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THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION  
IN THE LATER WORKS OF JACQUES LEFÈVRE D'ÉTAPLES

A THESIS

by

DONNA SPIVEY ELLINGTON

Submitted to the Graduate School  
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ABSTRACT

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION IN THE  
LATER WORKS OF JACQUES LEFÈVRE D'ÉTAPLES (May 1984)

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The doctrine of justification became one of the major points for argument, dispute and definition during the period of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century; and both Protestants and Catholics addressed themselves to this issue. The present work examines the later works of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1460-1536) in order to determine Lefèvre's mature doctrine of justification and thereby to evaluate Lefèvre's place within the Reformation. His views will be compared to those of Luther and also to the Council of Trent. The major emphasis of the study is upon the later works of Lefèvre because the final phase of his active career (1521-1525) coincided with his participation in a project for the evangelical reform of the Meaux diocese begun by his friend and patron, Guillaume Briçonnet. These works reflect the degree of influence which the growing continental reform and Lefèvre's own involvement with a reform effort had on his thought.

Topics such as original sin, good works, faith, grace, and election are important to any discussion of justification and the thesis explores the use of each of these in Lefèvre's writings in order to clarify his

position. The works of Lefèvre which are studied in detail are his Epistola ad Romanos (1512), a commentary which represents Lefèvre's earliest views on justification, the Epistres et evangiles pour les cinquante-et-deux dimences de l'an (1525), an anonymous work of multiple authorship which Lefèvre helped to correct and edit, and as the work of central importance to the thesis, the Commentarii in epistolas catholicas (1527), Lefèvre's last published Biblical commentary.

During the course of his career as reformer and Biblical scholar, it is possible to discern some degree of Protestant influence on Lefèvre's work. His view of the negative effects of original sin became stronger and he gave an increasingly important role to faith in justification and the Christian life. It is nevertheless true that despite the appearance of some Protestant points of emphasis, Lefèvre's doctrine of justification remained a Roman Catholic one which saw justification as a process of becoming righteous in which faith and good works cooperated with the grace of God. Lefèvre did not adopt Luther's view of justification which involved the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner because of his faith. Instead Lefèvre was much closer in his outlook to the Council of Trent, and he may be seen as a bridge between a late medieval Church in need of reform and the council which met to provide that reform.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The thesis would not have been possible without the ability to obtain materials from libraries on other campuses and many thanks are therefore due to Stephanie Perrin and Martha Kreszock, Interlibrary Loan librarians at Belk library, for their help in ordering valuable sources. Financial assistance was provided in part by a Graduate Research Grant from the Graduate Student Senate which made it possible to purchase personal copies and microfilms of some of the most crucial primary sources, and for this I am also thankful.

It would be impossible to completely express my gratitude to Dr. H. L. Bond for the assistance and guidance he has provided as I prepared this thesis. He has given unreservedly of his time and has always been willing to freely share his extensive knowledge of medieval and Renaissance thought. My own ability to read and translate the primary sources, particularly those in Latin, would be much weaker if he had not often prodded me toward attempting to read works which I thought, at the

time, were far too difficult for me. I have always received from him encouragement as well as honest and constructive criticism; and I am deeply grateful to him for his belief in my work. I must also express my thanks to him for the use of his word processor. It has made the final production of my thesis much easier than it might have been. I should also express gratitude to Mrs. Lorraine Childers for so ably typing the final copy.

Finally, I owe my husband, Steve Ellington, more than I can say. He has been forced to live with me, and with Jacques Lefèvre, throughout the two years that I have worked and pursued my research, and his support and sense of humor have never failed. He has believed in me when I did not. This thesis is dedicated to him.

coniugo meo et amico,

STEVEN ELLINGTON

in

amore et gratia

dedicatus





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## ABBREVIATIONS

- Comment. in epist. cath., Lefèvre d'Étaples, Jacques. Commentarii in epistolas catholicas. Basel: Andreas Cratander, 1527.
- Denzinger, Denzinger, Henricus and Umberg, Iohannes S. I., eds. Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationem de rebus fidei et morum. Editio 21-23. Friburgi Brisgoviaw: Herder and Company, 1937.
- Epistola ad Rhomanos, Lefèvre d'Étaples, Jacques. Epistola ad Rhomanos. Epistola prima ad Corinthios. Epistola secunda ad Corinthios (et al.). Paris: Henricus Staphanus, 1512.
- Epistres et evangiles, Bedouelle, Guy and Giacone, Franco, eds. Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples et ses disciples: Epistres et evangiles pour les cinquante et deux dimanches de l'an. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976.
- Herminjard, Herminjard, Aime Louis. Correspondance des réformateurs dans les pays de langue française. 9 Vols. Nieuwkoop: B. De Graf, 1965.
- Pauck, Luther, Martin. Lectures on Romans. Translated and edited by Wilhelm Pauck. Library of Christian Classics. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960.
- PL, Migne, J. P. ed. Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina. Paris: 1844-1890.
- WA, D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Weimar: 1883-.

## INTRODUCTION

"But when we say that God justified Abraham by faith, the glory of this justification belongs to God and not to Abraham."<sup>1</sup> With statements such as this one, French reformer Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples brought the issue of justification to the forefront of theological debate five years before Luther even began his period of reform with the Ninety-Five Theses. Justification was to remain a point for argument, dispute, and definition throughout the period of Protestant reform on the one hand, and of Catholic reform, culminating in the Council of Trent, on the other.

Lefèvre has always posed problems for Reformation studies. He certainly never openly rejected the Roman Catholic Church in order to support the Protestant cause. He was, nevertheless, repeatedly attacked by the Sorbonne, that staunch defender of Catholic orthodoxy in France, and at times even the label "Lutheran" was applied to him. The purpose of this study will be to examine Lefèvre's doctrine of justification throughout his career as a reformer. It will consider especially the last works which he produced or helped to produce, in order to determine his precise position on this issue and thereby envision more accurately his place in the overall reform movement of the sixteenth century.



The major focus of the study is upon two of Lefèvre's later works because they were written during the final phase of his active career, 1521-1525, a period in which he was involved with bishop Guillaume Briçonnet's attempted evangelical reform of the Meaux diocese. These last works of Lefèvre should therefore not only represent his mature position on key issues such as justification but also reflect the impact, if any, of the growing continental reform and his own participation in a reform effort.

The Commentarii in epistolas catholicas (1527) is Lefèvre's last Scriptural commentary and it is the last work published in France which bears his name. This commentary contains Lefèvre's treatment of the book of James, one of his most important discussion of justification. The second work, the Epistres et evangiles pour les cinquante et deux dimanches de l'an (1525) contains homilies written in French to accompany the New Testament pericopes for the Church Year. It was published anonymously but Lefèvre's involvement with it is virtually unquestioned. The Epistres et evangiles was produced by at least four different men and is generally more Protestant, at least in language, than those works done entirely by Lefèvre. Still it is possible to discern Lefèvre's ideas and language in the French homilies, and they were the basis for some of the Sorbonne's most stringent criticism of Lefèvre and of the Meaux reform in general. They must be included in any consideration of Lefèvre's reform writings.

The Meaux period does not, however, represent Lefèvre's only works of Biblical exegesis. From 1508 until 1521, after leaving the University of Paris, Lefèvre retired to the monastery of St. Germain-des-Prés to continue his studies in quiet and solitude. While there, Lefèvre had published his first Scriptural commentary in 1509, the Quincuplex Psalterium, and in 1512, the Epistola ad Rhomanos appeared. It is this latter work on the Pauline epistles which first stressed justification by faith and influenced Luther's early period of theological development.

A comparison of Lefèvre's 1512 Romans commentary and Luther's 1515-1516 Romans lectures has been used to introduce the present study for several reasons. Luther's particular doctrine of justification by faith which involved the imputation of Christ's righteousness as the sole basis for the sinner's forgiveness and his being declared righteous by God became the normative definition of justification for Protestantism and must therefore be the measuring rod against which Lefèvre's own views are placed. Because it can be shown that Luther had not yet reached his mature position on justification in the Romans lectures and that there is a considerable amount of agreement between the lectures and Lefèvre's Romans commentary, it becomes easier to demonstrate the essential conformity to traditional Catholic thought remaining in Lefèvre's work in 1512. Lefèvre's Romans commentary can then become a means of determining the degree to which Lefèvre subsequently approaches a more Protestant position in his final commentary.

The very meaning of the word "justification" has posed problems of its own. Justification has been a source of disagreement between Protestants and Catholics chiefly because each group has defined the word differently. Roman Catholics have traditionally followed the perspective that justification is a lifelong process whereby the Christian gradually becomes righteous himself through the grace of God offered in the sacraments joined to his own efforts to fulfill the law of Christ. The basis for salvation is the atoning work of Christ but it is through justification that the righteousness of Christ becomes effective for the individual Christian. Protestants have instead tended to see justification as a judgment or declaration by God. Because of the believer's faith, the righteousness of Christ belongs to him and on that basis, he is declared to be righteous by God although he remains very much a sinner. He should then begin a process of actually becoming righteous himself, but his own righteousness will never be the ground of his justification before God. This fundamental distinction between the Catholic and the Protestant approaches to justification needs to be kept in mind when examining Lefevre's statements on justification.

The text for Lefèvre's Romans commentary used in this study is found in the Epistola ad Rhomanos published in Paris, December of 1512, by Henricus Stephanus. The Commentarii in epistolas catholicas was printed by Andreas Cratander in Basel, 1527. The homilies of the Epistres et evangiles are in Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples et Ses Disciples: Epistres et evangiles pour les

cinquante et deux dimanches de l'an, edited by Guy Bedouelle and Franco Giaccone. It is based upon the Pierre de Vingle edition of 1531-1532. This work is also used as the source for the Sorbonne's censures of its contents. These censures were included by the editors on those pages where condemned statements appeared. The text for Luther's Romans lectures is that of Weimar edition of Luther's Romans lectures is that of the Weimar edition of Luther's works. All translation of Lefèvre from the Latin or French are the author's. Wilhem Pauck's translation of Luther's lectures is used throughout chapter one.

The method of inquiry used will be that of examining the most important passages of the four primary sources which treat the word and concept of justification. The precise doctrine of justification will be determined as well as the importance of other related ideas and terms in the various contexts in which justification is treated. Other important topics to be explored include original sin, faith, grace, merits and good works. Important secondary sources will be studied for background information and for insight into the specific problem of justification.

The Council of Trent which met in three sessions from December of 1545 until December of 1563 became the standard for Roman Catholic orthodoxy and has remained so until the twentieth century. It seems logical, then, to compare Lefèvre's final position on justification, at least briefly, to that found in the Tridentine decrees. Such a comparison makes it possible to see

that, concerning man's justification before God, Lefèvre remained within the accepted bounds of Roman Catholic teaching while at the same time anticipating some of the reform statements made by the Church at Trent.

## CHAPTER I

### THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

#### IN THE EPISTOLA AD RHOMANOS OF JACQUES LEFÈVRE D'ÉTAPLES (1512) AND MARTIN LUTHER'S LECTURES ON ROMANS (1516)

Perhaps more than any other issue, the doctrine of justification occupied the reformers of the Church in the sixteenth century, both Catholic and Protestant. In Lutheran circles sola fide became the watchword while Catholic theologians generally maintained the Church's traditional position which insisted on a cooperation between faith and works of charity in order to procure salvation.<sup>1</sup>

Jacques Lefèvre has often occupied an uncertain position among historians of the Reformation. One central question concerning Lefèvre involves the degree to which his work, whether his Scriptural commentaries or his efforts to reform the Church's worship and practice, were an expression of orthodox Catholicism or whether in fact it approached a more radical or Protestant perspective. Because his Biblical commentaries were begun in 1509,<sup>2</sup> prior to Luther's 1517 Ninety-Five Theses and were not concluded until 1525-1527, the issue of the possible impact of the Protestant Reformation upon his thought must be faced. Did Lefèvre's position, particularly his concept of justification, change as a result of his exposure to Lutheran and Zwinglian doctrines?



The most thorough treatment of justification in the New Testament is found in Paul's epistle to the Romans. During the years 1512-1516 both Lefèvre and Luther were engaged in commenting and lecturing on this Pauline letter. The Epistola ad Rhomanos, Lefèvre's commentaries on Paul's epistles appeared in 1512,<sup>3</sup> and from 1515-1516 Luther composed and delivered his Lectures on Romans in his capacity as professor of Biblical theology at the University of Wittenberg.

