Charles Raith II

After Merit

John Calvin's Theology of Works and Rewards



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Preface

The focus of this study is John Calvin's theology of works and reward, and the approach is to contextualize his thought in light of both medieval theological developments surrounding the doctrine of "merit" and his polemics against the doctrine as he understood it in his day. But this study also strives for something much more. The book, by analyzing this particular part of Calvin's thought—his doctrine of works and reward—illuminates the whole in fresh ways. It provides a framework for reading and interpreting Calvin's theology that strives to do justice to the reformational context in which it developed. It is able to do so because Calvin's polemic against the merit-based soteriology of his "opponents" drives the vast majority of Calvin's positive theological constructions (as we shall see). So while the book is not a full-on reinterpretation of Calvin, by emphasizing the centrality of this doctrine in Calvin's historical and polemical context, it does reorganize the constellation of the rest of his teaching somewhat, allowing the various elements of his theology to fall more naturally into place and thus highlighting the function other various doctrines do—and don't—fulfill. Without this proper framework, misinterpretations of Calvin on topics like predestination, free choice, sin, justification, sanctification, works, and eternal life—all topics related to merit—will necessarily result. We have certainly witnessed many readings of Calvin in which these topics have been extracted from the medieval developments in Calvin's past and the polemics in his present, with disastrous results. Given the 500th anniversary of the Reformation era on the horizon, a volume committed to reading texts from within this reformational context seems most fitting.

More thanks are due for this volume than space allows. Herman Selderhuis deserves special thanks for encouraging me to write this book and for being a guiding light in my understanding of Calvin. Ward Holder and Jordan Ballor graciously organized conference sessions that gave me the opportunity to present some of the material found in this volume; thank you also to the *Sixteenth Century Society*, *RefoRC*, and *ASCH* for facilitating those conferences and for those who participated in the sessions and offered helpful feedback. Thanks are

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due to *Pro Ecclesia* for publishing two articles that form the substance of chapter 2: "Calvin's Critique of Merit, and Why Aquinas (Mostly) Agrees," *Pro Ecclesia* XX (2011): 135–66, and "Aquinas and Calvin on Merit, Part II: Condignity and Participation," *Pro Ecclesia* XXI (2012): 195–210. I am also grateful to John Brown University for awarding me the J. Vernon McGee Chair of Biblical and Theological Studies to facilitate the completion of this volume. Special thanks are due to Jeff Reimer for his painstaking editorial work—it is a rare gift to find someone who so ably combines editorial proficiency with theological acumen.

I dedicate this book to my son, Zeb, who was born in the final stages of its composition, and to my other children, Charles, Paul and Elizabeth. As my wife and I are keenly aware, a good theology of works and reward becomes quite practical whilst in the throes of parenthood.

Ash Wednesday, 2016 Charles Raith II

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Abbreviations

Journals

ACPQ	*American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*
ATI	*American Theological Inquiry*
ARG	*Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*
CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IJST	*International Journal of Systematic Theology*
JEMC	*Journal of Early Modern Christianity*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JHP	*Journal of the History of Philosophy*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
MAJT	*Mid-America Journal of Theology*
PE	*Pro Ecclesia*
RR	*Reformation & Renaissance Review*
RHE	*Revue d' histoire ecclesiastique*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SCJ	*The Sixteenth Century Journal*
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
ZD	*Zeitschrift für Dialektische Theologie*
ZK	*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*

Compilations

CHI	*Calvin and His Influence, 1509–2009.* Edited by Irene Backus and Philip Benedict. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011
CCJC	*Cambridge Companion to John Calvin.* Edited by Donald K. McKim. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004

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CCO *Cambridge Companion to Ockham.* Edited by Paul Vincent Spade. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999

CSEMP *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism: Studies in Honor of Richard A. Muller on the Maturation of a Theological Tradition.* Edited by Jordan J. Ballor, David S. Sytsma, and Jason Zuidema. Leiden: Brill, 2013

DS *Enchirdion Symbolorum: Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et morum.* Edited by H.J. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer (Barcinone: Herder, 1965

JCET *John Calvin and Evangelical Theology: Legacy and Prospect.* Edited by Sung Wook Chung. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009

