; the second is the imputation of righteousness, which is properly called justification. These two aspects of justification should not be understood as if they are movements that are diverse and different in number. They should rather be understood as constituting a movement that is unified in being and number. But this unified movement (as it were) has diverse names by reason of its two *termini* or end points. With reference to its *terminus a quo* this movement is called the remission of sins, or absolution from sin, or the non-imputation of sin. But with reference to its *terminus ad quem* it is called justification, or the imputation of righteousness. Thus this movement that is itself one in substance and number—by which sin is destroyed and righteousness is introduced—can be distinguished into parts on the basis of its termini. But that this movement (as it were) is ultimately singular is apparent from Romans 4.6-7, when that which David in the Psalms calls the remission of sins is called by Paul, in the same sense, the imputation of righteousness.

1.4.1. The Remission of Sins

Let us, then, talk about the first aspect of justification. The remission of sins is not some sort of annihilation or removal of sin from the subject, with the result that sin now ceases to inhere in the subject. It is, rather, that by which God, although sin exists in the subject, nevertheless judges sin not to exist, and does not impute it to the subject, but considers the sinner as one who is not a sinner. When God judges sin not to exist he at once removes the guilt of sin, which is the meritorious basis of punishment, and the punishment itself—that is, death.

In the remission of sins, therefore, there are three things which God simultaneously takes away: first, the sin itself, when he judges that sin not to exist; second, the guilt of sin; and third, the penalty of sin. The removal of those two latter realities—that is, guilt and punishment—necessarily follows from the removal of sin itself. Moreover, this first part of justification takes its name from sin, which is properly the terminus or point from which this movement—the remission of sins—proceeds, and from which the sentence of absolution exists. For the sentence also pertains to guilt and punishment, but only secondarily.

1.4.2. The Imputation of Righteousness

Now let us talk about the second aspect of justification. That which is properly called justification, or the imputation of righteousness, is not the introduction of some inherent righteousness into the subject, but is God's judgment of that subject, who is intrinsically a sinner, to be righteous according to another's righteousness—that is, the righteousness of Christ apprehended through faith. To put this another way, it is God's imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner. There is indeed a certain symmetry between the remission of sins and justification properly called. For just as God, in the remission of sins, does not impute sin (that nevertheless exists), so God, in justification, imputes righteousness (that is not inherent). From the imputation of righteousness, a meritorious claim upon life and the reward of life itself equally

follow. For just as the sentence of sin's remission has regard to three things—sin, liability to punishment, and punishment itself—so the sentence of justification has regard to three things—Christ's righteousness or satisfaction, that merit which belongs to Christ's righteousness or satisfaction (for his satisfaction is meritorious of eternal life), and life itself. Although the sentence of justification has regard to all these things, it takes its name from the first (Christ's righteousness), from which the last two aspects of justification necessarily follow.

1.5. The Execution of God's Judicial Sentence

God's sentence of life to those of us who are the objects of justification is executed when he regenerates us through his Holy Spirit—that is, when he creates within us that new life that he has assigned to us already by means of that earlier sentence of justification. Therefore, the execution of the sentence of justification properly has regard to that spiritual and eternal life which we said above constitutes the sentence of justification. But this should be dealt with more fully under the doctrine of regeneration.

1.6. A Fuller Definition of Justification

By means of everything that we have said we arrive at this proper and complete (as they say) definition of justification: justification is a pronouncement of God our Judge, delivered in keeping with his authority, by which, in keeping with his grace and according to sinful and believing man's faith in Christ, he remits sins and imputes his own righteousness to man, to the end of man's own eternal life as well as the glory of his grace and that righteousness of his that he freely imputes to man. This definition comprises an explanation of the word justification itself as well as attention to the four causes and the two aspects of justification.

1.7. Objections Considered

At this point it may be asked whether justification is perfectly completed in this life? Let me say in response to this, first of all, that God's benefits to us in Christ fall into two categories. One category includes benefits that are not inherent in man, such as his eternal predestination, his justification, and his adoption. The other includes benefits that are inherent in man, such as his effectual calling and his glorification. The benefits included in these two categories have this in common, that none of them—not predestination, not justification, not adoption, not effectual calling, not glorification—will be fully manifested and revealed until Christ's own manifestation is full and perfect. Indeed, the revelation of these things in man has a beginning in the first manifestation of Christ himself. Thus the Apostle writes in Romans 3:21, "but now the righteousness of God is revealed, etc." But the revelation of them in believers is not yet full. Thus 1 John 3:2: "We are already sons of God, but it has not yet appeared what we will be." But these two categories of benefits differ in this, that those which we have said do not inhere in man are perfected and summed up in this life itself. "We are already," 1 John 3:2 says, "sons of God." We have then already been predestined. We have then already been justified. But those benefits which we

have said do inhere in man are not completely perfected in this life, even if they have begun. From these considerations it is surely clear that justification is perfected and summed up in this present life, but is not fully manifested in the same.