Because the book of Romans is so important as a basis for the doctrine of justification, a comparison of justification in Lefèvre's Romans commentary and in Luther's Lectures on Romans is necessary in order to answer any questions concerning the theological development of the two men, particularly since in both cases these works were produced in the beginning of their careers as ecclesiastical reformers. An attempt will be made to determine the degree of similarity and of difference which existed between Lefèvre and Luther during the period 1512-1516 on the issues of original sin, the relationship of faith and works to justification, and the extent to which sin remains in the one who has been justified.

Some historians who wish to claim Lefèvre for Protestantism have concluded that Lefèvre was in part a Protestant before the Reformation, that already in his 1512 Romans commentary he was teaching a doctrine of justification by faith prior to Luther and similar in most ways to Luther's later position.<sup>4</sup> Such a viewpoint would imply not only that Lefèvre may have exceeded the bounds of accepted Catholic teaching by 1512 but also that it was he who influenced Luther's thought. It was not the Reformation which produced a more Protestant outlook in Lefèvre.

Instead Lefèvre had come to his ideas independently through his study of Paul. Even E. Amann, who stresses Lefèvre's catholicity, says that Lefèvre's Scriptural interpretations affected Luther's theological development and that Lefèvre was teaching justification by faith in 1512 and explaining it in Pauline terminology.<sup>5</sup>

Lefèvre composed his Pauline commentaries while staying in the monastery of St. Germain-des-Prés. He had come to the monastery in 1508 at the request of the abbot, Guillaume Briçonnet, to assist in reforming the worship life of the community;<sup>6</sup> and he remained there under the abbot's patronage until 1521. Thus Lefèvre was already engaged in one type of Church reform when he wrote his commentary on Romans. His reform at the monastery was based upon Scriptural study and interpretation,<sup>7</sup> and during his stay there Lefèvre also published the Quincuplex Psalterium in 1509. This work provided readers with five parallel Latin versions of the Psalms,<sup>8</sup> a commentary on each Psalm, and a description in the preface of Lefèvre's hermeneutical principles.

In contrast to Lefèvre, when Luther composed his Lectures on Romans he had not yet begun to think of himself as a reformer in any sense, monastic or otherwise. He had received the doctorate in theology on October 19, 1512<sup>9</sup> and taken over the chair of Biblical theology which had belonged to his monastic superior and friend Johann von Staupitz. By his own testimony Luther was not a reformer but one who sought to understand Paul's letter to the Romans, particularly the phrase "the righteousness of God."<sup>10</sup> Luther used Lefèvre's Roman's commentary to prepare his own lectures, and it appears that Lefèvre's hermeneutic may have exerted a strong influence on Luther in his earliest writings.<sup>11</sup>



Research concerning Lefèvre's Scriptural commentaries has most often dealt with his exegetical principles rather than his theology.<sup>12</sup> There have been some studies, however, which treat the doctrinal content of his 1512 Epistola ad Rhomanos. Eugene F. Rice, Jr. mentions justification in the introduction to his book, The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Related Texts. Rice sees Lefèvre striving above all to reconcile Paul and Aristotle. Christian piety should be "elegant, simple, evangelical, a harmony with philosophy." Aristotelian philosophy is completed by Pauline theology. Both faith and works are required for justification and are incorporated into a three-fold system of mystical illumination. Works purge, faith converts, and justification illumines.<sup>13</sup>

Charles Henri Graf, in his Essai sur la vie et les écrits de Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, states instead that Lefèvre is trying to reunite Paul and James in his doctrine of justification and to prove that there is in fact no contradiction between the two. Lefèvre's commentary teaches that faith and works are necessary for salvation but that neither of them justifies. Only the grace of God can save and justify. Lefèvre denies merit to works but nevertheless does not make salvation dependent on faith alone.<sup>14</sup>

In addition Graf finds Lefèvre at odds with Augustine on the issues of original sin and free will. According to Graf, Lefèvre believes that "all are destined to be saved and it is by their own fault that all are not saved."<sup>15</sup> Men are free to seek or to reject the grace of God. Concerning original sin, Lefèvre views it only as virtual or potential and not as actual. Men follow Adam into sin and death by imitation not

necessity. Original sin only provides a weakness or inclination to sin.<sup>16</sup>

Augustin Renaudet points to faith as a key term for Lefèvre's 1512 commentaries. Renaudet believes that Lefèvre based the efficacy of the sacraments upon faith and that he also taught a doctrine of justification by faith rather than works. He states that Lefèvre held a Pauline conception of grace but did not extend this to include predestination. However, although Lefèvre "took notable liberties with ecclesiastical tradition" he was no Protestant reformer; he remained loyal to the Church and its practices.<sup>17</sup>

Another interesting viewpoint comes from Heiko Oberman who says that in the preface to his 1512 commentaries, Lefèvre has come to emphasize the problem of justification over that of Scriptural exegesis. Lefèvre nevertheless links these two issues. Even as there are two ways of reading the Scriptures, the literal and the spiritual, so there are two types of relationships which men may have toward God.<sup>18</sup> Oberman does not develop the argument further but it is significant that both Renaudet and Oberman see justification to be important for Lefèvre as early as 1512.

Certainly the most thorough discussion of Lefèvre's thought as it appears in the Epistola ad Rhomanos is that of John B. Payne. Payne's article "Erasmus and Lefèvre d'Étaples as Interpreters of Paul" finds Lefèvre closer than Erasmus to the theology of Paul. The major concern of Paul's epistles for Lefèvre is the contrast between divine grace and human works. Justification is the work of God's grace, not of human effort.<sup>19</sup> Those who know this are humble, those who do not are proud.<sup>20</sup>

Lefèvre does teach that works may prepare for justification and Payne connects this idea with Occam's concept of meritum de congruo.<sup>21</sup> But he admits that Lefèvre refuses to call such preparation a merit. Lefèvre puts his emphasis on justification as a free unmerited gift.<sup>22</sup>

Payne does not find justification by faith alone in Lefèvre's Pauline commentaries. This type of justification is only for baptized infants and the thief on the cross. Works are necessary for both to retain and to increase justification.<sup>23</sup> Thus Lefèvre stresses the priority of grace but leaves room for human freedom.<sup>24</sup> Payne's findings support those of Graf regarding Lefèvre's concept of original sin. Man only inherits a certain weakness from Adam but the soul is given by God not by Adam; it is yet free to choose. Original sin, therefore, is only potential.<sup>25</sup> Man's sin and death result from imitating Adam and are not inevitable.<sup>26</sup>

Once a man is justified he is indeed a righteous man. Payne sees no adherence to an idea of simul iustus et peccator in Lefèvre's work. One cannot be both sinful and righteous at the same time as one cannot be both sick and well.<sup>27</sup>

Payne also focuses on the influence of the mystics and mystical theology on Lefèvre's thought. Like Rice, he points to the fact that Lefèvre places justification in the context of the stages of mystical experience in one passage of his commentary. Justification is not by faith alone; faith is only the second of the three steps on the way to justification.<sup>28</sup> Payne ends by saying that Lefèvre interprets salvation generally from a mystical standpoint. Even in his exegesis of Scripture he follows three ascending steps from the Fathers to the mystics and

finally to illumination by God himself.<sup>29</sup>

Lefèvre's View of Justification (1512)

An examination of Lefèvre's Romans commentary shows that Graf and Payne are correct in their evaluation of his doctrine of original sin; it is certainly not Augustinian. Lefèvre indicates that it is contrary to the meaning of the Apostle Paul to believe that from the time of Adam to that of Moses, death ruled and held sway even in those who had not sinned. Men incur death by means of their own sin. Likeness to Christ is life; likeness to Adam, death. Anyone who obtains salvation obtains it by likeness to Christ. Those who perish do so because of their likeness to Adam.<sup>30</sup> The inherited inclination to sin and concupiscence is like the tendency of a leper's son to contract the disease at some point in his life. At birth it is only a possibility or potential. It is not an actual disease. In the same way this tendency to sin can promote desires that war against the Spirit in all the sons of Adam but it is not actual sin, only potential. This inclination is present in all those in whom God's blessing and grace do not completely precede and heal it.<sup>31</sup> Lefèvre does not state that sin is inevitable; however his comments on justification indicate that all need to be forgiven and made righteous in God's eyes, that all lack the perfection which God requires.

Lefèvre clearly insists upon man's free will, even though the grace of God is required for salvation. God wants to justify for he is righteousness itself. But as the sun cannot illumine the one who turns

his face from its light, so God cannot justify the one who deliberately turns from him.<sup>32</sup> Yet it remains to be seen whether this justification is acquired by faith, by works, or by both.

Lefèvre's 1512 Romans commentary does not appear to present a truly consistent doctrine of justification. This may be due to the fact that Lefèvre's method of commentary seldom focuses upon an analysis of terms and ideas, instead his own statements follow closely the wording of the text itself and seek to provide the reader with a pastoral exhortation or homily. Also, Lefèvre was not a trained theologian; he was a professor of the liberal arts and philosophy who turned to Scriptural studies later in his career.<sup>33</sup> This lack of a systematic approach explains in part the wide variety of interpretation concerning his work.

Lefèvre does include works as an important part of the process of justification and at times even seems to suggest that for a select few, the excellence of their works may suffice to justify them. He does not indicate whether or not he has the saints in mind when he compares justification by works to that by faith, but he states

And if justification were owed to works of the law it would be able to belong to very few. But the one who understands that justification is by the grace of God, who justifies not according to merits, . . . sees that justification is able to extend itself to very many.<sup>34</sup>

Lefèvre suggests that it is only because God in his mercy is pleased to justify some without works and merits that justification is not then confined to a small and limited group.<sup>35</sup>

On another occasion Lefèvre affirms the existence of a righteousness by works possessed by the one who fulfills the commandments of God. Such a person is righteous, but his righteousness is still merely a "pale or slender shadow of his (God's) righteousness."<sup>36</sup> Works of this



type, which are works of the law, do not justify, they prepare one for justification as the performance of evil works prepares for eternal damnation.<sup>37</sup> Using his familiar metaphor of the sun Lefèvre says that as one must open his eyes to receive the sun's light, so one does good works to prepare to receive the grace of justification. If there is an absence of justification the fault is within the person who is unprepared to receive it.<sup>38</sup> When Paul states in Romans 2:13 that "doers of the law shall be justified," he does not mean that works justify. He uses the future tense to indicate that those who do good works will be justified because their action have opened the way for God's justification.<sup>39</sup>

While Lefèvre may believe that it is possible for a very few, perhaps the saints, to be justified by works, this is clearly not the usual occurrence. Lefèvre continues by saying that faith also is a necessary component of justification in addition to works.

Referring to James' statement that "faith if it has not works is dead," (James 2:17) Lefèvre concludes that faith and works cooperate in justification and that faith is completed or consummated by works. Faith is dead if works do not precede, accompany or follow it.<sup>40</sup> Works will be present with and proceed from faith even as they came before to prepare for justification; and these works provide signs of faith and prove that faith is living.<sup>41</sup> Also the works of faith which come after justification are an aid to faith and help to retain justification once it has been acquired. Lefèvre is certain that James does not intend to imply that anyone is justified by works in the sense that they should trust in them for their salvation, but works are a support for

justification which come after it and save it. Lefèvre alludes to two sects in the early church, one which trusted in faith alone for salvation, the other which placed its confidence in works.<sup>42</sup> It is the task of James to refute the first, Paul the latter.<sup>43</sup>

There may be some who will object that if works are chiefly a means of preparation and one is actually justified by faith then works are useless or in vain. Lefèvre answers that this is not the case, for if the Christian does not work when he has the ability and opportunity to do good then he will lose the grace of justification. He should therefore work both to retain justification and to increase it in himself.<sup>44</sup>

As Payne has mentioned, Lefèvre also discusses the cooperation of works and faith in the language of mystical ascent to God.<sup>45</sup> Works act as a purging from sin. Faith converts the heart and joins it to God. Justification then follows as a final cleansing which illumines and brightens.<sup>46</sup>

What has been said so far would indicate that Payne is correct in stating that Lefèvre in no way taught a justification by faith alone in his 1512 Romans commentary, the possible exceptions being baptized infants and persons such as the thief on the cross who are clearly saved apart from works.<sup>47</sup> The issue is not settled quite so easily, however, for in other places Lefèvre seems to advocate just this doctrine. This is particularly obvious in Lefèvre's treatment of the classic passages on justification dealing with Abraham.

