

Schleiermacher on Justification: A Departure From the Reformation?

Paul T. Nimmo

New College, Mound Place, Edinburgh, EH1 2LX, Scotland, U.K.

paul.nimmo@ed.ac.uk

Abstract

In his 1923–4 lectures on the theology of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Karl Barth offered a strikingly negative verdict on Schleiermacher's doctrine of justification, lamenting that it was radically discontinuous with the theology of the Reformation. The core purpose of this article is to assess this verdict in detail. The introduction presents in outline Barth's criticism of Schleiermacher's doctrine of justification from these lectures. The first section of the article provides a summary of the doctrine of justification as it is found in Schleiermacher's mature work, *The Christian Faith*, together with a brief consideration of the related doctrines of conversion and sanctification, and an exposition of the dogmatic location and inter-relation of the three loci. In the second section, the article proceeds to investigate closely whether three of the central criticisms of Barth pertaining to Schleiermacher's doctrine of justification reflect an accurate reading and adjudication of the underlying material. The criticisms explored are: that for Schleiermacher there is no justification as a free act of God but only a justification which takes place according to the law of nature; that in the event of justification Schleiermacher considers both God and the human being to be active; and that the doctrine of Schleiermacher repeats the heresy of essential righteousness after the fashion of Andreas Osiander. The common theme underlying each charge is that Schleiermacher has departed significantly (and lamentably) from the tradition of the Reformation. The third section of the article proceeds to explore these charges carefully in light of a close reading of Schleiermacher's dogmatic work on justification and related doctrines. In the case of each of the criticisms directed at his doctrine of justification, it is argued that there are strong grounds for asserting that Barth's concerns may be rather misplaced and that – true to his word – Schleiermacher indeed remains in broad dogmatic continuity with the Reformation tradition. In the conclusion, two further theological possibilities are noted. First, it is suggested that, far from leaving the Reformation tradition behind, Schleiermacher's work on justification resonates strongly with one particular reading of Calvin's work which has much currency in contemporary theology. And second, it is suggested that, far from Schleiermacher being the one to depart from the Reformation tradition on justification, it might actually – ironically – be

Barth who is more guilty of that charge in view of his own doctrine of justification in the *Church Dogmatics*.

Keywords: Barth, conversion, justification, Reformation, sanctification, Schleiermacher.

Introduction

Karl Barth is not generally renowned for being a sympathetic interpreter of the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher. The two figures shared much by way of Reformation inheritance, academic productivity, ecclesial passion and political engagement. Yet, between his dialectical turn in *Safenwil* and his final work in Basel, Barth was – almost unremittingly – a respectful yet trenchant critic of the method, the content and the implications of Schleiermacher's theology.

Barth's 1923–4 lectures on Schleiermacher at the University of Göttingen offer a case in point.¹ The *Wintersemester* lectures survey a variety of source materials, indicating a wide – if not encyclopaedic – familiarity with the work of Schleiermacher,² but the predominant tone across the lectures is critical.³ As early as the first lecture, Barth explicitly outlines his overarching disposition:

I have no reason to conceal the fact that I confront Schleiermacher – and everything that Protestant theology essentially became through him – with distrust, that I do not consider the decision in matters Christian that was made in that spiritually and culturally so important era to have been a happy decision . . .⁴

This stance – at best, suspicious, at worst, dismissive – is evident throughout these lectures in relation to a whole range of loci and questions.

¹ These are published as vol. 11 of the *Karl Barth Gesamtausgabe*: Karl Barth, *Die Theologie Schleiermachers*, ed. Dietrich Ritschl (Zürich: TVZ, 1978). The published English translation is *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley.

² Just over half of the lecture material delivered is focused on a selection of three groups of Schleiermacher's sermons: regular sermons from 1831–4, Christmas and Easter sermons on Jesus Christ and the 'household sermons' of 1818. The remainder is devoted (albeit unevenly) to three of Schleiermacher's major publications – *The Brief Outline of the Study of Theology*, *The Christian Faith* and *The Speeches on Religion* – and to Schleiermacher's work on hermeneutics.

³ Barth, in a letter written to Emil Brunner on 26 Jan. 1924 – in the midst of the Schleiermacher lectures – describes one of the seven possible approaches to dogmatics thus: '7. Clear nonsense (*Der helle Unfug*): Schleiermacher and whatever creeps and flies after him'. In vol. 33 of the *Karl Barth Gesamtausgabe*: Karl Barth-Emil Brunner *Briefwechsel 1916–1966*, ed. Eberhard Busch et al. (Zürich: TVZ, 2000), p. 95.

⁴ Barth, *Die Theologie Schleiermachers*, pp. 5–6 (ET, pp. xv–xvi).

The doctrine of justification is one area where Barth's negative judgement on Schleiermacher's work in these lectures is vividly evident. Though the locus is never thematised in the lectures, it is twice referenced in striking ways. First, in his treatment of Schleiermacher's regular sermons of 1831–4, Barth writes:

One understands Schleiermacher's view best when one compares it to, for example, Luther's concept of the *iustificatio impii*. For Schleiermacher, there is neither a *iustificatio* as a free act of God grounded in Godself (*eine iustificatio als freie, in sich selber begründete Gottestat*), nor an *impius*, a genuinely lost person. In their place there is a process which takes place according to the 'law of nature', in which God and the human being alike actively participate (*ein nach dem 'Gesetz der Natur' sich abspielender Prozeß, in dem Gott und der Mensch wirkend und handelnd gleich beteiligt sind*).⁵

Second, in his assessment of Schleiermacher's Easter sermons, Barth writes:

[F]or Schleiermacher, there was no *servum arbitrium* in the sense of the Reformers, no sin that would mean a genuine and effective lostness, no word of truth that would be other than one of many possible expressions of subjective experience, no justification that would not be considered an infusion of righteousness in a Catholic-Osiandrian manner (*noch eine Rechtfertigung, die nicht zugleich katholischosiidrisch als Gerechtigkeitseingießung gedacht wäre*) . . .⁶

These statements are not simply commentary or observation: these statements are harshly critical, rejecting Schleiermacher's account for deviating from the doctrine of the Reformation. Barth concludes – shortly after the second quotation – that 'The whole understanding of Schleiermacher is regrettable (*mißlich*)'.⁷

The purpose of this article is to explore Barth's verdict on Schleiermacher's work more fully with specific reference to his doctrine of justification. In a first section, the article offers a brief sketch of the context and content of Schleiermacher's doctrine of justification in *The Christian Faith*,⁸ locating justification together with conversion and sanctification in the heart of

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 54–5 (ET, p. 26).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 187 (ET, p. 102).

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 188 (ET, p. 102).

⁸ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt*: 2. Auflage (1830/31) – Erster und zweiter Band, ed. Rolf Schäfer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008); hereafter GL (*Glaubenslehre*) followed by section, volume and page number. All trans. of this text are the author's own. The published Eng. trans. is *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, trans. by various

Schleiermacher's soteriology. The second section draws this material into dialogue with the three core criticisms of Schleiermacher's doctrine of justification found in the quotations drawn from Barth's lectures above, and contends that on each occasion Barth's concerns may be misplaced. In the concluding section, the article indicates that, on one interpretation of the Reformed tradition, Schleiermacher may actually be far more an heir of the Reformed tradition than Barth might ever have realised.