NPNF[1] A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Series 1. 14 vols. Edited by Philip Schaff et al. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1887–1894. Several reprints; also accessible online at www.ccel.org

PL Patrologia Latina [= *Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina*]. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. 217 vols. Paris, 1844–1864

Works of Calvin

Antidotes Paris *Articles by the Theological Faculty of Paris, with Antidotes.* In *Tracts Relating to the Reformation.* Translated by Henry Beveridge. Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844

Antidotes Trent *Acts of the Synod of Trent, with Antidotes.* In *Tracts Relating to the Reformation.* Translated by Henry Beveridge. Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844

BLW *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will: A Defense of the Orthodox Doctrine of Human Choice against Phighius.* Translated by Graham I. Davies. Edited by A.N.S. Lane. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996. This work is cited by chapter and paragraph number, with page number following in parentheses.

CO *Corpus Reformatorum: Ioannis Calvini Opera quae supersun omnia.* Edited by W. Baum et al. Brunswick: C.A. Schwetschke & Filium, 1863–1900

Com. *Commentarius super.* Contained in CO, unless otherwise noted

Com. Rom. *Commentarius in Epistilorum Pauli ad Romanos.* Edited by T.H.L. Parker. Leiden: Brill, 1981

CTS Calvin Translation Society. *Calvin's Commentaries*. 22 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989.

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Inst.	*Institutes of the Christian Religion.* Translated by Henry Beveridge. 1845. Reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008
Interim	*The True Method for Giving Peace to Christendom and Reforming the Church.* In *Tracts Relating to the Reformation.* Translated by Henry Beveridge. Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844
OS	P. Barth *et al.* (eds), *Johannis Calvini Opera Selecta.* Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1926–68
Reform	*The Necessity of Reforming the Church.* In *Tracts Relating to the Reformation.* Translated by Henry Beveridge. Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844

Other Works

Gabriel Biel

Sent. (B)	Gabriel Biel. *Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sententiarum.* Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1973–1984

Martin Bucer

Ep. ad Eph.	*Epistola D. Pauli ad Ephesios.* … 1527
Ep. ad Rom.	*Metaphrasis et Enarrationes Perpetuae … in Epistolam ad Romanos.* … 1536

Erasmus

CWE	*Collected Works of Erasmus.* Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1974–

Martin Luther

WA	*D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe.* Edited by K. Drescher et al. Weimar: Verlag Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1883–

Philip Melanchthon

Apology	*Apology for the Augsburg Confession (1530).* In *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* Edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert. Translated by Charles Arand et al. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000
C. Rom.	Philipp Melanchthon. *Commentary on Romans.* Translated by Fred Kramer. St. Louis: Concordia, 1992

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Duns Scotus

Lect. *Lectura*

Ord. *Ordinatio*

Quod. *Quodlibetum*

Vatican *Opera omnia studio et cura Commissionis Scotisticae ad fidem codicum edita praeside Carolo Balic.* Vols. 1–10, 16–21. Vatican: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950–

Wadding *Joannis Duns Scoti Doctoris Subtilis Ordinis Minorum Opera omnia.* Edited by Luke Wadding. 12 vols. Lyons, 1639

Wolter *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality.* Translated by Allan B. Wolter. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1986

Thomas Aquinas

S. ep. Col. *Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Colossenses lectura.* Latin text and English translation in *Commentary on the Letters of Saint Paul to the Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.* Edited by J. Mortensen and E. Alarcón. Translated by F.R. Larcher, OP. Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012

S. ep. Rom. *Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Romanos lectura.* Latin text and English translation in *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.* Edited by J. Mortensen and E. Alarcón. Translated by F.R. Larcher, OP. Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012

ScG *Summa contra Gentiles*

ST *Summa Theologiae*

William of Ockham

Quodl. *Quodlibeta septem una cum tractatu de sacramento altaris.* Argentinae, 1491

Sent. (O) *In libros Sententiarum.* Used for both the *Scriptum* (on book 1) and the *Reportatio* (on books 2–4). References to the *Scriptum* are to the prologue or distinction and question numbers; for the *Reportatio* to book and question. *Opera philosophica et theologica.* Edited by Gedeon Gál et al. 17 vols. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1967–1988