The Jews had believed that circumcision and works of the law were required for justification.<sup>48</sup> They were wrong for Abraham was justified

by neither circumcision nor the law but by believing in God. He trusted the promise of God that his offspring would be as numerous as the stars of heaven and his belief in God was reputed to him as righteousness.<sup>49</sup> The righteousness of God is a righteousness by faith. God wills all to be saved so that they might render to him the glory which is his due.<sup>50</sup> If Abraham were justified by works the glory of justification would belong to him and not to God, "but when we say that God justified Abraham by faith, this glory of justification is God's not Abraham's."<sup>51</sup> Justification came immediately after the faith and belief of Abraham so that it is not due to works.<sup>52</sup> Only a righteousness by faith is possible because men, whether Jews or gentiles, are not able to be saved by their own efforts and works, which usually merit damnation rather than salvation.<sup>53</sup>

Lefèvre goes even further in condemning those who believe that Abraham was justified by works rather than faith. "Whoever says that the seed of Abraham received the promised land by works makes faith superfluous and does away with the promise." In that case Abraham would have received the land as something owed to his works whether or not faith or the promise had been present. Likewise, sons of the faith of Abraham, whoever they might have been, inherited not only the earthly land but a dwelling place in heaven as well by means of justification by faith and the promise made to Abraham.

For the promise of God who is faithful and true is firm, and firm is his grace, and firm was the faith of Abraham. Weak, however, are the law and our works. The promise of God is full.<sup>54</sup>

The story of Abraham's righteousness and justification pertains not only to him. It was written also for those who would come after so that



they too would have firm faith in God.<sup>55</sup> Those who wish to trust in works say that Abraham was justified by works. This is not the teaching of Paul; he shows that Abraham was justified by faith in God.<sup>56</sup>

Lefèvre has what appear to be two contradictory attitudes to justification. On the one hand it seems to be the result of faith cooperating with works; on the other he presents a doctrine of justification by faith apart from works as illustrated by Abraham. Luther will solve the dilemma of works in his Lectures on Romans by making a distinction between "works of the law" and "works of faith."<sup>57</sup> Luther, like Paul, excluded works of the law from any part of justification but, agreeing also with James, he states that justification does include works when they are understood as works of faith, done out of love for God.<sup>58</sup>

It has already been mentioned that Lefèvre usually follows the vocabulary of Paul when commenting on Paul's epistles. Thus Lefèvre frequently uses the phrase "works of the law" for this is found several times in Paul's letter to the Romans.<sup>59</sup> The words "works of faith," however, a term not used by Paul, appear only twice in Lefèvre's Romans commentary: once in connection with a comparison between Romans 4 and James 2,<sup>60</sup> and again in Lefèvre's discussion of Romans 13 where they are included under the category of "works of the light."<sup>61</sup> Only in the first instance does Lefèvre include works of faith in an important discussion and even here, they are called works of the regalis legis or royal law which Lefèvre identifies as the Ten Commandments.<sup>62</sup> Lefèvre obviously refuses to completely sever works from the law.

It is works, seen as works of the law, which pose the problem for understanding Lefèvre's concept of justification. Unlike Luther, Lefèvre solves the problem not by a distinction in terminology concerning works, but by viewing works of the law as useful or in vain depending upon the intention of the one who performs them. Works of the law may not even participate in justification if they are done apart from faith and if those who do them trust in them as meritorious; for as we have already seen, Lefèvre denies that anyone is justified by trusting in works. Salvation is solely by the mercy and grace of God, not owed to anyone because of works.<sup>63</sup> Those who do works of the law in order to be justified are still under the law and not under grace;<sup>64</sup> and whatever legal righteousness they possess cannot lead to a righteousness acceptable to God.<sup>65</sup> In both Jews and gentiles, however, works of the law may prepare for justification,<sup>66</sup> and they will always accompany and follow faith proceeding from it. They indicate that faith is genuine and living. No one is saved by works of the law alone; but no one is saved without faith and the works which necessarily result from faith if it is truly alive.

Works of the law are good, then, if they are done as a preparation for justification or when they are done in order to increase justification which has come by faith and the mercy of God. Works also enable Christians to imitate Christ and be truly Christlike themselves. In this case the works, while still works of the law, are done not under the law but under grace.<sup>67</sup> Works performed under grace are necessary but less necessary than faith and justify only in a distant or remote sense while faith justifies closely.<sup>68</sup> Lefèvre's distinction, then, is not

between works of the law and works of faith, but between works of the law done under the law to merit justification, and works of the law done under grace either to make oneself more receptive to God's grace<sup>69</sup> or to imitate Christ and thereby increase and retain justification. Yet even though Lefèvre does not use the same language as Luther, his meaning is very similar.

Lefèvre's overriding concern in his commentary is to give all the glory for man's justification to God alone, apart even from works and faith. Justification is a gift of God, given by his grace. It comes from the grace of God when one is converted to him by faith, whether he works or does not work. This is the main cause for Lefèvre's stress on justification by faith. Even the impious can be justified, and it is clear that they have done no works to merit such a favor. A debt on God's part, owed to the merit of man is one thing, the grace of God, another. "Whoever says that justification is a debt removes all grace from God and makes man ungrateful to God and for that reason unworthy of justification."<sup>70</sup> In the end it is neither faith nor works that justify; these prepare for justification by God in his grace.<sup>71</sup>

One final problem concerns sin in the one who is now justified. Does sin remain and if so in what form? Payne has shown that Lefèvre does not teach a concept of simul iustus et peccator. In fact he explicitly denies this idea.

But it is impossible both to be under grace and also to sin; these do not come at the same time even as health and sickness. For the one who is under grace is the servant of righteousness just as the one who is healthy is subject to health; and the one who sins is a subject of sin as the one who is sick is subject to sickness. But who is able to become at the same time subject to righteousness and to sin?<sup>72</sup>

Before justification men are servants of sin, afterward they are servants of Christ and of righteousness.<sup>73</sup> This does not mean that those who are justified never sin, only that they are no longer its servants. This is clear for two reasons. Lefèvre believes in the necessity of good works to retain and increase justification.<sup>74</sup> The fact that justification may be augmented implies that there is sin yet remaining in the believer which must gradually be purged. Also, returning to the metaphor of sunlight Lefèvre admonishes the justified to do good works. As a polished mirror reflects the sun's light better than a dirty one, so a life of good works shows the light of God better than one which is clouded by the impurity of sin.<sup>75</sup>

#### Justification According to Luther (1515-1516)

Studies of Martin Luther's Lectures on Romans have almost always focused upon the issue of Luther's evangelical discovery, both the nature of the discovery and the time period in which it occurred. Erich Vogelsang has concluded that the essence of Luther's discovery lay in his new understanding of the phrase "iustitia dei" as the righteousness of God whereby he makes the sinner righteous, rather than a righteousness which necessarily implies judgment.<sup>76</sup> Vogelsang believes that Luther's breakthrough occurred during his Psalm lectures of 1514. If this is the case, then Luther's Lectures on Romans of 1516 should represent his Protestant and evangelical perspective. Gordon Rupp, in his work, The Righteousness of God, agrees with Vogelsang on both points. Rupp thinks that Luther's Romans lectures

show the reformer to be still immature in his thought, yet he sees these lectures as an important source for understanding Luther's theology.<sup>77</sup> Rupp seems to be particularly concerned to point out that there is no emphasis in the lectures on a forensic doctrine of justification, the doctrine which many have thought to be one of Luther's most characteristic ideas.<sup>78</sup> For Luther, Rupp says, the righteousness of Christ for the believer is not "merely legally external" but it is the presence of Christ within because of the believer's faith.<sup>79</sup> Rupp praises Karl Holl for announcing that Luther's concept of justification was not that of "Melanchthonian orthodoxy" with a forensic notion of justification and the imputation of Christ's righteousness.<sup>80</sup>

Rupp also finds Luther believing that works may prepare for justification. These works simply express the desire for justification. They are not works of the law because those who do them are in a way just already. Those who are already justified perform works to increase justification in themselves.<sup>81</sup> Finally, on the question of original sin, Luther is in agreement with Augustine, believing that all men inevitably share in its ill effects.<sup>82</sup>

An opposing position is taken up by Uuras Saarnivaara in his book, Luther Discovers the Gospel. Saarnivaara agrees that the theology in Luther's Romans lectures is similar to that of his lectures on the Psalms,<sup>83</sup> but says that Luther is only gradually heading toward his evangelical position;<sup>84</sup> he has not yet developed it completely. Luther understands that faith is required for justification but still does not see it as something accomplished totally without the works of faith done by the Christian.<sup>85</sup> He still holds an Augustinian analytical view of



justification which sees it as a "gradual process of becoming righteous,"<sup>86</sup> something which is never completed in this life.<sup>87</sup> Luther was additionally influenced toward this view by the German mystics who taught that God justifies by making righteous rather than by imputing Christ's righteousness to the sinner.<sup>88</sup>

According to Saarnivaara, the Luther of the Lectures on Romans fails to distinguish adequately between Law and Gospel and therefore has no real doctrine of the assurance of salvation. Man must still fulfill the law even if he does this through grace, and he must make progress in justification. Therefore Luther's concept of justification is still pre-Reformational and ethical rather than religious.<sup>89</sup> Luther talks about the non-imputation of sin but not about the imputation of Christ's fulfillment of the law. Christ covers the sins that remain but the sinner's justification is yet based upon the promise of God actually to perfect the sinner and the fact that he has already begun to make him righteous.<sup>90</sup> Luther agrees with the mystics once again that justification and the way to God lead through "humility, self-denial and the cross."<sup>91</sup> Saarnivaara recognized that Luther makes some statements in his Romans lectures which reflect his later understanding and are "considerably above Augustine." These instances, however, are not typical of the whole work and must be seen in its context.<sup>92</sup>

Another scholar who has disagreed with Vogelsang and Holl is Lowell Green. In How Melanchthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel, Green describes Luther's Lectures on Romans as "surprisingly meager and lacking in the later evangelical doctrine."<sup>93</sup> Luther's doctrine of justification is still analytic rather than forensic.<sup>94</sup> While it is true

that Luther's first breakthrough came in 1513 with the discovery that the righteousness of God may be redemptive as well as punitive, Vogelsang and Holl were incorrect in judging this to be Luther's chief evangelical insight.<sup>95</sup> As Denifle and other Catholics had pointed out, this was no more than an acceptance of traditional Catholic teaching going back to Augustine.<sup>96</sup>

Luther's real insight according to Green occurred during 1518-1519 when he began to view the nature of righteousness involved in justification as extrinsic and not intrinsic.<sup>97</sup> Prior to this date, Luther taught a synergistic concept of justification. The sinner in humility accepts God's judgment of his sin, thereby actually justifying God. In return God justifies the sinner because of his humility. Humility is thus the key virtue resulting in justification,<sup>98</sup> and is in fact almost identical with faith in these lectures.<sup>99</sup> Like Saarnivaara Green sees no assurance of salvation in the Romans lectures.<sup>100</sup> Luther puts "sanative healing" in the center of his doctrine of justification and does not view it as the result of justification as he does in his later works.<sup>101</sup>

Luther himself begins his Lectures on Romans by acknowledging man's sinful nature. He describes Paul's intention in writing to the Romans in this way:

The sum and substance of this letter is to pull down, to pluck up, and to destroy all wisdom and righteousness of the flesh . . . no matter how heartily and sincerely they may be practiced, and to implant, establish, and make large the reality of sin (however unconscious we may be of its existence.)<sup>102</sup>

Man may be unconscious of his sin for he cannot know from his own self-examination that he is a sinner and liar in God's sight. God must

reveal this to him; and God has indeed revealed what he considers man to be, a sinner. The sinner must yield to God's judgment and confess himself as such.<sup>103</sup> It is of no help to be aware of the law which explains the will of God. This law simply increases the inclination of the will to sin. Even if the will under compulsion does works of the law outwardly it would still prefer to act otherwise and is therefore sinful inwardly. "For every law occasions sin unless under the influence of grace, feeling, mind, and will are bent toward the law."<sup>104</sup>

Luther, then, accepts the doctrine of original sin in an Augustinian sense. Man is "naturally evil," and his will is evil. He cannot will the good unless prodded by God's grace.<sup>105</sup> He states "we are all born in iniquity, i. e., unrighteousness."<sup>106</sup> Man will always be ruled by sin unless the grace of Christ heals his mind.<sup>107</sup>

Because Luther begins his lectures with an emphasis on the sinfulness of man and continues to argue this point throughout, it is natural that he advocates humility as the proper attitude of man before a righteous God. Humility precedes justification and is required before God will justify. Luther states that "the entire Scriptures teach nothing else than humility,"<sup>108</sup> which makes one capable of receiving the good. It is pride that causes an unreceptive attitude to God. Proper humility results in a confession of sin to God and leads in turn to justification because it renders the sinner worthy of God's grace.<sup>109</sup> God will reckon as righteous the one who is humble and has not "anticipated the divine action by justifying himself."<sup>110</sup> Humility and confession of sin give to God the glory for justification by accepting his words, especially his words of judgment for sin and grace for the sinner as true.<sup>111</sup>