An outline of Schleiermacher on justification

Context of justification in *The Christian Faith*

Schleiermacher treats of justification *per se* in the course of the second aspect of the second part of *The Christian Faith*, where he seeks to explicate the Christian consciousness of grace.⁹ The first section of this material is headed 'The situation of the Christian, in so far as she is conscious of the divine grace'.¹⁰ This section in turn is divided into two sub-sections, the first exploring the person and work of Jesus Christ and the second exploring what Schleiermacher calls 'The manner in which the communion (*Gemeinschaft*) with the perfection and blessedness of the Redeemer expresses itself in the individual soul'.¹¹ It is within this latter sub-section that one finds Schleiermacher's understanding of justification.

At stake in this section of *The Christian Faith* is the 'self-consciousness which is specific to the one assumed into communion of life with Christ (*dem in die Lebensgemeinschaft Christi aufgenommenen*)'.¹² This person, according to Schleiermacher, is nothing short of a 'new human being' who results

(Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), and for reference, page numbers in this trans. are also indicated.

⁹ Work on Schleiermacher's doctrine of justification in recent literature appears to be rather circumscribed. Matthias Gockel, in *Barth and Schleiermacher on the Doctrine of Election: A Systematic-Theological Comparison* (Oxford: OUP, 2006) does mention the doctrine (pp. 75, 87, 91, n. 151), but only in passing, while Dawn DeVries and B. A. Gerrish offer a very concise overview of the doctrine in 'Providence and grace: Schleiermacher on justification and election', in *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher*, ed. Jacqueline Mariña (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp. 189–208. The exception to the rule is Julia Lamm who, in *The Living God: Schleiermacher's Theological Appropriation of Spinoza* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), offers a sustained and helpful consideration of the matter (pp. 201–12).

¹⁰ This text is the heading of GL, §§91–112 – the First Section of the Second Aspect of the Second Part of Schleiermacher's system of doctrine – II:35 (ET, p. 371).

¹¹ This text is part of the heading to GL, §§106–12 – the Second Division of the First Section of the Second Aspect of the Second Part of Schleiermacher's system of doctrine – II:164 (ET, p. 476).

¹² GL, §106, Lehrsatz, II:164 (ET, p. 476).

from ‘the entrance and the living influence of Christ’ on the individual.¹³ On the one hand, Schleiermacher contends, this new life can be related to what preceded only on ‘the assumption of a turning point, at which the continuity of the old ceased and the continuity of the new began the process of becoming (*zu werden begann*)’.¹⁴ This, he writes, is the basis of the ‘concept of regeneration (*Wiedergeburt*)’,¹⁵ in which there is ‘an assumption (*Aufgenommenwerden*) into communion of life with Christ’.¹⁶ The content of this event of assumption is twofold: considered in terms of the change it effects in the relationship of the human being to God, it is the justification (*Rechtfertigung*) of the believer; considered in terms of the changed form of life (*veränderte Lebensform*) it effects, it is the conversion (*Bekehrung*) of the believer.¹⁷ For Schleiermacher, these two elements of regeneration – justification and conversion – cannot be separated.¹⁸ On the other hand, Schleiermacher contends, from another point of view there is also ‘the growing continuity of the new [life]’.¹⁹ This continuity, in which ‘the . . . moments [of the new life] . . . run into each other more and more and those which represent the old life recur ever more weakly and ever more seldom is indicated by the expression sanctification (*Heiligung*)’.²⁰

As they together characterise the self-consciousness of the one assumed into communion of life with Christ, neither of these overarching concepts of regeneration and sanctification can be isolated.²¹ Consequently, the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ GL, §107.1, II:168 (ET, p. 478).

¹⁷ Ibid. Lamm is concerned at this point that, with the term ‘changed form of life’, Schleiermacher is already trespassing on the grounds of sanctification, and concludes that on this basis ‘Schleiermacher seems to make a significant shift away from the Reformers’, *Living God*, p. 209. However, there seems to be no compulsion to read this phrase in this way and every reason to consider the religious self-consciousness in view here to refer merely to the *Grund des Willens* of GL, §107.1, II:168 (ET, p. 478), and thus to the *ground* of spontaneous activity, rather than to any activity itself. Indeed, Schleiermacher later explicitly repudiates the suggestion that justification is a part (or product) of sanctification, GL, §109.3, II:196 (ET, p. 500).

¹⁸ GL, §107.1, II:169 (ET, p. 479). Schleiermacher confesses that there is a certain arbitrariness to the way in which these concepts are named, and that more important is ‘the exact explanation of what is meant by the expressions rather than the choice of the words themselves’, GL, §107.2, II:170 (ET, p. 480). He further describes the ordering of the presentation which follows as a matter of complete indifference in view of the mutuality of the relationships, GL, §107.2, II:171 (ET, p. 480).

¹⁹ GL, §106.1, II:165 (ET, p. 476).

²⁰ Ibid. (ET, pp. 476–7).

²¹ Ibid. (ET, p. 477).

order of presentation is – for Schleiermacher – simply a matter of theological judgement.²² Schleiermacher pursues the following order: regeneration before sanctification and, within regeneration, conversion before justification. Each will be explored in turn, with more detailed attention given to justification.

Conversion

Schleiermacher turns first to conversion. He has previously indicated that in the form of life being left behind, ‘only the sensible self-consciousness was determinative of the will’, while ‘the stimuli (*Erregungen*) of the self-consciousness in which the God-consciousness was co-positated were never determinative of the will but only transient (*durchlaufend*)’.²³ In the converted form of life, however, the situation is entirely reversed. The event of conversion which lies between these two dispositions comprises two features: ‘repentance (*Buße*), which consists in the combination of regret and change of mind (*Sinnesänderung*), and . . . faith (*Glaube*), which consists in the appropriation of the perfection and blessedness of Christ’.²⁴ This ‘most perfect regret’, Schleiermacher notes, can only be inspired by Christ as ‘his self-imparting (*sich mittheilende*) perfection confronts us in its truth’, and this, Schleiermacher observes, ‘is exactly what happens in the emergence of faith’.²⁵ Thus regret and the emergence of faith are immediately connected, arising in the same way and from the same source, and together representing the beginning of the communion of life with Christ.²⁶ Between regret and

²² See GL, §106.2, II:166–7 (ET, pp. 477–8), and GL, §107.2, II:169–71 (ET, pp. 479–80). Lamm fears that there may be a possible inconsistency in Schleiermacher’s treatment of the relationship between conversion and justification at his point, *Living God*, p. 208. Far from the doctrines being interdependent or mutually implicated, she notes that Schleiermacher explicitly states that his presentation ‘derives justification completely from conversion’, GL, §109.3, II:195 (ET, p. 499). This would suggest a dependence inconsistent with the mutuality between conversion and justification already posited, GL, §107.1, II:169 (ET, p. 479). However, it would also be plausible to take Schleiermacher at his word and the ‘derivation’ mentioned as referring, not to a logical or ontological succession but to the manner of presentation itself, which might easily be reversed.

²³ GL, §107.1, II:168 (ET, p. 478).

²⁴ GL, §108, *Lehrsatz*, II:171 (ET, pp. 480–1). Schleiermacher claims that his statement contains exactly the same (material) as the totality of the (Protestant) confessional documents on the matter, GL, §108.1, II:173 (ET, pp. 481–2). By contrast, he claims, the Roman (Catholic) Church differs by including within conversion not faith, but confession and satisfaction, GL, §108.1, II:175 (ET, p. 483).