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Introduction

> The theologian's task is not to divert the ears with chatter
> but to strengthen consciences by teaching things true, sure, and profitable.
>
> —*Inst.* 1.14.4

Few, if any, in the sixteenth century denied the necessity of faith, the centrality of God's grace, and the work of Jesus Christ for salvation. The questions people did tend to ask, however, pertained, on the one hand, to the mediatory role of the Church in God's giving of grace, and on the other hand, how human ability and activity relates to divine activity in the appropriation of God's saving grace.[1] By the sixteenth century, God's grace was conceived in a deeply institutionalized and highly economized manner, with the sacramental structures of the Church being understood as the key mechanism for God's dispensing of his grace, and with a great deal of emphasis put on human responsibility for appropriating this grace.[2] As Aquinas had noted centuries before, "Faith requires that [the Christian] should seek to be justified from his sins through the power of Christ's Passion *which operates in the sacraments of the Church.*"[3] The indulgence controversy sparked by

1 On the prevailing medieval options for relating God's causality to created causes—occasionalism, mere conservationism, and concurrentism—see Alfred J. Freddoso, "God's General Concurrence with Secondary Causes: Pitfalls and Prospects," *ACPQ* 68 (1994): 131–35. Even within concurrentism, which was the most widely held view among Christian theologians, debates existed as to how to relate God's *immediate* causal activity to secondary causes (like human willing) in the production of a single effect.

2 Joseph Wawrykow notes that among sixteenth-century Catholic interlocutors the topic of merit was often approached primarily as a way of asserting the contribution of human beings to their own salvation, whereas it had been for someone like Thomas Aquinas a theocentric doctrine that served the proclamation of the salvific work of the Christian God; Joseph Wawrykow, "John Calvin and Condign Merit," *ARG* 83 (1992): 73–90, at 83–85; Wawrykow, *God's Grace and Human Action: "Merit" in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). On the increasing importance of the Sacrament of Penance for the high and late Middle Ages, see John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study in the Roman Catholic Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 1–22.

3 Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 84, a. 5, ad. 2 (emphasis added), addressing the sacrament of penance. There was, to be sure, debate among the schoolmen around how to relate the sacraments to God's giving of grace, such as that between Aquinas's more intrinsic connection and Scotus's more circumstantial connection. For medieval sacramental theology in connection with the dispensing the blessings of the covenant, see Martin Greschat, "Der Bundesgekanke in der Theologie des spaten Mittelalters," *ZK* 81 (1970): 45; James Preus, *From Shadow to Promise: Old*

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Martin Luther, for example, hinged on an understanding of the Church's sacramental role in dispensing grace to forgive penitential punishment due to sin.[4] And while the Reformers raised questions pertaining to the Church's mediatory role in dispensing grace,[5] this concern was intimately intertwined with a proper conception of human activity in the appropriation of God's grace. Simply positing a less robust role for the Church in mediating God's grace did not address the issue of how human action functioned in relation to God's action in the dispensing of grace. Again Aquinas, for example, had earlier legitimized the sacrament of penance—that is, the activity of contrition, confession and absolution, and penitential works for obtaining forgiveness of sins—as the means of obtaining grace based on Augustine's dictum, "He who created you without you will not justify you without you."[6] The issue here is not whether faith is necessary for justification, nor whether justification is a result of Christ's grace; both of these Aquinas affirms. The issue, rather, is the role of human activity in relation to divine activity and ordination in obtaining God's grace for the forgiveness of sins.

This central issue, namely the role of human activity in appropriating God's grace brings us to one of the principle disputed topics in sixteenth-century: merit. If the Church's treasury was grace and its sacramental structures the means of dispensing it, merit was the mechanism by which a person's activity tapped into the treasury in order to obtain soteriological goods: justification, the forgiveness of sins, the grace of perseverance, and ultimately the reward of eternal beatitude.[7] But caught in the middle of the sacramental structures, on the one side, and the meritorious activities prescribed for appropriating God's grace, on the other side, stood the late-medieval Christian, many of which had an increasing awareness both of the self as weak and sinful and of the lofty requirements that must be met to

Testament Interpretation from Augustine to the Young Luther (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 130–32, 162. For the Augustinian underpinnings of this view, see Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform 1250–1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 22–31.