As Green indicates, Luther teaches a two-fold process of justification beginning with a humble admission of guilt and sin, declaring as true and accurate God's condemnation of the sinner. Luther calls this confession the passive justification of God by man. God is recognized as the only righteous one and thereby is made righteous in the sinner.<sup>112</sup> The person who thus justifies God by having faith and belief in his word is actively justified by God. "To be justified," Luther declares, means "to believe." Similarly when someone judges the word of God to be untrue, he is under the condemnation of God.<sup>113</sup>

By this justification of God we are justified. And this passive justification of God by which he is declared righteous by us is our active justification by God. For he reposes the faith as righteous that regards his words as righteous. . . . And conversely: the passive condemnation of God by which he is condemned by the unbelievers is their own damnation. . . . For he justifies (and triumphs) in his word when he makes us such as his word is, namely, righteous, true, wise.<sup>114</sup>

Clearly in the Romans lectures, Luther does not present a view of justification by faith which is comparable to that usually associated with his later thought. Neither is faith itself understood as trust but as a humble confession of the truth of God's word. Even when Luther states that "Righteousness is given only through faith in Jesus Christ,"<sup>115</sup> he defines faith as faith in Christ's word whenever and through whomever he speaks.<sup>116</sup>

Luther, as Lefèvre, believes that it is necessary to make progress in justification. Growth in the righteousness of God gives a greater clarity to faith. One should never presume that he has already been completely justified; if he does he will stop growing and begin to lose ground.<sup>117</sup> It is imperative that one continually seek God in this life; only those who do will be saved. Luther quotes St. Bernard, "When we

begin not to want to become better, we cease to be good."<sup>118</sup>

This progress in justification is required, of course, because of the sin which remains in the believer. Luther says that God intentionally leaves the believer in sin and concupiscence to prevent the growth of pride and false security. There seems to be no real assurance, for God "wants to keep us in fear of him and in humility so that we may always keep running to his grace, always fearful that we may sin."<sup>119</sup> The righteousness of Christ is needed to cover our remaining sin and as for whatever righteousness is ours, "we must always be in fear before God."<sup>120</sup>

Luther relates works to justification by dividing them into two kinds, works of the law and works of faith. Although the former may be good and holy Luther asserts that there is no work of the law good enough to merit justification in God's eyes; and for the one who trusts in such works, they may instead prove to be a hindrance to God's grace.<sup>121</sup> Luther attributes the concepts of works of the law and works of faith to Paul. Works of the law are done "apart from faith and grace" due to fear of punishment or the desire for temporal reward. Works of faith are actions "done in the spirit of liberty and only from the love of God."<sup>122</sup> They are able to be done by those who are justified by faith.<sup>123</sup> Luther agrees with James that those who believe faith to be sufficient for justification apart from works are in error. Faith justifies without works of the law but not without its own works for apart from these it would not be true faith.<sup>124</sup>

In addition Luther says that it is possible to prepare for justification by doing good works. These will not be works of the law,

however, for those who do them do not trust in them for salvation, but merely express, through them, the desire to be justified.<sup>125</sup> Good works render one able to receive God's righteousness and are a "prayer for righteousness." By such works one prepares the way of the Lord; but they do not in themselves represent righteousness. The same is true for works done after justification. They obviously do not justify for justification has already occurred. Works of faith may prepare for and accompany justification but it is the grace of God within which actually makes a person righteous.<sup>126</sup>

It is true that some of Luther's statements in his Lectures on Romans sound very much like his later more mature thought. Commenting on Romans 2:15 Luther says:

Wherefrom then shall we take the thoughts that excuse us? Only from Christ and in Christ. For when his own heart reproaches a Christian and accuses him by testifying against him that he has done evil, he presently turns away from it and turns to Christ and says: He made satisfaction, he is righteous, he is my defense, he died for me, he made righteousness to be mine, and made my sin his own. And if he made my sin his own, then I have it no longer, and I am free. And if he made his righteousness mine, then I am righteous in the same righteousness as he. But my sin cannot swallow him up but it is swallowed up in the infinite abyss of his righteousness, for he is God himself to whom be praise forever.<sup>127</sup>

In spite of such ideas, however, Luther has still not achieved his final Protestant position. He yet retains a belief in the necessity of works for justification even if they are works of faith and he thinks that one must make progress in justification while living continually in the fear of sinning. There is neither a clear doctrine of assurance nor of justification by faith alone.

Lefèvre and Luther (1512-1516)

While Luther in 1515-1516 is still in many ways following in the traditions of Roman Catholic theology, the evidence supports the fact that Lefèvre, too, remains a loyal Catholic. He advocates a doctrine of justification by faith but it is one in which works also have a part. God and his grace must receive the glory for man's justification but this does not exclude man from active participation in his salvation. By his works he both prepares to receive grace and cooperates with it after he is justified. These works are obligatory if he does not wish to lose his justification.

Luther used Lefèvre's 1512 Romans commentary to compile his own Lectures on Romans and the number of issues on which they concur is significant. Both men assert that works may prepare for justification and cooperate with faith in justification itself. Although they use different terminology, Lefèvre and Luther each point out the difference between works done to try to earn justification and works performed in order to make oneself receptive to grace and to serve Christ once one is justified. They also agree with Augustine<sup>128</sup> that it is possible to make progress in justification, thereby, at least from a Protestant perspective, blurring the distinction between justification and sanctification.<sup>129</sup> There is present in each work a stress on the need for humility before God since to be proud is to nullify the grace of God and make one unworthy of justification. As we have seen, Luther calls such pride an attempt to justify oneself. The confession of sin and unworthiness which results from humility ascribes the full glory for

man's salvation to God; and both men conclude that in the end it is God's grace which actually justifies and makes righteous.

The most important difference between Lefèvre and Luther lies in the area of original sin. Lefèvre approaches original sin not as a necessarily inherited sinful state but as a weakness which can be resisted. Actual sin is not therefore inevitable, although it is almost never absent, but is instead the end product of the imitation of Adam's sin. Luther, however, departs from the position that man can resist sin and do some good on his own. He takes an Augustinian stance by insisting upon man's complete sinfulness and guilt in God's eyes from the moment of his birth. This seems to be a further indication that Luther, in the Romans lectures, is still trying to work his way through to a clear understanding of justification for it is difficult to reconcile his thoughts on original sin and election with his ideas on the role of works in justification.

After considering Lefèvre's Romans commentary of 1512 and Luther's 1515-1516 Lectures on Romans one is forced to conclude that there are more essential similarities than differences. Of course it is not necessary to point to Luther's use of Lefèvre's work to account for this when one realizes that at this point neither man has parted company in any overt or significant way with the mainstream of Catholic thought. Saarnivaara and Green are right to say that Luther in 1516 is still a Catholic theologian and not yet a Protestant, even though it is possible from a historical perspective to see that the growth of his thought is moving in that direction; and if Lefèvre ever comes to a really Protestant view of justification sola fide, he has not reached it in 1512.



## CHAPTER II

### LEFÈVRE'S DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION IN THE COMMENTARII IN EPISTOLAS CATHOLICAS (1527)

#### Faith, Justification, and Charity in the Commentary on James, 1527

In 1516, Lefèvre's patron and friend, Guillaume Briçonnet, was removed from his position as abbot of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and appointed to be bishop of the diocese of Meaux.<sup>1</sup> This event proved to be especially important for Lefèvre and for the French Church in general. In 1518, Briçonnet embarked upon a reform of the diocese<sup>2</sup> which became perhaps the most important attempt at serious ecclesiastical reform in France and which called together a group of men eager to bring more evangelical and more Scripturally oriented practices into the Church;<sup>3</sup> one of these men was Lefèvre.

Already in 1512 Lefèvre had been looking for a reform of the Church which would be initiated by God. Guillaume Farel reported that Lefèvre had told him: "My son, God will renew the world and you will be a witness to it."<sup>4</sup> Briçonnet's decision to reform the Meaux diocese must have seemed to Lefèvre the beginning of the renewal which he had foreseen; and around 1521 Lefèvre moved to Meaux and once again joined with Briçonnet in a project of reform.<sup>5</sup>

During the next few years (1521-1527) Lefèvre's reform activities and his work were based upon the Scriptures. The Commentarii in quatuor



evangelia appeared in June of 1522, and his French translation of the New Testament was published by November of 1523. In 1525, under Lefèvre's supervision, several other reformers of the Meaux circle composed short homilies in French to accompany the Epistle and Gospel lessons of the Church year, a work known as the Epistres et evangiles pour les cinquante et deux dimanches de l'an. Finally, the last of Lefèvre's Scriptural commentaries, the Commentarii in epistolas catholicas, was published at Basel in August of 1527.<sup>6</sup> Of these two later works, the Commentarii in epistolas catholicas is the likelier source for discovering Lefèvre's mature position on faith, works, and justification for it is his last published commentary and it represents only his own viewpoint while the Epistres et evangiles was compiled by several men, at least four, under Lefèvre's supervision.<sup>7</sup> These catholic commentaries will be used here to provide a basis for understanding Lefèvre's doctrine of justification during the height of his reform work.

Opinions on the nature of Jacques Lefèvre's theology from 1521-1527 cover a wide range. There are those who believe that he remained an essentially orthodox Roman Catholic, concerned only to make the Scriptures and an evangelical understanding of the faith an integral part of the lives of the French people. On the other hand, some judge that the European reform movement influenced Lefèvre to shift from orthodoxy to beliefs which were rightly seen by his critics to be outside of accepted Catholic teaching.

James Jordan's article, "Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples: Principles and Practice of Reform at Meaux," exemplifies the position which minimizes the changes in Catholic doctrine and practice advocated by Lefèvre. Any

such changes were purely the result of Lefèvre's insistence upon deriving doctrine and practice solely from the Scriptures,<sup>8</sup> and were only incidental to his primary goal of releasing the power of the Gospel in the lives of the common people.<sup>9</sup> The Epistres et evangiles were intended to provide the average parishioner with a guide to the spiritual interpretation of Scripture even as the Latin commentaries had done for the more scholarly community.<sup>10</sup> Jordan does not deal with Lefèvre's theology directly in this article, however in his unpublished dissertation, The Church Reform Principles in the Biblical Works of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, he offers his view of Lefèvre's doctrine of justification.

Jordan finds no significant differences on this topic among Lefèvre's several commentaries so that he believes it is possible to draw upon them all to ascertain Lefèvre's position.<sup>11</sup> Jordan thus takes his understanding of Lefèvre's ideas almost entirely from the Epistola ad Rhomanos with some supporting quotations from the Commentarii in quatuor evangelia.

According to Jordan, Lefèvre does not include works in his view of justification in any way because to do so would imply that God owed justification to those who had fulfilled the requirement of works.<sup>12</sup> Indeed good works and even the desire to do them originate with God.<sup>13</sup> Works are useful only for those who have never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel.<sup>14</sup>

It is faith and not works, says Jordan, which is the major component of Lefèvre's doctrine of justification.<sup>15</sup> Jordan singles out

Lefèvre's statement in his Romans commentary, "Neither faith nor works justify, but they prepare for justification since God is the one who justifies."<sup>16</sup> Jordan feels that this statement has been misconstrued by some to indicate that Lefèvre required works as well as faith in man's preparation for justification, and therefore never departed from current orthodox Catholic teaching. Jordan denies this and says that Lefèvre required not works but faith for a man to be justified. He quotes an important passage from Lefèvre's Romans commentary.

But when Paul says 'we therefore judge a man to be justified by faith without works of the law' you will say: Who has ever been justified without works of the law, I mean either written or natural? If I should say even innumerable ones, I would, perhaps, not be deceiving. It is certain that of those gentiles and even publicans who fled to the grace of baptism, having only faith in Christ and the confession of His holy name: they were justified immediately upon rising from the holy bath. And if they had died as soon as they emerged: who will doubt that, even without works, they would rise to the life of the blessed? We feel the same way about baptized infants. And who does not know that the thief was justified by faith alone?<sup>17</sup>

Jordan concludes from this statement that although Lefèvre believes works to be important to the Christian life, he still denies that works have any part in justification or that a man can be saved by his works.<sup>18</sup>

There are problems here with Jordan's analysis. The first is that in each case, Lefèvre is referring to those who have had no chance to do good works either because of age or imminent death. One could just as easily conclude that Lefèvre simply views faith as more important for justification than good works, not that good works are not also necessary for those who have the opportunity to perform them.<sup>19</sup> God would not unjustly require good works from those who are unable to meet such a requirement.<sup>20</sup>

The second problem is less obvious. To say that works play a part in justification and to say that one is saved by his works are two different things. Pure Pelagianism was condemned soundly by the Church at the Council of Orange in 529. The grace of God remained the primary agent in man's salvation, yet man was under obligation to perform, by the assistance of Christ, the good works necessary to purify the soul and be made righteous.<sup>21</sup> It is possible for Lefèvre to deny that human works save and yet to include them in the process of man's justification.