²⁵ GL, §108.2, II:177 (ET, p. 484).

²⁶ *Ibid.* For further reflection on the centrality of this encounter with Christ in Schleiermacher’s understanding of justification, and its relation to his construal

faith, there lies the change of mind mentioned previously – a twofold desire which involves ‘the continuing rejection of the communion of the sinful life which remains from regret and the desire to receive the impulses (Impulse) coming from Christ’.²⁷ Schleiermacher insists that this whole nexus of conversion is effected – both in the past and in the present – by ‘the divine power of the Word’: ‘no example can be proposed of conversion without the mediation of the Word’.²⁸

Justification

Schleiermacher opens his treatment of justification with the following thesis:

That God justifies the convert (*den . . . Bekehrenden*) involves [God] forgiving her sins and recognising her as a child of God. But this transformation (*Umkehrung*) in her relationship to God takes place only in so far as she has true faith in the Redeemer.²⁹

There exists for Schleiermacher a profound analogous relationship between justification and conversion: ‘justification is for the self-consciousness resting in reflection what conversion is for the self-consciousness passing over into a stimulation of the will (*Willensregung*)’.³⁰ More explicitly, he explains that repentance (treated under conversion) comes in justification ‘to rest in the forgiveness of sins’, just as faith (treated under conversion) represents in justification ‘the consciousness of being a child of God (*Kindschaft Gottes*), which is the same as the consciousness of communion with Christ’.³¹ This

of the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism, see Paul T. Nimmo, ‘The Denominational Antithesis in Schleiermacher’s *Glaubenslehre*’, *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 5:2 (2003), pp. 187–99.

²⁷ GL, §108.2, II:177 (ET, p. 485).

²⁸ GL, §108.5, II:185 and 186 (ET, pp. 490 and 491).

²⁹ GL, §109, Lehrsatz, II:191 (ET, p. 496). Schleiermacher again begins with the relationship between his own understanding of ‘justification’ and that found in the (Protestant) confessional documents, noting that properly understood, and despite the lack of uniformity of language in the latter, there is agreement between them, GL, §109.1, II:192–3 (ET, pp. 496–7). He claims, in the same way as he did with conversion, that the Roman (Catholic) Church understanding of ‘justification’ is ‘utterly divergent (*ganz abweichend*) from the Protestant’, presenting justification as dependent upon sanctification, GL, §109.1, II:193 (ET, p. 497).

³⁰ GL, §109.2, II:193 (ET, p. 497).

³¹ *Ibid.* (ET, p. 498). Schleiermacher expressly posits that this does not mean that the forgiveness of sins can *precede* faith, a position echoing the explicit provision of the overarching Lehrsatz; rather the forgiveness of sins expresses the end of the old existence (as does repentance), while being a child of God expresses the character of the new existence (as does faith), GL, §109.2, II:193–4 (ET, p. 498). A certain simultaneity can therefore be seen to be in view.

whole complex of justification, as with that of conversion, ‘is dependent upon the complete activity of Christ’.³²

For Schleiermacher, justification means that the old relationship of the individual to God – that found in ‘the consciousness, in virtue of God’s holiness and righteousness, of guilt (*Verschuldung*) before God and of deservingness of punishment’³³ – is no longer possible. He writes that this consciousness ‘must cease, when by and with faith the communion of life (*Lebensgemeinschaft*) with Christ arises’.³⁴ Though neither sin nor consciousness of sin disappears in the new life of the individual, nevertheless ‘the new person thus no longer takes sin to be her own, but works against it as against a strange thing, hence the consciousness of guilt is abolished (*aufgehoben*)’.³⁵ The result is that ‘because of sin, consciousness of sin becomes to her consciousness of forgiveness of sins’.³⁶ Within the communion of life with Christ, the corollary of forgiveness is adoption: ‘it is impossible that Christ live in us without His relationship to His father also coming to form in us and without us therefore participating in His Sonship’.³⁷ This, Schleiermacher continues, is ‘the power originating in him to be children of God, and includes the guarantee of sanctification’.³⁸

Together, these two elements of justification – forgiveness and adoption – comprise for Schleiermacher ‘the complete transformation (*Umkehrung*) of the [person’s] relationship to God’, and they are not only completely inseparable but also mutually conditioning.³⁹ And he claims that, as his presentation of conversion, so his presentation of justification ‘traces everything back to the influence of Christ’, such that both justification and conversion are ‘ascribed completely and utterly to Christ’.⁴⁰

³² GL, §109.2, II:194 (ET, p. 498).

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ GL, §109.2, II:195 (ET, p. 499).

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ GL, §109.3, II:195 (ET, p. 499). In this tracing of all the aspects of regeneration back to Christ, Schleiermacher considers his presentation to conform to the confessional standards, GL, §109.3, II:195–6 (ET, p. 499), although he acknowledges that his presentation deviates from the ‘prevailing manner which in justification goes back to a divine activity, and ascribes both forgiveness of sins and adoption (*Adoption*) in a particular way to God’, GL, §109.3, II:195–6 (ET, pp. 499–500). At stake here is the differing way in which Schleiermacher perceives God to interact with creation relative to the confessional standards and the ‘prevailing manner’; this issue is explored further below.

Sanctification

For Schleiermacher, sanctification means ‘to become holy (*heilig werden*), . . . a striving for holiness (*Trachten nach Heiligkeit*)’, and is therefore to be understood as ‘a progressive movement (*Fortschreiten*)’.⁴¹ Schleiermacher explains that:

from the turning-point of regeneration on, the content of the fullness of our time (*der Gehalt der Zeiterfüllung*) departs ever further from that which preceded the turning-point and approaches ever closer to pure commensurability with the impulse emanating from Christ and thus also to indistinguishability from Christ himself.⁴²

Schleiermacher proceeds to develop his treatment of sanctification from these two perspectives. First, Schleiermacher turns to the relationship between sanctification and the pre-regenerate state. In the new life, he writes,

the desire no longer to be in the common life that reproduces sin has become a repelling power, which continues to have an effect continuously in the form of an essential performance of life (*Lebensverrichtung*), which, however, is itself only a result of having surrendered to the incorporating (*aufnehmenden*) influence of Christ.⁴³

This surrender, Schleiermacher notes, is one which ‘has secured itself in the whole system of self-activity as a continuous desire to be determined by Christ’.⁴⁴ And its result, Schleiermacher contends, is that ‘in the powers appropriated (*angeeigneten*) by Christ, sin can never grasp new ground, whereas it is being dispelled from the old ground’.⁴⁵ Second, Schleiermacher turns to the relationship between sanctification and the likeness of Christ. There is from the outset a boundary posited at this point: the perfect development of Christ ‘is not granted to any other person who brings her personality from the common life of sin’.⁴⁶ Indeed, he acknowledges, ‘by the influences of the sinful common life which surround us the sinfulness of every individual

⁴¹ GL, §110.1, II:204 (ET, p. 506). Lamm contends that Schleiermacher only retains the doctrine of sanctification on account of its biblical and confessional importance (*Living God*, p. 204). However, it seems to be rather more important for Schleiermacher than that, because it refers to and accounts for the state of the new life, whereas regeneration refers only to the act from which that new life arises – GL, §106.1, II:165–6 (ET, p. 477).

⁴² GL, §110.1, II:204 (ET, p. 506).

⁴³ GL, §110.2, II:206 (ET, p. 507).

⁴⁴ GL, §110.1, II:206 (ET, p. 507).