4 See John O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), for the ways that the Tridentine Fathers did and did not address the issue of indulgences.

5 With some exaggeration, de Greef states, "Reformation [for Calvin] is above all reformation of the church" (Wulfert de Greef, "Calvin's Writings," in *CCJC* 46).

6 Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 84, a. 5; see Augustine, *Sermones*, clxix, 13 (PL 38.923): *Qui ergo fecit te sine te, non te iustificat sine te.* For the reception of this phrase in the Middle Ages, see Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 92–117.

7 See the description from Ozment: "The penitent, like the baptized, soon succumbed to the temptation to sin and found himself, if earnest, returning to the sacrament of penance in what became a recurring cycle of sin and absolution" (*Age of Reform*, 30).

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merit one's salvation.[8] The result was often that "people were urgently looking for the security of salvation, but in the late medieval system they could not find it."[9] Since by the sixteenth century one acceptable view of human action, such as that of Luis de Molina, framed human free action as standing outside divine governance and direct causality,[10] persons seeking salvation could imagine a God waiting on them to do their part—possibly waiting in anger on account of their sin—before he would step in and do his part to save. But one could never know if they had actually done their part; nor could they ever know if grace actually indwelled them.

The Reformers by and large felt a major source of the problems was the prevailing meritorious framework of salvation. Martin Bucer's comments in the second chapter of both his 1536 and 1562 exposition on Paul's Letter to the Romans are telling: "the principal religious disagreements in the whole world have arisen and been sustained from the fact that very few indeed have yet paid attention to the status that should be accorded to our works and why it is they have the nature of merits and earn the wages of eternal life."[11] The Reformers understood that addressing these problems would require a thorough rethinking of the economics of salvation.[12] Luther's denouncement of indulgence trade beginning with his Ninety-Five Theses reflects an early attempt at this rethinking —a rethinking that would shift and develop throughout the sixteenth century.[13]

8 Berndt Hamm, *Der frühe Luther. Etappen reformatorischer Neuorientierung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 38–41.

9 Theodor Dieter, "The Early Luther and His Theological Development," *Ecclesiology* 9 (2013): 254–61, at 255. There has been considerable debate as to the extent of any "crisis" in early sixteenth-century spirituality. See Hans J. Hillerbrand, *The Division of Christendom: Christianity in the Sixteenth Century* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 11–25, 65–69.

10 Steve A. Long, *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 37–41; Thomas P. Flint, "Two Accounts of Providence," in *Divine and Human Action: Essays in the Metaphysics of Theism*, ed. Thomas V. Morris (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 156–62. The seeds of this position had been sown many years before; see the comment from Thomas Bradwardine regarding his days as a student: "In the philosophical faculty I seldom heard a reference to grace. … What I heard day in and day out was that we are masters of our own free acts, that ours is the choice to act well or badly" (cited in Heiko A. Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation: The Shape of Late Medieval Thought* [Cambridge: James Clarke, 1967], 135).

11 Cited in Brian Lugioyo, *Martin Bucer's Doctrine of Justification: Reformation Theology and Early Modern Irenicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 39.

12 "It is the concept of merit that prompts or forces persons to reflect on themselves and their inner state of affairs instead of living the relation to the beloved (God)," (Dieter, "Early Luther," 257.

13 David Steinmetz points to Staupitz's reinterpretation of *gratia gratum faciens* not as the grace that makes us acceptable to God but rather the grace that makes God acceptable to us as forming the background of the first of Luther's theses regarding penance as a lifelong mark of the Christian (*Misericordia Dei: The Theology of Johannes von Staupitz in Its Late Medieval Setting* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 84–85. Garcia notes that the "need" to relate Christian obedience

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Luther's theses flows from his post-1515 break from any attempt to reconcile the *meritum de congruo* of the *doctores moderni* with God's unmerited mercy in the *pactum misericordiae*.[14] In Brian Gerrish's words, "Luther finds himself attacking reason in characteristically Nominalist style precisely in order to destroy the other characteristic of Nominalist thought, its optimism concerning the powers of human will."[15] Later, Luther's *De liberate christiana* (1520) and *De servo arbitrio* (1525) worked as a two-edged sword to carve out what the Christian did not have to do, on the one hand, and what the Christian could not do, on the other.[16] Both of these served the broader purpose of reenvisioning salvation along a different set of lines than the prevailing meritorious framework.[17]