The question remains whether Christ will in the future, on the day of judgment, justify those who have believed in this life? And if so, is it not true that justification is actually perfected in the life to come rather than in this life? I respond that Christ will not, on that day of judgment, justify believers. He will, rather, declare on the basis of their works that they have believed and have been justified in this life. Indeed, the verb "justify" sometimes has the meaning of "declare justified." James uses the word in this very sense when he speaks of the man who is justified according to his works.

It is asked, moreover, whether or not we seek forgiveness of sins—that is, the first aspect of justification—from God on a daily basis? And if so, how can we say that justification is completed once and for all in this life? I respond that when we pray for the remission of sins, we are not praying for that benefit as if it were not already given to us. Rather, we are praying for the increase of our faith, and for the application of that benefit which is ours through faith and faith's increase.

But justification, someone will say, is a judicial sentence of life. And life is not perfected until Christ's second coming. Is it not the case, therefore, that justification itself will not be perfected until Christ's second coming? I respond that it is one thing for the judicial sentence of life to be complete, and another thing for life itself to be perfected. The sentence of life is surely complete already in this life, but life itself will not be perfected until Christ's second coming. This argument, therefore, is fallacious and captious.

1.8. Justification vis-à-vis Effectual Calling, Adoption, and Regeneration

I have previously mentioned the doctrine of adoption, and wish now to say something more about it, because the doctrines of justification and adoption are joined in my understanding. The benefits of God that are given to us in Christ in time are effectual calling, justification (which comprehends adoption), and, finally, regeneration or glorification. Each of these benefits comes to us through the application to us of Christ and his grace; or rather, each of these benefits constitutes an application of Christ and his grace to us. The application of Christ to us has a twofold character: there is, first of all, God's application of Christ to us; secondly, there is our application to ourselves of Christ, who has already been applied to us by God. The first application, therefore, is God's; the second is our own. The application which we ourselves make of Christ to us is generally called faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit is always yoked with God's application of Christ to us. Through the Spirit, God works in us our own act of application, or rather the instrument of that application—that is, our faith.

The general points just made concerning, first of all, God's application of Christ to us, and then our application of Christ to ourselves, will become clearer if we consider what this looks like in relation to each discrete benefit that God gives to us. With respect to effectual calling, then, first of all: God's work of application consists in Christ with all his grace being offered to us in his word, which word is accompanied by the Holy Spirit. Our work of application consists in laying hold—by

that faith kindled in our hearts by the word and the Holy Spirit—of Christ who is offered to us with all his grace.

In justification, secondly, God's work consists in a more specific application to us of Christ, who has already been applied to us in effectual calling, with all his grace. This God accomplishes by imputing to us Christ himself and a particular grace of his; namely, his righteousness. The Holy Spirit is joined to this work of God's imputation. Our own work of application in justification consists in laying hold—through that faith kindled in our hearts by the gift of God's Spirit—of Christ and that righteousness of his which has been imputed to us by God.

Adoption follows justification. In adoption, which we are now discussing, God's work consists in a more particular application to us of Christ as our brother. This God accomplishes by reckoning us as brothers of his firstborn Son, and so too as his own sons in Christ. Indeed, just as God in justification applies Christ to us as the righteous one, so in adoption he applies Christ to us as our firstborn brother. And this is truly a closer degree of application and union. With this work of application by God the Holy Spirit is once again joined. Our work in adoption consists in laying hold and applying to ourselves—through that faith kindled in us by the gift of the Holy Spirit—Christ as our firstborn brother. In other words, we apply to ourselves filiation in Christ, which filiation God imputes to us.

In regeneration (about which we also now speak), finally, God's work consists in an even closer application of Christ to us, uniting us to him just as a body is joined to its head. With this work of God the Holy Spirit is once again joined. In this work of application God unites us, first of all, to Christ in his death, for the mortification of our own flesh. He further unites us to Christ in his resurrection from death, for the vivification of our spirits. Our own work of application in regeneration consists in laying hold—by that faith stirred up in us through the Holy Spirit—of that Christ who has been united to us in his death and in his life. In this twofold work of application—first of God, then of us—by which Christ is joined to us as a head to its body, our regeneration is seen. For by one and the same work Christ is united to us as our head and we are regenerated or renewed. But about regeneration more must be said in its own place. We see what the nature of adoption is from the things we have said. But there is no need to linger any longer on this point.

As a final point, we add that the Spirit that God gives to us in the application of each benefit noted above derives a particular name from each of those benefits, even though he is one and the same Spirit of God. Insofar as the Spirit is given to us in effectual calling, he is called the Spirit of our calling. Insofar as he is given to us in justification he is called the Spirit of our justification. Insofar as he is given to us in adoption he is called the Spirit of our adoption. Insofar, finally, as he is given to us in regeneration, he is called the Spirit of our regeneration.