⁴⁵ GL, §110.2, II:207–8 (ET, p. 508).

⁴⁶ GL, §110.3, II:208 (ET, p. 508).

is continually being excited anew'.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Schleiermacher contends, 'this does not preclude the relation (*Zusammenhang*) with Christ being effective in every moment of the state of sanctification'.⁴⁸ Indeed, in the state of sanctification, Schleiermacher posits that 'every moment is to be seen as . . . a new being grasped by the incorporating (*aufnehmenden*) activity of Christ and thus includes a new will to be not for oneself but to be in communion with Christ'.⁴⁹

Barth's critique of Schleiermacher on justification

With this brief outline of Schleiermacher's doctrine of justification in view, it is time to revisit Barth's criticisms in more detail. Drawing on the citations given in the introduction, three individual charges will here be addressed: first that justification is not a free act of God grounded in Godself; second, that in justification both God and the human being actively participate; and third, that in justification there is an infusion of righteousness. At each point, further material pertaining to justification in *The Christian Faith* will be explored in an effort to adjudicate on the validity of Barth's exegesis of Schleiermacher, and to determine whether Schleiermacher departs from the Reformation in the way Barth suggests.

Justification as divine act

Barth's criticism that in Schleiermacher, in contrast to Luther, 'there is [no] *iustificatio* as a free act of God grounded in Godself' is the corollary of his contention that, for Schleiermacher, justification has become 'a mere process that takes place according to the "law of nature"'.⁵⁰ Just prior to these statements, Barth offers two quotations from sermons of Schleiermacher which seem to offer support for this view: the first asserts that 'the divine Spirit . . . in each individual soul . . . works only as power subject to the law of nature', while the second posits that '[t]he Redeemer worked . . . only according to the natural law of human matters'.⁵¹ However, it is not clear that a 'free act of God grounded in Godself' and 'a work . . . subject to the law of nature' are as theological concepts quite as antithetical for Schleiermacher as they are for Barth.

⁴⁷ GL, §110.3, II:207 (ET, p. 508).

⁴⁸ GL, §110.3, II:208 (ET, p. 509).

⁴⁹ GL, §110.3, II:209 (ET, p. 509). Correspondingly, he observes, within sanctification 'every moment can be seen as a renewal of regeneration', *ibid.*

⁵⁰ Barth, *Schleiermacher*, pp. 54–5 (ET, p. 26).

⁵¹ Both sermons are from 1832 – the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany and Sexagesima Sunday respectively. The full citations (and details) are in Barth, *Schleiermacher*, p. 54 (ET, p. 26).

At this point, recourse must be had to Schleiermacher's own, detailed consideration of 'how the formula of a divine act of justification relates' to his own presentation.⁵² He is quite aware that, if justification describes a change in relation to God, which he accepts, then 'the activity must be ascribed (*zukommen*) to God'.⁵³ In this connection, he makes three related points. First, he posits that 'we can in no way imagine this divine activity [of justification] independently of the activity of Christ in conversion, as if one could be without the other'.⁵⁴ With this statement Schleiermacher once again indicates the inseparability of conversion and justification, and their common ascription to Jesus Christ. Second, he posits that, if one is to speak with dogmatic incisiveness at this point, a conception of this divine activity as 'a temporal act occurring in a particular moment and . . . directed at a [particular] individual . . . cannot be assumed'.⁵⁵ Schleiermacher recognises that 'there can . . . be an individual and temporal effect of a divine act or decree', but does not believe that there can be 'such an act or decree itself'.⁵⁶ In view here is Schleiermacher's understanding of the God–world relationship and the way in which this relationship is expressed in activity. For Schleiermacher, there is 'only one eternal and universal decree of the justification of humanity for the sake of Christ',⁵⁷ which is 'the same as the decree of the sending of Christ . . . and . . . one also with the decree of the creation of the human race in so far as human nature is only completed in Christ'.⁵⁸ The whole complex of divine activity is thus '[o]ne divine act for the transformation of our relationship to God, the temporal manifestation

⁵² GL, §109.3, II:196 (ET, p. 500).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ GL, §109.3, II:197 (ET, p. 501).

⁵⁶ Ibid. Schleiermacher observes that 'we can only imagine the justifying divine activity in its connection to the individual in so far as every dogmatic treatment proceeds from the self-consciousness of the individual, and therefore also from the consciousness of a change in relationship to God', *ibid.*

⁵⁷ Ibid. It is thus not the case that 'the justification of every individual rests on a separate divine decree, even if one were to present [that decree] as framed in eternity and only coming into effect at the determined point in time', *ibid.*

⁵⁸ GL, §109.3, II:197–8 (ET, p. 501). In this connection, Lamm fears that Schleiermacher may again be inconsistent in his treatment of conversion and justification by here separating the activity of God in the former from the activity of Christ in the latter, and thereby undermining the mutuality between them which Schleiermacher elsewhere emphasises. However, Schleiermacher's statement that there is no 'dependence (*Abhängigkeit*)' of the divine activity upon the activity of Christ, GL, §109.3, II:197 (ET, p. 500), is not to be read as indicating such a separation; rather, his purpose is simply to reject those conceptualisations of justification in 'devotional (*asketischen*) prose and poetry' which depict Christ as 'point[ing] out to God the one in whom he

of which commences in the incarnation of Christ from which the complete new creation of humanity proceeds'.⁵⁹ While justification is therefore most assuredly a divine act, it is not a discrete or individual act in time. Indeed, Schleiermacher states disapprovingly that 'to assume an individual decree of forgiveness of sins and of adoption would mean to submit God to the antithesis of abstract and concrete or of general and particular'.⁶⁰ Third, and finally, Schleiermacher dissents from the Protestant view of 'the divine act of justification [as] declaratory',⁶¹ a point which will be developed further below in the context of exploring the third criticism.

In contrast with Barth's view that Schleiermacher posits justification as not being a free act of God, then, Schleiermacher himself resolutely affirms not only that justification is an act of God, but also that justification rests on the one eternal decree of God. There is, for Schleiermacher, 'one complete divine act of justification in connection with redemption, which realises itself gradually in time'.⁶² Indeed, he explains, 'the temporal manifestation (*Kundgebung*) of this divine act is a truly continuous one', even if, 'according to its effect, it appears to us as if broken up into as many points separated from one another as there are individuals in whom union with Christ is effected (*gesetzt*)'.⁶³ Barth's concern – at this point, at least – seems misplaced.

In respect of Barth's claim that Schleiermacher's doctrine of justification is a natural process, a more careful verdict is required, one which again draws on the latter's view of the God–world relationship. In his doctrine of conversion, Schleiermacher writes that the gracious activities of Christ in conversion are:

supernatural, in so far as they rest on the being of God in the person of Christ and also really proceed from this, but at the same time they are historical and history-forming and thus natural, in so far as they are naturally linked (*naturgemäß gebunden*) to the historical life of Jesus in general.⁶⁴

The corollary of this is that, for the individual, the transition from the old life to the new life 'is not supernatural in relation to the new [life], for the effects [of the new life] are produced according to its nature; but it is

has effected faith and recommending her [to God] for the granting of forgiveness of sin and adoption', *GL*, §109.3, II:196–7 (ET, p. 500).

⁵⁹ *GL*, §109.3, II:198 (ET, p. 501). Schleiermacher insists elsewhere that the decree to create (and thus to redeem/justify) is free, *GL*, §41, Zusatz, I:240 (ET, p. 156).