1. Calvin's Theology as a Soteriological Alternative to Merit

Into this scene steps John Calvin, who at some point began to be driven by a desire to rethink salvation over against the merit-based framework of his "opponents."[18] Benefiting from the work already done by the likes of Luther, Melanchthon, and Bucer, but also leaving his unique stamp, Calvin reconceived an understanding of salvation, works, and reward that would combine a largely Augustinian-Thomistic approach to human and divine action with a nominalist-voluntarist emphasis on God's will and human worthlessness.

In light of recent Calvin scholarship, two particular points require exposition and defense: (1) the uniqueness of Calvin's position on merit, works, and reward when compared to his predecessors and contemporaries, and (2) the centrality of his polemic against merit in shaping his soteriology.

---

to justification in a theologically satisfying manner was "acutely felt" by the Reformers—a need that "was simply part of Luther's legacy, and belonged as a defining characteristic of a period of transition." It is within this "rapidly moving stream" that Garcia believes Calvin's thought on these issues is best understood (Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin's Theology* [Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2008], 86).

14 Heiko Oberman, *Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 64.

15 Brian Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 56.

16 For the controversies surrounding his *De libertate christiana*, see Steven E. Ozment, "Homo Viator: Luther and Late Medieval Theology," *HTR* 57 (1969): 275–87.

17 I agree with Fink's thesis that "the first-generation reformers, galvanized by Luther's protest against the indulgence trade, adopted a common 'rhetoric of dissent' aimed at critiquing the regnant Catholic orthopraxy of salvation in the interest of a common set of primarily existential-religious concerns" (David Fink, "Was There a 'Reformation Doctrine of Justification'?," *HTR* 103 [2010]: 205–35, at 206).

18 On discussion surrounding Calvin's conversion to the Protestant cause, see Bernard Cottret, *Calvin: A Biography*, trans. M. Wallace McDonald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 65–70; Alexandre Ganoczy, "Calvin's life", in *CCJC* 9–10.

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1.1 Calvin's Unique Position on Merit, Works, and Reward

In light of contemporary Calvin scholarship, it is necessary to ask: (1) why study *Calvin* on this topic (i. e., merit, works, and reward), and (2) why study Calvin on *this* topic?

First, Calvin scholarship has gone far in helping us recognize Calvin's overall lack of theological originality, either due to his overarching desire to be "catholic" and therefore intentionally unoriginal[19] or due to the influences of other Reformers, most notably Bucer and Melanchthon, such that many of Calvin's ideas are merely representations of another's (more original) positions.[20] Such scholarship has rightly contributed to a certain "demotion" of Calvin, which is actually a promotion of the true, historical Calvin—that is, a Calvin not dropped from the heavens but one who often either merely passed on what he had received from the tradition (even from the medieval tradition) or borrowed from other Reformers when articulating his positions.[21] What is it about *Calvin*, then, that deserves attention on the topic of merit?

Regarding the second, Calvin scholarship has highlighted that outside of the topics of the Eucharist, predestination, and policies addressing religious dissent —the three loci historically most commonly associated with the term "Calvinist" or "Calvinism"[22]—there seems to be little reason for a study on the theological

19 J. Todd Billings, "The Catholic Calvin," *PE* 20 (2011): 120–34; Michael Horton, *Calvin and the Christian Life: Glorifying and Enjoying God Forever* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 33–35; David Steinmetz, "The Scholastic Calvin," in *Protestant Scholasticism*, ed. Carl R. Trueman and R. Scott Clark (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster 1999), 16–30.