Finally, Jordan sums up Lefèvre's position on justification by saying that the key to its understanding lies in Lefèvre's assertion that it is God who justifies, faith and works are only a preparation.<sup>22</sup> Man is saved by God's grace alone, faith, and works are the result of God's action.<sup>23</sup> Jordan views Lefèvre's ideas as somewhat different from "the commonly held position of his contemporaries,"<sup>24</sup> and attributes this to Lefèvre's intention to allow the Scriptures to speak rather than to insist that they conform to current interpretations and ideas.<sup>25</sup> Although Jordan points to some differences between Lefèvre's position and that of contemporary theologians, he nevertheless remains certain that Lefèvre was no Protestant but a loyal Catholic who sought to make the teachings of the Scriptures a more important part of the life and the doctrine of the Church.<sup>26</sup>

An opposite position is taken by Henry Heller who believes that between 1523 and 1525, during Lefèvre's residence at Meaux, there was a "growing radicalism" due to the influx of reform ideas from Germany and Switzerland. While Lefèvre's thought was not totally transformed into

the Lutheran or Zwinglian position, under the impact of these new currents of thought Lefèvre's later works included much significant criticism of contemporary Catholic piety.<sup>27</sup> Like Jordan, Heller stresses Lefèvre's emphasis upon the Scriptures as the basis both of doctrine and of the individual life of faith,<sup>28</sup> but he concludes that this scriptural centrality led Lefèvre to question seriously the traditional Catholic teaching on the sacraments, images, prayers to the saints, and other matters.<sup>29</sup> Heller, however, finds the seeds of all these developments in Lefèvre's thought in his earlier works and ideas, especially in his inward spirituality and in his mystical sense of the transcendence and omnipresence of God.<sup>30</sup>

Heller identifies a noticeable change in tone and emphasis from the first Latin Scriptural commentaries to the Epistres et evangiles and the Catholic Commentaries, a switch from a subjective, spiritual and emotional tone to a dogmatic and didactic effort which sought to clarify doctrinal positions. He indicates that the Epistres et evangiles must be used with more caution than the Catholic Commentaries, since they were written by several men, but he still thinks that in all, there is a similarity of approach and of ideas in the two works.<sup>31</sup> Lutheran concepts, for instance, such as justification by faith, Christian liberty, and the priesthood of all believers appear.<sup>32</sup>

Heller believes that Lefèvre's understanding of grace and faith as it appeared in his earlier commentaries was carried over into the Catholic Commentaries. This concept of faith involves credulitas or intellectual assent, and fiducia, trust and confidence in God. Faith is a gift from God and a prominent feature in the relationship between God



and man.<sup>33</sup> Yet Lefèvre's concept of faith was colored by Dionysian mysticism,<sup>34</sup> and Lefèvre included faith in the three stages of the contemplative life -- "purification, illumination, perfection."<sup>35</sup> Lefèvre was thus prevented from viewing faith as the sole requirement for justification.<sup>36</sup> Faith basically involved a "growing receptivity to grace" which was infused into man and resulted in his justification. Heller concludes that Lefèvre believed in justification by grace rather than by faith.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, while both Jordan and Heller find that Lefèvre did make at least some important changes in traditional doctrine or practice in his works, E. Amann, the author of the article on Lefèvre in the Dictionnaire de théologie catholique does not agree. To begin, he does not find any differences between Lefèvre's Catholic Commentaries and his former Latin commentaries as did Heller. All have the same method, inspiration, and result.<sup>38</sup> Also, after quoting several passages from the Catholic Commentaries, which Heller had seen to be controversial, Amann concludes that all are susceptible to orthodox interpretation.<sup>39</sup> Amann does admit that Lefèvre criticized abuses surrounding the cult of the saints but states that Lefèvre did not oppose prayers to them, he only attacked the belief that their merits could be applied to the petitioner.<sup>40</sup>

Amann thus takes a defensive position regarding Lefèvre, desiring to show that he was a loyal Roman Catholic. Amann does not discuss a doctrine of faith in Lefèvre's writings, but he does say that Lefèvre taught justification by faith in his 1512 Romans commentary, several years before Luther, in order to point out that salvation is not by



human efforts but by the work of Christ. But Lefèvre was not willing to separate faith from the works of charity which complete it. Amann seeks to clarify Lefèvre's position by saying that in his thought, neither faith nor works justify. They only purify and prepare the way for justification, which is the action of God.<sup>41</sup> Virtually all the quotations of Lefèvre used by Amann are drawn not from the Catholic Commentaries but from the earlier Latin commentaries on the Gospels and the Pauline epistles.

#### Justification in the Commentary on James

By far the most systematic and doctrinal treatment of original sin, faith, works and justification in the Catholic Commentaries appears in the first book, the commentary on James. In Lefèvre's commentary on James, he introduces nearly all the important uses of those terms which recur throughout the rest of the work, in particular: original as opposed to actual sin, faith as both belief and trust, faith in relation to justification and forgiveness, and faith in the context of the other two theological virtues, charity and hope. In all the Catholic Commentaries Lefèvre especially stresses the interconnection between faith and charity, that is, between faith and love toward God as well as works of Christian love directed toward one's neighbor.

The book of James thus provides an excellent basis for understanding Lefèvre's view of faith and of justification. It could also serve as an interesting point of comparison between the later Lefèvre and the later Luther because of Luther's well-known dislike for the book of James and his doubts about its canonicity and apostolic authority.<sup>42</sup>

Within the Catholic Commentaries, Lefèvre employs the word "faith" in a number of different ways and in a variety of contexts, and it is difficult at times to pin down an exact meaning. One obvious fact about Lefèvre's James commentary, however, if it is compared to his earlier works, is the new focus upon the idea of faith in all its meanings. He seems concerned to determine once and for all the exact meaning of the word and its true purpose in the life of the Christian.

Lefèvre, as Heller has also noted, makes the distinction between faith as belief and faith as trust already in his comments on the first chapter of James.<sup>43</sup> James had indicated that Christians should make petitions to God in faith and without hesitation.<sup>44</sup> By faith, Lefèvre understands James to mean here a trust (fiducia), the sort of trust possessed by the woman who was healed upon touching Jesus' garment. The Lord had said to her "your faith has made you well."<sup>45</sup> Like this woman, whether one wishes to be cured of physical or of spiritual disease, it is necessary to ask by "faith and perfect trust in Christ who heals all our weaknesses." Such a request, made in faith and trust, is effective even for those who are chained by sin for it obtains also the forgiveness of those sins.<sup>46</sup> Faith as trust must be in God's ability to come to our aid and in God's goodness; it must not rely to any degree upon our own sufficiency.<sup>47</sup>

Lefèvre refers to trusting faith as both a living faith<sup>48</sup> and as a perfect faith.<sup>49</sup> There is also a faith which is simply belief (credulitas), but Lefèvre makes it clear that this sort of faith, while a necessary part of perfect faith and included in it, is incomplete and imperfect.<sup>50</sup> Lefèvre identifies belief as acceptance of the truths

contained in the Scriptures and the outward and spoken acknowledgment of this truth in the presence of others. He agrees with James that faith understood in this way is good but is of no ultimate value in God's eyes for the demons likewise believe in the statements of Scripture and tremble.<sup>51</sup>

In order to be complete, trust in God must be added to belief, and this trust is a sign of perfect and full faith in God, which is itself a gift of God given by his Spirit.<sup>52</sup> Also, it is only faith expressed as total trust in God which is able to withstand testing and temptation, for it is like an anchor firmly fixed in the heavens, and is able to look upon the internal and the invisible rather than upon the outward problems which threaten to drown all hope.<sup>53</sup> A trusting and perfect faith in God is therefore necessary for obtaining requests from God and for enduring trials. But these things apply to the one who is already a Christian and who might be expected to have such a faith.

Lefèvre has thus defined the relationship between faith and certain aspects of the Christian life, but the question concerning the connection between fault and justification is still unanswered. It is this question which, in light of the Reformation, is now of prime concern in any discussion of Christian thought; for it was only within the context of the reform movements of the sixteenth century that faith, understood as Lefèvre here describes it and its relationship to justification became the focal point of doctrinal disputes.<sup>54</sup>

Justification is necessary because of man's sin. If he were not sinful he would be able to appear before God as righteous by virtue of his own powers and would not need to be made or declared righteous by

some other means. There are two kinds of men according to Lefèvre, the spiritual and the carnal. In the spiritual man the Spirit of God and grace reign; but the carnal man is controlled by sin and the flesh. There is no situation between these two. The same man cannot do both good and evil or be both spiritual and carnal at the same time<sup>55</sup> any more than the same tree could bring forth good and bad fruit.<sup>56</sup> It is this carnal man under the dominance of sin who is in need of being made righteous. Lefèvre evidently has not changed his opinion on this issue from that held in 1512. Man is not simul iustus et peccator.

Likewise there is little change to be found in the Catholic Commentaries in Lefèvre's concept of original sin; however, there does seem to be more stress on the evil consequences of the defect received from Adam and, as Heller has shown, a greater desire to define the issue theologically. Lefèvre uses the language of John's Gospel to speak of the carnal and the spiritual or Christian man in terms of the first or second birth.

Along with the first birth, the natural birth into the world common to all, man inherits from Adam the stain of concupiscence,<sup>57</sup> a tendency toward desires of the flesh and of the world which is the origin of all sin.<sup>58</sup> It is a tinderbox of sin, inborn, and is present always except in someone whom God has freed.<sup>59</sup> This inborn concupiscence is called original sin.<sup>60</sup> In his description of a man who has experienced only the first birth, Lefèvre uses strong language to describe his plight when viewed from the perspective of the new man he can become in Christ. He is "flesh, sin, deprived of faith, a son of anger, the old man doomed to death and hell, impotent to every good work."<sup>61</sup> Lefèvre continues to

believe in free will<sup>62</sup> but the implication is clearly that all those born of Adam will sin; original sin or concupiscence will not remain dormant. Instead, concupiscence conceives and brings forth fruit in action. This action, resulting from original sin is actual sin. Actual sin generally produces an external work but this is really of no practical importance. For Lefèvre, it is the will which is crucial in an act of sin, for sin is consummated and becomes actual as soon as the will consents to concupiscence whether or not an external work is present. Consent, then, produces the reign of sin in the heart;<sup>63</sup> and this is the condition of one who has not experienced the second birth.

The tinderbox of concupiscence may be suppressed and killed, but it is strong and may be completely subdued only by the Spirit of God.<sup>64</sup> As we have seen, the carnal man lacks the Spirit and therefore the means to control his own sinful inclinations. While Lefèvre retains the belief that original sin, concupiscence, need not result in actual sin if the will opposes it, yet he certainly focuses upon the inability of man, unaided by the Spirit to remain free from sin. His doctrine of original sin is still not Augustinian but his picture of man's sin is much more graphic here than in 1512.

Lefèvre makes an interesting distinction between concupiscence which is aroused because of temptation and the type of concupiscence which produces its own enticement to sin. The first variety was present in Eve who, created pure, showed no desire for the forbidden fruit until Satan tempted her by pointing out not only the beauty and desirability of the fruit in itself but also by insinuating the thought that the fruit would render those who ate of it wise as God, knowing good and



evil. So by temptation Satan aroused concupiscence in Eve.<sup>65</sup> Judas Iscariot, on the other hand, who had inherited concupiscence and was already possessed by greed needed only the temptation of the Devil to encourage his greed and cause him to fall into actual sin by betraying his own Lord.<sup>66</sup>

Elsewhere in his Catholic Commentaries Lefèvre explicitly identifies actual sin with a transgression of the divine law.<sup>67</sup> Although this is not mentioned here with regard to concupiscence, it is implied by his treatment of Eve whose desire led her to break the express command of God. And in his comments on the second chapter of James which deals specifically with justification, Lefèvre emphasizes the importance of fulfilling God's law. He reiterates James' point that whoever offends in one commandment has offended in all.<sup>68</sup> Lefèvre adds that after this one sin against the law, even a perfect keeping of all the other commandments will not merit salvation.<sup>69</sup> When inborn concupiscence conceives sin by the consent of the will and produces an offense against the divine law, the result, as James had said, is death,<sup>70</sup> a situation in which man is unable to produce good works because he is controlled by the flesh and sin.<sup>71</sup> He is in need of justification.