⁶⁰ *GL*, §109.3, II:198 (ET, p. 501).

⁶¹ *Ibid.* (ET, p. 502).

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.* (ET, p. 501).

⁶⁴ *GL*, §108.5, II:187 (ET, p. 492).

supernatural in relation to the earlier life of the individual'.⁶⁵ This interplay in which what is supernatural *becomes* natural also governs Schleiermacher's doctrine of the incarnation⁶⁶ and his doctrine of the church.⁶⁷ In one sense, then, for Schleiermacher justification can be considered a natural process – but only when its supernatural origin in the divine activity is recognised. It is in this light that the quotations from the sermons cited above must also be read: as indicating a reluctance to posit God as an agent intruding arbitrarily within creation rather than as denying that the act of justification is a fully divine one.

Justification as human act

The second of Barth's criticisms to be explored is that, in contrast to Luther, Schleiermacher posits justification as an act in which God and the human being alike are active. Having considered the divine act of justification in the previous section, it is the role of the human being in justification which here commands attention. Again, there are grounds within the sermons of Schleiermacher quoted by Barth just prior to these statements which seem to offer support for this view: Schleiermacher preaches that the disciples are disciples in part because 'they felt a need in themselves to support [Jesus] and consult him' and that even in the soul of someone who has lived frivolously 'a true desire for the Redeemer can readily arise'.⁶⁸ However, it is not clear that in either case the quotation does full justice to Schleiermacher's understanding of the human activity involved in justification.

At this point, there is a need to consider Schleiermacher's own adamantness that his presentation of the doctrine of justification 'will not easily be exposed to the misunderstanding that everyone justifies herself'.⁶⁹ He contends that his presentation 'ascribes both [justification] and conversion completely and utterly to Christ',⁷⁰ and explains further that

we have not here ascribed everything belonging to [justification] to, for example, simply the activity (*Selbstthätigkeit*) of the converted [individual], even if that activity be conditioned and elicited by Christ, as if justification

⁶⁵ GL, §88.4, II:26 (ET, p. 365).

⁶⁶ See e.g. GL, §110.3, II:208 (ET, p. 508): 'from the beginning of the incarnation, Christ developed in every way according to nature'. See also GL, §89.2, II:29–30 (ET, p. 367).

⁶⁷ See e.g. GL, §88.4, II:26 (ET, p. 365): 'the new communal life in relation to the Redeemer is in itself no miracle, but just the supernatural becoming . . . natural'.

⁶⁸ The sermons are 'Early Sermon 16' and the sermon from Sexagesima Sunday 1832 respectively. The full citations (and details) are in Barth, *Schleiermacher*, p. 54 (ET, p. 26).

⁶⁹ GL, §109.3, II:195 (ET, p. 499).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

were a part of sanctification or resulted from it . . . but have derived it completely from the influence of Christ, which effects faith in the living receptivity [of the individual].⁷¹

In justification, Schleiermacher states succinctly, ‘the individual can only be thought of as in a passive state (*im leidentlichen Zustand*)’.⁷²

Further light is shed on this matter by material earlier in Schleiermacher’s doctrine of regeneration in his treatment of conversion. Schleiermacher is emphatic that ‘everything . . . that contributes to conversion is the efficacy of Christ’,⁷³ and correspondingly that in the event of conversion ‘no causality can be ascribed to the one being assumed [into communion of life with Christ]’.⁷⁴ However, Schleiermacher also posits that the converting person – precisely as person – remains spontaneously active in this process, for ‘in no living being can any whole moment be without all activity (*Selbstthätigkeit*)’.⁷⁵

The question therefore arises, for Schleiermacher himself, as to the relationship between the moment of conversion and the natural activity of the person in conversion.⁷⁶ Schleiermacher immediately observes that ‘without deviating from our fundamental presupposition, we cannot consider the natural self-activity of the person in this moment [of conversion] as a cooperation’.⁷⁷ He offers two codas to this statement. First, he claims that ‘what preparatory grace has already achieved in her is cooperating’, but contends that ‘this is a part of the divine working of grace and does not belong to the person as her own action’.⁷⁸ Second, he asserts that what ‘arises from within’ as ‘her own activity’ can be considered ‘cooperation’ to the extent that the effectivity of the divine grace is really conditioned by it: for the mediation of the Word of God to occur, he argues, the activity of both the senses and the inner function of consciousness is required, and thus ‘the capacity for the perception (*Auffassung*)’ of the influence of Christ ‘must be attributed (*beigelegt*) to her in her natural situation’.⁷⁹

Schleiermacher is here trying to navigate between two perils: that of opening a sense in which the human individual actively cooperates in

⁷¹ GL, §109.3, II:196 (ET, p. 500).

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ GL, §108.5, II:187 (ET, p. 492).

⁷⁴ GL, §108.6, II:187 (ET, p. 493).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ A second question arising at this point – the relationship between the passivity of the person in conversion and her ensuing activity, see GL, §108.6, II:188 (ET, p. 493) – will not be explored here.

⁷⁷ GL, §108.6, II:188 (ET, p. 493).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

regeneration, which he everywhere seeks to deny, and that of reducing the human individual to an inert and inactive substance without agency, which would lead to a 'magical' conception of justification. On the one hand, then, he writes that he cannot concede 'any natural cooperation of the person' with what occurs 'after the Word has penetrated (*eingedrungen*) the soul', for 'even the approval that accompanies the acceptance of the divine Word . . . can only be ascribed to the preceding workings of grace'.⁸⁰ On the other hand, however, he insists that 'the assumption of an absolute lack of relation between the person's own activity and the influence of Christ is not a satisfying outcome'.⁸¹ This insistence builds on his previous stipulation that 'no change in a living being occurs without her activity; which means that without her activity – in a perfectly passive manner – no influence of another can really be received'.⁸²

Schleiermacher seeks, therefore, to square this circle, 'to find a status of activity in connection with the influence of Christ which is neither resistance nor cooperation'.⁸³ His corresponding proposal is that the original, carefully circumscribed 'cooperation of the mental organs with the perception (*Auffassung*) of the Word also includes an agreement (*Zustimmung*) of the will', but that this 'agreement' is 'nothing more than surrendering oneself to the influence [of Christ] or the setting free of the living receptivity for the same'.⁸⁴ Schleiermacher insists that this (agreement of the) will is not self-generated but is Christ-effected: '[Christ's] activity in assuming [us] into communion with him is therefore a creative production (*Hervorbringen*) of the will (*des . . . wollens*) to receive him in us'.⁸⁵ What this means is that between cooperative activity and apathetic passivity, Schleiermacher posits a solution by way of a middle third, a state which cannot be reduced to mere activity or mere passivity but rather represents 'a passive state . . . [which] includes that minimum of self-activity which belongs to every complete moment'.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ Ibid. (ET, p. 494).

⁸¹ GL, §108.6, II:189 (ET, p. 494).

⁸² GL, §91.1, II:36 (ET, p. 371).

⁸³ GL, §108.6, II:189 (ET, p. 494).

⁸⁴ Ibid. The alternative position – that the cooperation of the senses and consciousness affirmed above and the resistance or apathy of the will denied above might somehow exist together – is 'evidently (*offenbar*)' not possible, *ibid.*

⁸⁵ GL, §100.2, II:106 (ET, p. 426).