20 See, e. g., Timothy Wengert, "Philip Melanchthon and John Calvin against Andreas Osiander: Coming to Terms with Forensic Justification," in *Calvin and Luther: The Continuing Relationship*, ed. R. Ward Holder (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 71–72: "No one can truly appreciate Calvin's contribution to the debate without coming to terms with the fact that what he had to say others had said before him and that he borrowed and reshaped their arguments." David Wright emphasizes Bucer's influence on Calvin, claiming that while some scholars have interpreted Bucer as a "Calvinist," "it is surely far nearer the mark historically to describe Calvin as a 'Buceran'" ("Introduction," in *Common Places of Martin Bucer*, ed. and trans. D.F. Wright [Appleford: The Sutton Courtney Press, 1972], 17).

21 The term "demotion" is taken from Richard Muller's now well-known essay, "Demoting Calvin: The Issue of Calvin and the Reformed Tradition," in *John Calvin, Myth and Reality: Impact and Images of Geneva's Reformer*, ed. Amy Nelson Burnett (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011), 3–17; see also Muller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012).

22 The first written instance of the term "Calvinism" occurs from the hand of Calvin himself in a letter to Bullinger (June 26, 1548), in which Calvin reports on conflicts surrounding the Eucharist leading up to the *Consensus Tigurinus* (*CO* 12:730). During the Bolsec and Arminian controversies, the term began to be associated with his particular teaching on God's predestinating will to save some and damn others. And after Calvin's treatment of Castellio and Servetus, his name became associated with those who opposed religious freedom; for a short history of the concept, see Irena Backus and Philip Benedict, "Introduction," in *CHI* 2–12.

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loci of merit, works, and reward. In other words, even while recognizing that Calvin does present unique positions on certain topics, what does Calvin have to say uniquely on *these* topics? Is this study, then, just another unhistorical analysis of Calvin on a topic lacking any broader significance—a study perhaps reflecting the interests of a Calvin scholar but without a historical justification for the relevance of such a study?

As to the first, there is no theological locus that better illustrates the *non-Catholic* Calvin than his attack on the worth of works. No one in the Church's tradition is outside the scope of Calvin's criticism for their overvaluation of human works. While in *On the Bondage and Liberation of the Will* Calvin focuses his criticism on Ockham's statement, "God does not deny his grace to one who does what he can,"[23] in *Inst.* 2.2.4 Calvin chastises Chrysostom and Jerome for making claims quite similar to Ockham. Chrysostom erroneously claimed, according to Calvin, "As the whole is not done by divine assistance, we ourselves must of necessity bring something," and Chrysostom frequently said, "Let us bring what is our own, God will supply the rest." Jerome likewise claimed, "It is ours to begin, God's to finish: it is ours to offer what we can, his to supply what we cannot." Even Augustine does not escape criticism on this point. In *Inst.* 3.18.5 Calvin addresses 2 Tim 4:8 and intentionally goes further than Augustine regarding the impurity of works done even in grace. After quoting Augustine's claim regarding God's unearned grace as prior to the earned crown, Calvin states, "But I also add [*sed aliud etiam addo*], how could he impute righteousness to our works unless his indulgence hides [*absconderet*] the unrighteousness that is in them?"[24] A few lines down, Calvin first notes how Augustine gives the name of grace to eternal life, "because, while it is recompensed for works, it is bestowed by the gratuitous gifts of God." But Calvin then adds, "But Scripture humbles us more." It not only demonstrates that good works are gratuitous gifts of God but also shows that "they are always defiled by impurity, so that they cannot satisfy God when they are tested by the standard of his justice."[25] For works to receive reward, they must be first purified, which God graciously does for those in Christ. Since this is the case, merit clearly is not based on the "worth" of the work, and believers can never think anything is "due" to them from God.[26] In the end, we

23 *BLW* 6.397 (234). A.N.S. Lane points out in a footnote on this quote that the statement most likely came from Biel, *Sent.* 2, d. 27, a. 3, dubium 4 (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1973–1984), 2:523–24.

24 *Inst.* 3.18.5.

25 *Inst*. 3.18.5.

26 Calvin does not deny that there is goodness to the work of the saints, but rather he denies that the works are wholly good or perfectly good, able to stand up to the lofty judgment of God. In his commentary on Phil 1:11, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness," Calvin claims that believers bring forth good and pleasant fruits of righteousness "according to their measure [*pro suo modo*]," but no one gives "full and complete [*plena et solida*] obedience to the Law"

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