As in 1512, Lefèvre is still saying that faith and works cooperate in justification,<sup>72</sup> yet now they are almost inseparably joined. Where one appears, the other is also present. Even so, it is generally true that faith appears as the prerequisite for good works; without it they cannot be done. Lefèvre states that it is impossible for someone to have good works if he has no faith because they must proceed from it. In fact, without faith, any works which are performed are not only not

good, they are sin. "Everything which is not of faith is sin."<sup>73</sup> Also, "if you do not have faith you are an unfaithful and evil tree. . . . the evil tree is not able to bring forth good fruits." To further clarify this point Lefèvre poses the question of the goodness of the humanly virtuous works prescribed by various philosophers which are not done through faith. Even if such works appear to be good, he says, in reality they are not good at all.<sup>74</sup> As a consequence of this new emphasis upon faith as a requirement for good works, Lefèvre either has ceased to believe that such works prepare for justification or he has decided that such a possibility is unimportant for he makes no statement about any preparation for justification.

The connection of faith and works to justification is outlined most completely in Lefèvre's commentary on the second chapter of James. Besides Rahab and Abraham, whom James uses to illustrate justification, Lefèvre also included in his arguments the penitent thief on the cross. In the case of the thief, Lefèvre actually seems to present faith itself as a good work. He interprets the thief's words, "Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom,"<sup>75</sup> as a plea for mercy. Lefèvre calls this plea a work of faith which earned for the thief the promise of the eternal kingdom.<sup>76</sup> There is no elaboration of the term opus fidei so that it is not possible to know whether or not Lefèvre did in fact view faith, at least in some cases, as a good work as did Luther.<sup>77</sup> Luther, of course, saw faith as a good work of God and not of man.

Even if Lefèvre does not make the comparison himself, his remarks about the thief may serve as an effective illustration of faith as trust for they fit all his criteria for trust: a petition made to God for

aid, apparently made with confidence in his goodness and willingness to answer. And even though the thief was in a state of sin when he made his request, he obtained also the forgiveness of sins as a consequence of his trusting faith; Jesus promised him Paradise.

The thief was justified because of his faith alone for he was in fact already in the process of dying. Rahab and Abraham, however were justified by means of faith and works of faith. Rahab had believed that the God of the Hebrews would shortly deliver her city into their hands; and having heard of the reputed deeds of their God she protected Joshua's spies. In her conversation with the two spies she displayed her faith for she said "the Lord your God is himself the God of the heavens above and of the earth beneath."<sup>78</sup> But Rahab had not only faith<sup>79</sup> but works of faith. She saved the two men from discovery, thus aiding the Hebrews in their conquest of the city.<sup>80</sup>

Like Rahab, Abraham had first a faith in God which enabled him to be justified, a living and not a dead faith which produced good works. Abraham had the sort of faith which includes the fear and love of God. His love for God was great enough to make him willing to sacrifice his only son, Issac, at God's command.<sup>81</sup>

Lefèvre concluded that all three, the thief, Rahab, and Abraham were justified by a fruitful faith whose works declared it to be truly living.<sup>82</sup> They provide an example for all the faithful who should thus work through love as did Abraham so that their faith might be complete.

And the one in whom such faith is present is necessarily righteous, both righteous and justified, faith of this kind having been judged by God as righteousness, that is, having been justified by God. Otherwise, not yet justified, the

following work would not be good. Indeed without faith, Abraham would not have worked: but faith cooperated with his works through love toward God. Thus the faith of all the faithful ought to cooperate through love, so that it might be living, perfect, and complete.<sup>83</sup>

Lefèvre is obviously hesitant to make the bold statement that one is justified by faith alone. Nevertheless, faith is certainly the most important factor in the sinner's justification. Works may be necessary,<sup>84</sup> but they are present as good works only as the fruit of a living faith and as evidences of it. The relationship between faith and the forgiveness of sins is summarized in Lefèvre's comments on James, chapter five. In the context of exhorting Christians to confess their sins to God, he reminds them that both the faithful and the unfaithful fall into sin. Lefèvre quotes I John 1:8-10, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." But there is one important distinction between the faithful and unfaithful. Sins are imputed to the unfaithful, whereas they are not imputed to the faithful who are "ruled by faith and the Spirit."<sup>85</sup> By the time he wrote his commentary on James, Lefèvre's ideas on the relationship of faith and the connection of these two to justification have come even closer than in 1512 to those of Luther in his Romans lectures.<sup>86</sup>

It is interesting that although Lefèvre discusses both Rahab and Abraham, his comments on James, chapter two make no reference to James' assertion that these two people were justified by their works; and there is no attempt to reconcile James and Paul as there had been in the 1512 Romans commentary.<sup>87</sup> Lefèvre insists upon the requirement of good works in the life of the Christian, but he appears to prefer to include them here under the broad heading of living faith, fruitful faith, or

even works of faith rather than make a sharp distinction between faith and works.

Lefèvre makes no clear or well-defined statement regarding the origin of faith. In two places he does refer to faith as a gift. He says, for example, that it is impossible for anyone voluntarily to choose to emulate Christ by embracing the poverty and misery of the world unless he has obtained the gift of faith.<sup>88</sup> And on one other occasion Lefèvre calls faith a spiritual gift infused by the Spirit of God.<sup>89</sup> Lefèvre does not say whether it is possible to prepare for this gift, whether it is given only to those who actively seek it, or may be given at times solely on God's initiative.

Lefèvre also indicates that faith combines with the Word of God to save. Lefèvre's characteristic and usually prevalent theme of the power and efficacy of the Word of God, seen either as Scripture or as the preached Word of the Gospel, is subdued in the James commentary. There are, however, several references to the evangelical Word and its connection to faith. Faith is of primary importance because it alone can hear the word of God, "the treasure house of evangelical doctrine."<sup>90</sup> Faith is needed to firmly implant the Gospel in the minds of men and make that Word able to save.<sup>91</sup> No one is purified from sin except by the grace of Christ "through the righteousness of faith, by embracing purely and sincerely the doctrine of the Gospel."<sup>92</sup>

One cannot unlock the door to the Scriptures, understand them, and take advantage of the promises of God presented there without faith. Faith enables the Word of God to be a saving Word and enables sorrow for sin to result in true repentance and forgiveness. The faith of Christ



is the key to every good and is a gift which all sinners should strive to obtain.<sup>93</sup>

The final use of faith in Lefèvre's James commentary occurs within the context of the close relationship which must exist among the three virtues of faith, charity, and hope.<sup>94</sup> St. Paul's conclusion in I Corinthians 13:13 is obviously the model for Lefèvre's statements. Christian charity, expressed as love toward God, like that of Abraham, and as good works of love toward one's neighbor, as in Rahab's case, is the highest of the three virtues. Without it, faith, hope, patience or any other quality is in vain. Without charity one still does not have the perfect work expressed in the law of grace. There is something missing. One is not yet whole, perfect and complete.<sup>95</sup> Only faith working through charity can fulfill the law of Christ which requires love.<sup>96</sup> This is the reason that faith and works are both instrumental in man's justification.

Lefèvre explicitly states that faith and patience are insufficient for attaining the crown of immortality. The charity and love of God must be present. The crown is promised not to those with faith but to those who love God. Faith, patience, and hope are great gifts, but the greatest virtue is charity "which perfects and consummates all."<sup>97</sup> Charity is the opposite of the pride which rules in the hearts of the worldly. Faith and charity are the true marks of the Christian.<sup>98</sup>

Several facets of faith, hope and charity are drawn together by Lefèvre in James, Chapter one. The context is the trusting faith, already mentioned,<sup>99</sup> which is able to endure testing.

Which (faith), if it is present, is firm and able, drawing with itself, as a firm anchor fixed in the heavens, hope and

total trust in God. Patience regards external and visible things, hope and trust, the internal and invisible. But yet this beautiful patience, having with it the assent of faith and a hope adhering to God in total trust, ought to be less sluggish and more swift, and join to itself the perfect work, which is the work of divine charity and which is portrayed in the Scriptures, the fulfillment of the divine will.<sup>100</sup>

The specific phrase, fides charitate formata is not to be found in Lefèvre's Catholic Commentaries,<sup>101</sup> yet it expresses precisely Lefèvre's viewpoint. Lefèvre is always reluctant to separate any virtue such as faith or charity, or any aspect of a virtue such as believing or trusting faith and declare it to be the one important factor in man's relationship to God. Belief is necessary but it must be completed by trust. Trusting faith is essential but it too cannot stand alone. It must be perfected by charity which has its hope in God and issues forth in loving works when there is an occasion that calls for them.<sup>102</sup> Faith is then viva, perfecta, and consummata.<sup>103</sup>

Are there then any changes in Lefèvre's approach to the issue of justification between 1512 and 1527? Is there any indication that the other major continental reform movements have affected his theological outlook? The answer to both questions appears to be "yes." It is well known that Luther and Zwingli stressed the evil effects of original sin in order to magnify the importance of the grace of God and of faith in man's justification. Lefèvre certainly does not adopt Luther's Augustinian understanding of original sin, but there is in his 1527 work a heightened awareness of the debilitating effects of original sin as it is inherited from Adam. Perhaps because of this and because of his new concern with the importance of faith, Lefèvre also does not continue to speak of a preparation for justification by means of good works. Any

works not done from faith are useless, as is the morality prescribed by the philosophers. Faith becomes the focal point for Lefèvre in 1527 and is seen as the cornerstone of man's justification and of the Christian life.

Even so, Lefèvre is still not a Protestant. One could say that Lefèvre taught justification by faith only so long as it is understood that for him, faith necessarily includes works of faith and charity, works which complete and perfect faith. If there are elements of Lefèvre's thought which could have been considered suspicious by contemporary theologians, they are not to be found in his use of faith as it relates to belief, trust, justification and charity. He spoke of justification in language which, as Amann has said, was less theologically precise than that of the scholastics but to which no Catholic could object.<sup>104</sup>

Finally, no issue remains to divide Lefèvre from the Protestant camp so much as his continued rejection of justification as simul iustus et peccator. Justification is not being declared righteous for the sake of faith or even of faith and works, it is actually being righteous. While Lefèvre admits that sin still occurs in the life of the justified Christian because of the continued presence of concupiscence and the old man, it should be extremely rare for the remaining traces of this inherited defect to produce any actual sin whether in thought or outward act. Man is either a good and spiritual tree producing faith and works of faith, or a bad and evil tree producing sins and works of the flesh.

Therefore you will say: The spiritual man does not sin. You say truly, he is not able to sin because of the newness of his creation, as John says: We know that everyone who is born of God does not sin, but the birth of God saves him, and the evil

one does not touch him. But if he sins at any time, this is because of the infirmity of the old Adam. Because if the old Adam and the flesh rule, the new man and the Spirit do not remain. For they are not able to reign at the same time. But it is necessary for the good tree to be ruled and governed by the Spirit.<sup>105</sup>

The Christian Life:

A Journey Toward Perfection

Through Grace and the Imitation of Christ

Lefèvre's commentary on the book of James presents the most thorough discussion of justification in the Catholic Commentaries, but there are some important themes which do not appear in James and which occupy a significant portion of Lefèvre's effort and time. He says nothing in the remainder of the commentaries to contradict what appears in James; it is a matter of a difference of emphasis, a switch from the theological issue of justification to the ways in which a Christian may be expected to live and fulfill the righteousness of Christ daily. Lefèvre assumes that there are various stages of the Christian life ranging from those only beginning to live in the faith to the very perfect. Such a perfection is achieved by imitating Christ, by completely conforming oneself to the image of the divine found in the incarnate Word.

Lefèvre continues to expect that those who are reborn in Christ will mortify the desires or concupiscence remaining in them so that they will not sin in act, even if they cannot avoid the continued presence of original sin.<sup>106</sup> Yet avoiding the sins and lusts of the flesh is not sufficient. In addition the Christian must actively fulfill the law of God through works of faith and charity by which the soul is purged from the effects of sin.<sup>107</sup>

The primacy of faith in justification is always stressed but Lefèvre appears to regard justification itself as a process initiated by faith which continues throughout life, aided by faith, hope, and charity toward God and neighbor. Christ was righteous because he did all that the Father commanded him.