⁸⁶ GL, §108.6, II:189 (ET, p. 494). Schleiermacher insists that this solution by way of a middle third is 'vitiated . . . if the receptivity is split further into an active and a passive, and in our case [of conversion] only the passive is allowed to hold'; this would simply lead back to square one, *ibid.*

This very careful exploration in the text of activity and passivity in conversion – and, as corollary, in justification – suggests that Schleiermacher is not guilty of positing the individual as an independently active, fully cooperating agent as Barth fears. The activity or cooperation which he ascribes to the individual pertains to her basic functionality as an organism and to the submission of her will – by grace alone – in encounter with Christ. There is no natural capacity of the human being capable of initiating or effecting justification.

However, this is not to assert that Barth would agree with Schleiermacher, and indeed part of the latter's further explanation might initially perplex Barth: Schleiermacher posits that the ultimate ground of the living receptivity for Christ (that is heightened by prevenient grace, rendered free and active by converting grace, and distinguishable from passivity) is the original perfection of humanity. This original perfection includes 'the desire for communion with God that, though certainly pushed back firmly towards the boundary of consciousness, is never completely extinguished'.⁸⁷ Indeed, Schleiermacher claims that 'all real relation of life (*Lebenszusammenhang*) with Christ, in which he can be posited in any way as Redeemer, is dependent on the fact that living receptivity (*Empfänglichkeit*) for his influence is *already* present and is still present'.⁸⁸

This receptivity or desire, Schleiermacher writes, is the first 'point of contact (*Anknüpfungspunkt*) for all the divine works of grace',⁸⁹ and represents 'the remnant, ineffaceable in the human race, of that original divine impartation which constitutes human nature'.⁹⁰ However, Schleiermacher quickly explains that he only wishes to exclude 'that complete passivity which is absolutely inappropriate for human nature' and that he is not on that basis claiming 'anything about that which we ascribe in our Christian self-consciousness to the grace of God in Christ'.⁹¹ And – crucially – at no point does Schleiermacher seek to endorse any kind of natural theology: his rejections of such in *The Christian Faith* are frequent and even forceful.⁹² By contrast, he declaims again: 'no element of the natural constitution of the individual, nothing that develops in her apart from the whole series of effects of grace mediated by Christ, changes her relationship to God and effects her

⁸⁷ GL, §108.6, II:190 (ET, p. 495), cf. GL, §60, I:371–5 (ET, pp. 244–7).

⁸⁸ GL, §91.1, II:36 (ET, p. 371).

⁸⁹ GL, §108.6, II:190 (ET, p. 495).

⁹⁰ GL, §108.6, II:191 (ET, p. 495).

⁹¹ GL, §108.6, II:190 (ET, p. 495).

⁹² See e.g. GL, §10, Zusatz, I:88 (ET, p. 49); GL, §13, Zusatz, I:113 (ET, p. 66); GL, §29.2, I:192 (ET, p. 124); GL, §50.1, I:302 (ET, p. 195); GL, §59, Zusatz, I:366–7 (ET, p. 241); GL, §83.3, I:517 (ET, p. 345); GL, §103.2, II:127 (ET, p. 445).

justification'.⁹³ On this basis, even this original perfection of the individual can only be considered in view of Christ.

Justification as infusion of righteousness

The third of Barth's criticisms to be explored is that Schleiermacher conceives of justification as an infusion of righteousness in a Catholic-Osiandrian manner, in other words, that justification is essential rather than forensic. There are no sermon quotations in the vicinity to illuminate further Barth's charge here, but in his treatment of a series of Schleiermacher's Good Friday sermons a few pages prior, which leads to this conclusion, Barth is more expansive. There, he writes of one particular outcome of Schleiermacher's understanding of the cross:

as the impartation of the benefit of salvation (*Heilsgut*) there is the infusion (*Eingießung*) and reception (*Aufnahme*) in us of the same obedience that was in Christ – this is certainly the same as the heresy of essential righteousness (*iustitia essentialis*) of *Andreas Osiander* which, at the time of the Reformation, Lutherans and Reformed thought they had to eliminate from the Protestant church.⁹⁴

Once again, then, Barth's criticism centres on an alleged departure from the position of the Reformation on the part of Schleiermacher.

In the first place, attention must be paid to how Schleiermacher handles the question of the obedience – and particularly the active obedience – of Christ, and this material is found in his discussion of the high-priestly work of Christ. Schleiermacher posits that 'the ground of our relation with [Christ] is that his activity alone corresponds perfectly to the divine will and purely and completely expresses the supremacy of the God-consciousness in human nature'.⁹⁵ For this reason, Schleiermacher continues, 'apart from the connection (*Verbindung*) with Christ, neither an individual person nor any particular part of the common life of humanity is at any time in and for itself

⁹³ GL, §109.4, II:201 (ET, p. 504). This is true even of faith, which 'arises solely from the efficacy of Christ', *ibid*.

⁹⁴ Barth, *Schleiermacher*, p. 166 (ET, p. 90). For John Calvin's fullest refutation of the doctrine of Osiander, see *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols, LCC 20–1 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), III.xi.5–12; for the history and theology of this refutation, see Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin's Theology* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), pp. 226–43.

⁹⁵ GL, §104.3, II:137 (ET, p. 454).

righteous before God or an object of God's pleasure'.⁹⁶ Later in the same section, Schleiermacher elaborates further:

in virtue of his archetypal dignity, Christ represents the completion of human nature in his redeeming activity in such a way that, by virtue of our having become one with him (*Einsgewordensein*), God sees and values the totality of the faithful only in him.⁹⁷

In brief, and in highly forensic language, Schleiermacher concludes that 'God sees us not as each for ourselves but only in [Christ]'.⁹⁸

At the heart of this conception of forensic righteousness is an idea which has already been frequently mentioned above – communion of life with Christ (*Lebensgemeinschaft mit Christo*). This phrase dominates the *Lehrsätze* of this part of *The Christian Faith*,⁹⁹ and governs the treatment of the conversion, justification and sanctification of the individual. Within this communion, Schleiermacher is keen – once again – to protect the organic integrity of the individual: communion of life with Christ is not an existence in which the individual is merely or simply passive but is truly a living fellowship. Correspondingly, Schleiermacher contends that as Christ is the one who 'presents us pure before God by virtue of his own perfect fulfilment of the divine will', so also 'through his life in us, the impulse [to fulfil the divine will] is real in us'.¹⁰⁰ Schleiermacher explains: 'his pure will to fulfil the divine will is also active in us by the power of the communion of life existing between him and us, and therefore we share in his perfection, if not in accomplishment then in impulse'.¹⁰¹ The result of this impulse is, Schleiermacher concludes, that 'we . . . are also objects of the divine pleasure in this connection with Him'.¹⁰²

It is crucial at this point to pause to recognise that the basic righteousness that is in view here as the source of the divine pleasure is the human righteousness of Christ as the one who perfectly fulfils the divine will. In other words, there is in Schleiermacher at this point a complete rejection of the position of Osiander, for whom – at least according to Calvin – '[Christ] is made righteousness for us with respect to his divine nature, not

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ GL, §104.4, II:146 (ET, p. 461).

⁹⁸ GL, §104.3, II:137 (ET, p. 454).

⁹⁹ See e.g. the *Synopse der Leitsätze* found in GL, II:533–87, where this concept is visible in the *Lehrsätze* of §§106, 107, 108 and 110 (GL, II:566 and 568), all cited heavily above.

¹⁰⁰ GL, §104.3, II:137 (ET, p. 455).

¹⁰¹ GL, §104.3, II:138 (ET, p. 455).

¹⁰² GL, §104.3, II:137 (ET, p. 455).

his human nature'.¹⁰³ There is simply no sense, for Schleiermacher, that – again according to Calvin's description of Osiander's view – 'we are substantially righteous in God by the infusion both of his essence and of his quality'.¹⁰⁴ That this idea of righteousness is far removed from any concept of essential righteousness is also clearly indicated in Schleiermacher's doctrine of reconciliation. Here, he explicitly observes that 'the individual does not have the source of blessedness in herself'.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, he observes that 'if blessedness is not dependent on life in Christ, then it can . . . only be infused (*eingeflößt*) into every individual somehow from outside',¹⁰⁶ but immediately dismisses such a position, which makes 'the impartation (*Mittheilung*) of the blessedness of Christ independent of being assumed into communion of life with him', as 'magical'.¹⁰⁷

However, it might be suggested that even if Schleiermacher is indeed removed from an Osiandrian doctrine of essential righteousness, Schleiermacher is nevertheless making justification contingent upon something occurring or existing within the individual – namely, a particular impulse of the will. It is already clear from the material above that this impulse of the will in the individual results entirely from grace (the activity of and communion with Christ), and that her resultant righteousness in no way depends upon this impulse of the will being actualised. Yet the concern may nevertheless re-emerge that divine justification is somehow dependent on human cooperation.

The best way to address such a concern is to return to the solution between pure activity and pure passivity that Schleiermacher introduced in his treatment of conversion by way of positing a middle third. In this solution, as explained above, what is at stake is 'nothing more than surrendering oneself to the influence [of Christ] or the setting free of the living receptivity for the same'.¹⁰⁸ This state cannot be collapsed into pure passivity or pure activity, but must be seen rather – once again – in relation to the original perfection of humanity. If this explanation holds also here, then this would make clear that the righteousness in view in justification is not dependent upon the impulse of the will of the individual in any way which renders that will meritorious or prerequisite. Instead righteousness and justification occur with her conversion to communion of life with Christ, and this

¹⁰³ Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xi.8; emphasis added.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, III.xi.5.

¹⁰⁵ GL, §101.3, II:117 (ET, p. 435).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ GL, §101.3, II:116 (ET, p. 435).

¹⁰⁸ GL, §108.6, II:189 (ET, p. 494).

communion is manifest and realised in – though not itself conditional upon – the surrender of her will to the influence of Christ effected by grace. It is no surprise, then, that far from seeing any problems at this point, Schleiermacher explicitly observes that all he is doing here is explaining ‘the oft-misunderstood expression that the obedience of Christ is our justification, or that his righteousness is ascribed [or imputed – *zugerechnet*] to us’.¹⁰⁹ Again, it is a forensic and not an essential righteousness which Schleiermacher intends.

At the same time, however, as Schleiermacher endorses the forensic approach to justification of his Reformation predecessors, it must also be acknowledged that Schleiermacher expresses clear dissatisfaction with the prevailing Protestant view ‘which considers that the divine act of justification [is] declaratory: that is to say, that the converted person is declared righteous by God’.¹¹⁰ Yet the reasoning behind this dissent is related not so much to the *mechanism* of the justification of the individual that is in view in declaration – as if Schleiermacher wished to avoid declaration in favour of, say, infusion – as to the *concept* of the justification of the individual itself.¹¹¹ The first problem with this idea is, for Schleiermacher, that it is irrevocably related to a ‘plurality of divine acts or decrees of justification that is denied here’.¹¹² The second problem with this idea is, for Schleiermacher, that it leads to a separation of the declarative and the performative dimensions of the divine act and is thus guilty of being an ‘anthropomorphisation of God’.¹¹³

Nevertheless, in Schleiermacher’s presentation, as has already been noted, the act of justification ‘only becomes something in connection with the influence of Christ which evokes conversion’.¹¹⁴ And both justification and conversion can be traced back ‘to the universal divine decree’, which means that ‘the declaratory disappears (*verschwindet*) for us in the creative’.¹¹⁵ The declaratory act is thus not overlooked, but is identified with the effective act. This invocation of the universal divine decree leads to a further conclusion concerning the way in which Schleiermacher’s doctrine of justification

¹⁰⁹ GL, §104.3, II:137–8 (ET, p. 455).

¹¹⁰ GL, §109.3, II:198 (ET, p. 502).

¹¹¹ Here, Schleiermacher clearly opts for a corporate understanding of the doctrine of justification, where the *corpus* in question is the whole of humanity. See Lamm, *Living God*, pp. 210–12.

¹¹² GL, §109.3, II:198 (ET, p. 502).

¹¹³ GL, §109.3, II:199 (ET, p. 502).

¹¹⁴ GL, §109.3, II:199 (ET, p. 503).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

should be conceptualised. Far from the justification of the individual being dependent on some sort of infused essential righteousness, it is dependent upon our communion with Christ, and this itself, as Schleiermacher himself observes, 'is recognised by God as absolute and eternal and is posited as such in our faith'.¹¹⁶ Moreover, in contrast to the Roman Catholic position, Schleiermacher affirms that 'it is still the case that a person is justified as soon as faith is effected in her'.¹¹⁷

Finally, even though this means that the declarative is thus dissolved in the creative for Schleiermacher, there is for him no danger that a Protestant position is here being abandoned for a Catholic one. By contrast, Schleiermacher affirms the doctrine of justification by faith, 'the decisively Protestant mode of teaching'.¹¹⁸ Although there is only one eternal divine decree of justification, it has already been noted above that this decree has individual and temporal effects. Hence Schleiermacher writes that 'every act of conversion, in so far as the consciousness of the forgiveness of sins and of the adoption (*Kindschaft*) of God arises together with faith (*mit dem Glauben entsteht*), is a declaration in the individual herself of the universal divine decree to justify for the sake of Christ'.¹¹⁹ In other words, for Schleiermacher, 'the application of the universal divine act of justification to the individual person is tied to the emergence of faith and conditioned by the same'.¹²⁰ The declaratory element is therefore not lost in this presentation, but is simply relocated to an eternal declaration with a temporal actualisation.

¹¹⁶ GL, §104.3, II:138 (ET, p. 455).

¹¹⁷ GL, §109.3, II:199 (ET, p. 503). Prior to this, in Schleiermacher's words, she is 'only a part of the mass out of which persons come to be by the continuation of the creative act from which the Redeemer came', GL, §109.4, II:201 (ET, pp. 503–4).

¹¹⁸ GL, §109.4, II:200 (ET, p. 503). Lamm is concerned that Schleiermacher's view that justification 'follows only in so far as [one] has true faith' might again compromise the mutuality of conversion and justification: *Living God*, p. 208, quoting GL, §109, *Lehrsatz*, ET, p. 496. However, the crucial word *erfolgt* (GL, II:191, 'follows' in the ET) can also be translated 'takes place' or 'occurs' – which would preserve the simultaneity of justification and conversion. This reading would also call into question the necessity of Lamm's view that 'Justification is dependent on, and derived from, conversion, in that forgiveness and acceptance cannot, for Schleiermacher, precede faith', *Living God*, p. 209. The quotations which follow in the text above further question this view.

¹¹⁹ GL, §109.3, II:199 (ET, p. 503).