Righteousness therefore is to do that which he commands us to do in the Gospel, which no one does unless one who is born of God; for such a one alone has received the spirit of faith through whom he works righteousness and works of faith, through which he is justified.<sup>108</sup>

The righteousness which justifies thus begins with faith in Christ and includes as well the keeping of the precepts of the Gospel. Over and over Lefèvre defines righteousness as fulfilling the divine commands or the will of God.<sup>109</sup> But this righteousness cannot be only an outward observance for hypocrites too can have external works. It must also include and stem from an internal observance, an observance in which heart, soul and mind are united in the desire to love and please God.<sup>110</sup> Lefèvre calls the life of the Christian a life of light, a habitus or inclination to the good, a "living energy" enabling those who possess it always to do the will of the Father.<sup>111</sup>

Most frequently, Lefèvre speaks of the Christian life as an imitation of the life and example of Christ,<sup>112</sup> who as Son of God, was himself the image of the Father; and those who are born of God and imitate Christ by faith and charity will have in themselves the image of him whom they imitate.<sup>113</sup> By his incarnation, Christ provided the means of eternal life<sup>114</sup> and became the model all that the life of man could be. Christ "acquired us by his blood, He who is himself God and Son of God, and wishes us to be like the angels, indeed more conformed to and like



himself who is God."<sup>115</sup> Lefèvre says that the imitation of Christ is the very reason that he calls people to faith. His suffering provides redemption and an example of "holy patience."<sup>116</sup> Even if Christians are called upon to suffer as Christ did for the sake of the Gospel, they should not let this prevent them from being imitators of Christ, for by such trials the future beatitude and the reward of the soul in heaven are increased.<sup>117</sup> As long as his grace permits, it is necessary to live in this world by imitating the example of Christ, purifying the self and admitting no sin.<sup>118</sup>

Just as it is possible to identify the faithful who do all their works in imitation of Christ, and whose whole life is an imitation of the truth which saves, so it is possible to recognize those who are of the Devil by their works.<sup>119</sup> God is good in himself and has no need of imitation. The Devil likewise imitated no one but turned his will toward evil on his own initiative. Their followers are known by the one whom they choose to copy.<sup>120</sup>

In an important passage of his commentary on the third chapter of I John, Lefèvre uses the Platonic terminology of archetype and copy to describe the nature of Christ's righteousness and righteousness by imitation. Christ's righteousness is the true righteousness, the archetype or exemplar, and, as such, is the righteousness which saves, "For the truth saves, not the copy." Nevertheless, the way in which one makes the righteousness of Christ his own is a twofold process beginning with faith in Christ and ending with a keeping of God's commands by faith through charity. The Christian makes the archetype his own by imitating in faith, thereby performing righteousness and

becoming a son of God by imitation of the only eternal Son of God. It is true that this righteousness by imitation can never hope to equal the righteousness of Christ himself as a copy never equals the original; but righteousness by imitation is pleasing to God and is accepted by him.<sup>121</sup>

Lefèvre perceives three stages of the spiritual life as progress is made toward greater conformity to Christ. The inexperienced are those who are only beginning to imitate Christ in faith and charity. There are also those who are advancing and have obtained a measure of success. Finally, a few manage to achieve the high goal of perfection in the faith.<sup>122</sup> Lefèvre examines each of these spiritual positions in terms of its understanding of Scripture, an issue which always concerned him as a Biblical scholar, and to determine the nature of the fear of God which characterizes them.

Those Christians who are beginning to live a spiritual life simply believe without any full understanding of Scripture. They accept the basic tenets of the Gospels as they are instructed. As a rule, their attitude to God embraces either a fear of punishment or a fear of his immense power. After some advance toward perfection has been gained there appears also some insight into the Bible but not much above that of the average man. The second stage of growth eliminates the fear of punishment and focuses upon a fear of offending God because of who he is and because it is an unworthy act to offend such goodness and majesty. The perfect, however, are able to show to God the fear of the angels, a fear expressed in pure reverence and veneration; and these possess a clear and spiritual understanding of Scripture for they are guided completely by the Spirit of God who inspired the sacred writers.<sup>123</sup>

The Spirit uses each of these three levels to gradually purify the Christian. The first stage represents a purging from sin; the second brings illumination; and the third and highest stage includes the attainment of perfection and pure reverence toward God.<sup>124</sup> While the fear of offending God is a good thing it is obviously imperfect and Christ is imitated best by reverence, perfect prudence, and wisdom, qualities which he himself possessed. "And where the fear of perfect imitation is present, it excluded imperfect fear as manly age excludes tender adolescence."<sup>125</sup>

Lefèvre laments the fact that there are so few who are even attempting to embark on this spiritual pilgrimage and that as a result there are fewer still who finally attain perfection. He identifies this lack as a consequence of an inability to hear the Word proclaimed. "Our age," he said, "is in need, not only of exhortation but especially of teaching and of most urgently fulfilling the word of the Lord, 'Preach the Gospel to every creature.'"<sup>126</sup>

If justification is at least partially attributed to an active imitating of Christ and to the performance of works of charity, is it not then necessary to say that a man and his will and power to act are in some measure responsible for his salvation? So that no one will come to this conclusion, Lefèvre introduces the theme of God's election, pointing always to the priority of God's action in calling a man and empowering him to act according to the divine will. The election of God is a topic seldom found in the James commentary, but is often introduced in the rest of the Catholic Commentaries, always in order to eliminate a reliance upon human efforts and to encourage a complete trust in God's

grace. Jesus said "You did not choose me, I chose you."<sup>127</sup> He said this

so that nothing in divine perfection might be attributed to our will, but so that the infinitely good will of God and divine election might be glorified in all, which is the cause of all good, not a created will.<sup>128</sup>

Referring to John's statement that those who are of God can overcome the spirit of the Antichrist, Lefèvre says that whoever conquers this spirit does so not on his own but because he is born of God; and "this is the gift and election of God."<sup>129</sup>

It is the election and drawing power of God which are primary in salvation. Still, Lefèvre believes in free will, even if it is operative only as resistance or assent to the action of God. It is possible to willfully keep one's eyes closed to the light and thereby remain in darkness.<sup>130</sup> On other occasions Lefèvre suggests that resistance or obedience to the drawing of God are both possible but God will not refuse salvation to those who are not resisting and who seek to live a life of purity in accordance with the Gospel.<sup>131</sup>

Lefèvre's major concern in introducing the concept of God's election is one which may be found in all his works. He wishes to give all the glory for man's salvation to God alone. The imitation of Christ and the performance of works of charity have their place in justification but they are made possible only by God's grace working through an obedient servant. Without his grace, neither would be to any extent attainable. It is the same with resistance to the inborn concupiscence present in all men. The power not to sin is a divine gift resulting from the second birth. Man on his own would never be able to overcome his own sinful inclinations.<sup>132</sup> Lefèvre explains that the inheritance of eternal life is given only through the Father and the Spirit.

Through the Father who of his own will chose them in foreknowledge and by an eternal determining that they might know that they had come to Christ not of their own will nor their own knowledge, to whom no one comes unless the Father draw him, even if their own will is obedient to the drawing. Through the Holy Spirit who sanctified them, that they might not judge their sanctification to have come to them by works of the law.<sup>133</sup>

Lefèvre seems to be striving, as a Roman Catholic, to effect a balance in his thought between human will and responsibility and the insistence upon the priority of God's action and grace as he has found it in his own study of Paul and in the works of other continental reformers such as Luther or Zwingli. This can be seen in his use of divine election as well as in the increased role of faith and the decreased role of works in the Catholic Commentaries generally.

The true end of the Christian life, as Lefèvre envisions it, is an existence approaching that of the angels, a life expressed by perfect purity and reverence toward God. Human effort and will, essential as these are, cannot bring a man to this final goal. It is reached only with the assistance of God's grace and favor. Through the gift of grace and charity, infused from above,<sup>134</sup> the Christian is endowed with the strength to live a life without actual sin. He is able to love God and serve his neighbor through works of faith, and in all things to imitate Christ, who is both savior and example.



## CHAPTER III

### THE EPISTRES ET EVANGILES POUR LES CINQUANTE ET DEUX DIMENCHES DE L'AN (1525): "LUTHERANISM" AND THE PERSECUTION OF THE SORBONNE

Sometime in late October or early November of 1525, three of the Meaux reformers, Jacques Lefèvre, Michel d'Arande, and Gérard Roussel, were forced to flee France and seek refuge in the city of Strasbourg. We know little of Lefèvre's stay in this city other than the fact that while there he lived with the reformer Wolfgang Capito.<sup>1</sup> This event marked a victory for the theological faculty of the Sorbonne which had persistently watched and condemned various statements and viewpoints of the Meaux group since 1520 when they were first asked to oppose "Lutheranism" and guard against its entry into France.<sup>2</sup> The Epistres et evangiles pour les cinquante et deux dimenches de l'an had been published anonymously earlier in the year due to these threats of persecution and on November 6, the Sorbonne met and labeled as heretical forty-eight of its propositions.<sup>3</sup>

The Sorbonne had already forbidden the translation of any biblical texts into French in August of 1523.<sup>4</sup> Apparently Lefèvre had determined to disregard their wishes for in November of the same year he openly published his translation of the New Testament in French and began work on a translation of the Old Testament as well. It is probable that he felt able to pursue these goals without fear because he had for some time

enjoyed the patronage and protection of the French king, Francis I. Francis himself favored the development of humanism in France and was unwilling to support any attacks upon his most famous scholar. The king's sister, Marguerite d'Angoulême, was an advocate of ecclesiastical reform and became a close friend of Briçonnet from whom she often sought spiritual counsel and advice.<sup>5</sup> Also since Lefèvre had left Paris for Meaux, he was at least removed to a comparatively safe distance from the men who opposed him.

This immediate protection by the king, however, was lost temporarily from 1524-1525. When Francis left France in the fall of 1524 to fight in Italy, his mother, Louise of Savoy, a woman sympathetic to the Sorbonne and its goals, was left as regent. At the same time there was an agreement between the Sorbonne and the Parlement to mutually combat heresy. This alliance won papal approval and was henceforth able to act in secret and to call on the secular government to execute its policies.<sup>6</sup> On February 24, 1525 Francis was defeated at Pavia and taken prisoner by Charles V. Thereafter the Sorbonne was free to attempt a full-scale extermination of the reform effort. Briçonnet as well as Lefèvre, Caroli, Mazurier, Roussel, Mangin, and Prevost were accused of heresy. Caroli, Roussel and Prevost were ordered arrested wherever found. Lefèvre was summoned to appear in person.<sup>7</sup>

Among the charges, the men were accused of making the entire Christian faith to consist only of the Gospels while condemning all human and ecclesiastical traditions, even those of St. Paul. They had rejected obligatory observance of Lenten fasting and had perverted the doctrine of the consecration of the body and blood of Christ; and they

had likewise called into question the validity of prayers to the saints and to the Virgin Mary.<sup>8</sup> Although Francis wrote from prison to the Sorbonne on November 12 asking them to withdraw the charges against Lefèvre, Roussel and Caroli, the reformers still felt that remaining in Strasbourg was the only guarantee of safety.

Lefèvre had first become suspect when he had agreed in 1514 to defend Johannes Reuchlin before the theological faculty of the Sorbonne. Reuchlin, a Hebrew scholar, wished only to see Hebrew studies established at European universities but he was condemned nevertheless and Lefèvre's defense only served to make the faculty suspicious of him also. He was carefully watched afterward.<sup>9</sup>

By 1523, the year that the Sorbonne spoke out against biblical translations, the faculty began to examine Lefèvre's works for heresy, particularly his Commentarii initiatorii in quatuor evangelia, in which four errors were found.<sup>10</sup> Also in 1523 Briçonnet was forced to sign a decree condemning Luther and reaffirming the existence of Purgatory and the desirability of prayers to the Virgin and to the saints.<sup>11</sup> Briçonnet was ordered to forbid those with Lutheran leanings from preaching at Meaux,<sup>12</sup> and thus many of the reformers whom Briçonnet had called there to preach left Meaux and the task of preparing and delivering sermons fell once more to the regular parish priests. The Epistres et evangiles was initially composed to aid these priests with their sermon preparation.<sup>13</sup> The decrees of the Sorbonne regarding biblical translation was ignored, however, and the pericopes were given in French rather than in the traditional Latin of the Vulgate.