¹²⁰ GL, §109.4, II:200 (ET, p. 503). Indeed, Schleiermacher notes, this reference to the necessity of faith is all the more necessary 'if one imagines justification as a merely declaratory act' in order to avoid the impression of caprice, GL, §109.4, II:200 (ET, p. 503).

Conclusion

The material in the preceding sections has sought to achieve two things: first, to offer an outline of Schleiermacher's doctrine of justification in *The Christian Faith*, and second, to assess whether the criticisms of Schleiermacher's doctrine in Barth's lectures on Schleiermacher are sustainable. In respect of each of the three charges investigated – that there is no free act of God in justification, that the individual actively cooperates in justification and that justification takes place by the infusion of essential righteousness – it has been argued that Schleiermacher should be acquitted.¹²¹

The corollary of this outcome is that, at least as far as his doctrine of justification is concerned, Schleiermacher may not be dismissed as having left the theology of the Reformation behind quite as easily as Barth claimed. Certainly, *The Christian Faith* in general, and its doctrine of justification in particular, is written in a rather different register than the works of the magisterial Reformers, operating on rather different presuppositions, attending to rather different concerns and contending with rather different opponents. At the same time, this article has sought to exhibit the desirability of attending in detail to Schleiermacher's explicit and self-aware claims – found throughout his treatment of communion of life with Christ – that his own, creative presentation of the matter stands clearly consonant with the Protestant confessional tradition and carefully demarcated from the Roman Catholic tradition.¹²² The result is that, far from abandoning the soteriological concepts of the Reformation, it seems more likely that Schleiermacher was seeking to translate their meaning and significance into a more contemporary idiom for his own generation. The conception of justification as a free act of God, the view of the human agent as fundamentally passive in that act and the roles of imputation and faith in opposition to essential righteousness in its execution: all these – as demonstrated above – were fundamental to Schleiermacher's own doctrine, correctly understood.

¹²¹ Clearly, to explore the relationship between Schleiermacher and the Reformation on the issue which is one of the preconditions of the doctrine of justification – that of the 'genuinely lost person' in a state of 'genuine and effective lostness', to reprise the terms of Barth's lectures – would require a further and differently orientated article.

¹²² On the former, see GL, §108.1, II:171–5 (ET, pp. 480–3); GL, §108.4, II:183–4 (ET, pp. 489–90); GL, §108.5, II:185–6 (ET, p. 491); GL, §109.1, II:191–3 (ET, pp. 496–7); GL, §109.3, II:195–200 (ET, pp. 499–502); GL, §109.4, II:200–2 (ET, pp. 503–5); GL, §111.1, II:210 (ET, p. 510); GL, §111.2, II:213–16 (ET, pp. 513–15); GL, §112.1, II:218–22 (ET, pp. 517–19); GL, §112.3, II:224 (ET, p. 521). On the latter, see GL, §108.1, II:175 (ET, p. 483); GL, §109.1, II:193 (ET, p. 487); GL, §109.3, II:198–200 (ET, pp. 502–3); GL, §111.2, II:215–16 (ET, pp. 514–15).

In light of this fundamental conclusion, there are two final codas to which attention might profitably be drawn. Both of these codas have ramifications not only for the study of Schleiermacher but also for the consideration of the doctrine of justification in the Reformation and Reformed traditions more broadly.

The first coda is that, depending on how one interprets the theology of the Reformation, there may be room to suggest that Schleiermacher endorses and continues the trajectory of at least one of its central instincts in a quite fundamental way. As this article has explored, for Schleiermacher, the regeneration (conversion and justification) and the sanctification of the individual result from her assumption into communion of life with Christ.¹²³ Justification and sanctification thus – for Schleiermacher – flow directly from her union with Christ. Now if this is in truth the case then Schleiermacher’s ordering and prioritising of soteriological concepts parallels exactly that advanced by one particular reading of the theology of John Calvin (and, by extension, of the Reformed tradition more broadly). Scholars such as Wilhelm Niesel, and more recently Todd Billings and Julie Canlis, have posited that in Calvin’s soteriology – as elucidated in book III of the *Institutes* – the justification and sanctification of the Christian follow from her union with Christ.¹²⁴ And if this interpretation is correct,¹²⁵ then Schleiermacher’s theology, far from betraying the heritage of the Reformers, both logically and structurally locates the doctrine of justification in exactly the same place as Calvin. In both cases, the doctrine of justification is soteriologically decentred in favour of a focus upon and privileging of the doctrine of communion/union with Christ, and the significance of the former in itself necessarily diminishes as a consequence.

And the second, final coda, is that in Barth’s mature doctrine of justification in *Church Dogmatics*, IV,¹²⁶ Barth radically distances himself from the idea

¹²³ GL, §106, *Lehrsatze*, II:164 (ET, p. 476).

¹²⁴ Wilhelm Niesel, *Reformed Symbolics* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962), p. 191; Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ* (Oxford: OUP, 2007); and Julie Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).

¹²⁵ For all its current popularity, this reading of Calvin’s theology is not universally accepted. For a recent dissenting view, see Bruce McCormack, ‘Union with Christ in Calvin’s Theology: Grounds for a Divinization Theory?’, in David W. Hall (ed.), *Tributes to John Calvin: A Celebration of his Quincentenary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010), pp. 504–29.

¹²⁶ Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik* (KD), 4 vols in 13 parts (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1932, and Zürich: EVZ, 1938–65). All trans. are the author’s own. For reference, the published English trans. is *Church Dogmatics*, 4 vols in 13 parts, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956–75).

that the justification and sanctification of the Christian flow from her union with Christ. By contrast, Barth is emphatic that it is '[t]he divine activity effected and revealed in Jesus Christ' which consists 'not only in the justification of the human being, but also, and inseparably bound with this, in her sanctification'.¹²⁷ And correspondingly, for Barth, the doctrine of justification is the attempt 'to see and understand in its positive sense the sentence executed in God's judgement which is revealed to us in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead'.¹²⁸ Justification is therefore primarily and properly accomplished not in the believer (in union with Christ or otherwise) but in the history of Jesus Christ. And the secondary and derivative justification of the human being takes place by virtue of the divine election of grace, which means – in Barth's words – that 'his history is as such our history and henceforth precisely our most proper history'.¹²⁹ It is the justification contained in the divine verdict proclaimed in the resurrection of Christ which is basic, for Barth, to all that follows. The consequence of this, however, is that if the reading of Calvin and the Reformed tradition cited above is correct, then ironically Barth has distanced himself quite markedly from it. To his great chagrin, it might ultimately be the case that Barth's doctrine of justification is in truth far more a departure from the theology of the Reformation than that of his erstwhile adversary Schleiermacher.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Barth, *KD IV/2*, p. 565 (ET, p. 499).

¹²⁸ Barth, *KD IV/1*, p. 576 (ET, p. 516).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 612 (ET, p. 548). For a more detailed exploration of Barth's mature doctrine of justification, see Paul T. Nimmo, 'Reforming *simul iustus et peccator*: Karl Barth and the Actualisation of the Doctrine of Justification', *Zeitschrift für dialektische Theologie*, suppl. ser. 6 (forthcoming 2013/2014).

¹³⁰ This material was originally delivered as a paper at the sixth meeting of the Princeton-Kampen Barth Consultation in Driebergen in Sept. 2012. I am deeply grateful to all the participants in the Consultation for their comments on the original version of the text, and in particular to Kate Sonderegger, Rinse Reeling Brouwer, George Hunsinger and Bruce McCormack.