The Epistres et evangiles consists of short homilies, in French, composed to accompany the appointed epistle and Gospel lessons for each Sunday of the Church Year. Richard Cameron compares them to Luther's Postillae published at Wittenberg in 1522, but it is unknown whether the Meaux reformers had been able to see Luther's work.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, the authorship of the homilies remains a mystery since they were published anonymously. Lefèvre's name appears on none of the four editions of the work nor on any of his translations of the Bible published after 1523. The Catholic Epistles is the only one of his later works to bear his name.<sup>15</sup>

The only direct and reliable information concerning authorship of the Epistres et evangiles is that furnished by Meaux reformer Jean Lecomte de la Croix. According to Lecomte, Lefèvre edited and corrected the homilies which were written by four of the Meaux circle including Lecomte himself.<sup>16</sup>

Guy Bedouelle and Franco Giacone believe that the evidence found in the work itself supports the fact that there is a common inspiration between Lefèvre's works and the French homilies but point out that there is no coincidence of biblical citations in the Catholic Epistles and the homilies. The homilies contain none of Lefèvre's cross-scriptural references even when commenting on the same passage.<sup>17</sup> In addition, the homilies have a significantly smaller instance of allegory than is common in some of Lefèvre's works such as the Commentary on the Four Gospels.<sup>18</sup> They conclude that Lefèvre did not actually write any of the homilies himself. Who then besides Lecomte was responsible for them? Bedouelle and Giacone reject the possibility of Guillaume Farel on

stylistic grounds. The tone in Farel's works is somber and serious whereas the homilies are more poetic, lyrical.<sup>19</sup> A more likely candidate is Gérard Roussel, a member of Lefèvre's circle, and one whose ideas come nearer even than Lecomte's to the "new faith," approaching at times some Calvinist ideas, for instance, finding the marks of the true Church in the preaching of the Word and a pure administration of the sacraments.<sup>20</sup> The final conclusion of Bedouelle and Giaccone is that it is impossible to be absolutely certain about the authorship of the homilies.

Despite this uncertainty, the Sorbonne did not hesitate to associate the Epistres et evangiles with Lefèvre when it met to discuss and condemn the work;<sup>21</sup> and because of Lecomte's statement that Lefèvre edited and corrected the homilies, even if he did not compose them, any discussion of Lefèvre's later theological position must try in some way to relate it to the rest of his work. The homilies of the Epistres et evangiles differ from Lefèvre's other commentaries by being in French rather than in Latin and were intended for the average person and not solely for the scholarly community. Still, they coincide perfectly with Lefèvre's desire to see the Gospel preached convincingly to the French people, a task he had called for in the Catholic Epistles and helped to further by his publication of the New Testament in French.<sup>22</sup> Also Lefèvre's introduction to the French translation of the four Gospels carried an urgent and evangelical tone.

The acceptable time is now; here and now is the day of salvation. And the time has now come when our Lord, Jesus Christ, sole salvation, truth and life, wishes that his Gospel be purely announced by all the world.<sup>23</sup>

Lefèvre could only have been happy to take part in producing a work



which would not only present the lessons to the people in their own language but would also provide them with a clear and evangelical exhortation on the texts. The problem to be addressed here, however, is the degree to which the views expressed in the homilies reflect those of Lefèvre as they are found in the Catholic Commentaries which were composed at roughly the same time; and if there is a difference, to determine the possible reasons for it.

Of the forty-eight propositions in the homilies condemned by the Sorbonne, seven, including the first, have to do with justification and the concept of sola fide, while twelve concern good works, the relationship of faith to works, and the idea of human merit. The rest of the propositions are concerned with the authority of the Vulgate and scriptural interpretation generally, the saints, the rites and traditions of the Church, and the value of human doctrines and knowledge. In all, the fact that only nineteen of forty-eight suspect statements even relate to the doctrine of justification suggests that the Sorbonne felt it had more to fear from the Meaux reformers in the areas of traditions, rites, and practices of the Church than in more exclusively doctrinal topics.

Thus when Henry Heller discusses the radicalism of the Meaux group, he stresses such things as the condemnation of images and prayers to the saints, and the growing emphasis on an interior faith as opposed to more external forms of religion such as the efficacy of the priesthood and the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament.<sup>24</sup> Heller believes that Lefèvre never actually embraced Luther's positions on grace and the connection between faith and works,<sup>25</sup> and that his

reform, being undogmatic, was able to find a place within the confines of contemporary ecclesiastical teaching.<sup>26</sup> Heller nevertheless calls Lefèvre's ideas heterodox,<sup>27</sup> and he makes a good case with reference to his developing views on the presence of Christ in the sacrament.<sup>28</sup>

It is still true, however, that the doctrine of justification was the central theme of the Reformation and the issue which more than any other divided the Church. Though Heller mentions justification he does not attempt to define Lefèvre's position in these later works, saying only that Lefèvre's view involved justification through grace and not faith, a statement which, properly interpreted, could be said to apply to Luther as well.<sup>29</sup>

The first condemnation of the Sorbonne against the Epistres et evangiles is directed against a statement appearing in the very first homily and concerns justification. The writer had said, "Everything is forgiven us in Christ alone, if we have firm and living faith in him."<sup>30</sup> The censure of the Sorbonne states that "This proposition which designates faith alone to be required and to suffice for the remission of sins and for justification perniciously turns the faithful from procuring their salvation through pious works and is a heresy of Luther."<sup>31</sup>

One notices immediately the inclination of the Sorbonne to link the condemned statements to Luther's influence, and this accords with their mandate to prevent the spread of Lutheran doctrines. In addition, as has been noted before, in the Catholic Epistles, Lefèvre hesitated to state that justification is the result of faith "alone."<sup>32</sup> Thus, at least in language, the homilies appear to be a bit more Protestant than

the works of Lefèvre when speaking of justification by faith. What must be done is to determine whether the homilies actually present a Lutheran view of justification or whether they are capable of being seen in a more traditional Catholic perspective. This is difficult to do because the homilies were directed to laymen who had no theological training and often no formal education at all, so there is little if any effort made by the authors to define terms and doctrines.

Justification is mentioned in twenty-three of the homilies. In almost all instances, when the term is used as more than a passing reference, it refers either to the Christian's inability to justify himself by the law and good works, or to the atoning work of Christ on behalf of mankind. An example of the first theme appears in the homily on the epistle for the first Sunday of Advent which says that it is impossible for man to be justified by works of the law.<sup>33</sup> The second use of the doctrine is introduced in the homily for the first Sunday after the Epiphany. Here it is asserted that Jesus was raised from the dead for our justification.<sup>34</sup>

The exhortations of the Epistres et evangiles follow the lessons very closely, just as Lefevre's commentaries had done. For this reason, there is no specific context which frames the discussions of justification in all or even most of the cases where it appears. Often, however, outward Pharisaic justification or righteousness by means of the law is contrasted with the inward justification of the Christian through faith in Christ, a comparison suggested by Jesus' famous story of the Pharisee and the Publican.<sup>35</sup>

If the authors of these homilies use none of Lefèvre's scriptural references, it is still clear that they have often borrowed a considerable amount of material from his commentaries. This is most obvious in the language that is used. For instance the descriptions of original sin are usually very close to those in the Catholic Epistles. The picture of the old Adam is negative but original sin generally appears as concupiscence or an inclination to sin,<sup>36</sup> and the stress is on the fact that without Christ, men have nothing of value in and of themselves.<sup>37</sup> The bride whom Christ has chosen is not desirable but "refuse, polluted, contaminated, mad, and completely full of sin, death, and hell."<sup>38</sup> There is a comparison of sin with leprosy which is from Lefèvre's 1512 Pauline commentary;<sup>39</sup> and also drawn from Lefèvre's work are references to the fact that concupiscence is incurred in the first birth.<sup>40</sup> In one instance, the homilies go further than Lefèvre and suggest a view of original sin very much in the Augustinian tradition. In a homily for Epiphany the writer asserts that there is no one of us (although by faith and the Word of Jesus Christ we are mercifully adopted to life eternal) who has not been conceived in sin and born a child of anger."<sup>41</sup> This statement exceeds anything which may be found in Lefèvre's own work.

It is established then that man is a sinner. It is further declared that he is unable to produce his own righteousness by keeping the law. In fact the law which he so zealously tries to keep becomes his accuser because his sin renders him incapable of answering completely to its demands inwardly as well as in outward actions.<sup>42</sup> Lefèvre, following Paul, had spoken of the law in its role of accuser.<sup>43</sup>

Once again, however, the language used to express this idea in the Epistres et evangiles is slightly harsher than his.

O divine immaculate law, where is the heart that before you will be found pure and clean? Certainly, thus having heard and been exposed to the truth, one commandment alone damns us all.<sup>44</sup>

The answer to this dilemma lies in the work of Christ on behalf of the sinner. Jesus appears as the one who has accomplished the law and "satisfied all for all."<sup>45</sup> He has fulfilled the promise of God to Abraham that through his seed the nations would be blessed.<sup>46</sup> Because of the corruption of human nature, Christ's first action for men was to become man. His assumption of human nature purified it even as his touch cleansed and purified men from leprosy.<sup>47</sup>

Of course the work of Christ most frequently praised is that of his sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection on the third day, drawing upon Paul's words in Romans 4:25 that Jesus was "offered for our sins and raised for our justification."<sup>48</sup> Yet there must be some way for the work of Christ to become active for man so that he is himself possessed of righteousness, consequently the idea of justification by faith, as seen in the Sorbonne's first censure, is frequently found in the homilies. Another assertion, condemned by the Sorbonne, assures the hearer that one will not receive God's grace and blessedness by means of any saint or through the law but "by faith alone and the trust that one has in Jesus Christ."<sup>49</sup> All sinners and enemies of God are justified by faith in Christ.<sup>50</sup> Good works may even be considered sinful if not done in faith for nothing is agreeable to God unless it springs from faith.<sup>51</sup>

Perhaps the most complete statement on all the benefits of faith itself occurs in the homily for the twenty-fourth Sunday after



Pentecost. The lesson is Matthew 9:18-26. Central here is the message that the leader of the synagogue and the woman with the issue of blood were required to have nothing but faith in order to receive healing by Jesus. It is the same with those who are sinful. If they have faith in Jesus it will be done for them according to their faith and they will be healed of sin.

If you have this faith that Jesus Christ has died for you, and to erase your sins, it is thus and your sins are erased. And his death is yours and the merit of his death yours. And if you believe likewise that he was raised for your justification, it is thus and his resurrection is yours and your justification, and you are truly justified by faith.<sup>52</sup>

This passage comes the closest to Luther's later position of any other found in the homilies. It approaches his belief in justification by means of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner because of his faith. It should be noted, however, that it is preceded by a warning that such faith is a living faith which works by charity. As a sun which illumines but produces no heat cannot give life, so faith which does not work by charity cannot be life-giving. Seen from this perspective, in fact, the entire homily begins to sound very much like Lefèvre's ideas in the Catholic Epistles. The sun was his favorite metaphor and the idea is certainly his. Lefèvre's influence is even more obvious when one reads further and the next sentence proclaims that faith is also required in order to properly understand the Scriptures which are hidden from us and obscure unless we are illumined by the light of faith.<sup>53</sup> It is true that one could interpret this homily several ways, but the fact that faith is defined as a faith working by charity immediately prior to the sentence on justification at least

lends itself well to the interpretation that works of charity or faith are included in those things required for justification.

There are two more important propositions regarding justification. The first is from the homily on the epistle lesson for the Monday after Pentecost. It is worth noting because of the wording which echoes a similar passage from Lefevre's Catholic Epistles. The writer states that "God wishes to extend his mercy to all and to accept all men from all nations if they have believed in him and do the works of faith by which is required for justification but a faith which is accompanied by works of faith. In the Catholic Epistles Lefèvre had said that only one born of God could do the commands of God and be righteous "for such a one alone has received the Spirit of faith through whom he works righteousness and works of faith, through which he is justified."<sup>54</sup> Finally there is one other homily which seems to indicate that the writers still perceive justification and sanctification to be one and the same thing. Commenting on the epistle for the second Sunday of Lent, the writer says that two things are required for sanctification. The first is to keep the outward vessel of the body pure of evil actions and the inward vessel of the soul free of evil desires. When he continues, however, he says that "the second thing that it is necessary to do to be justified in God" is to refrain from causing one's Christian brother or one's neighbor any grief or imposition.<sup>55</sup> The writer has switched from "sanctification" to "justification" without any indication that there is a change in meaning, implying that at least one of the authors views justification as a process of becoming righteous, a process perhaps begun by faith, although faith is not mentioned in this

homily, but a process nonetheless. Justification does not appear here, or indeed in any of the homilies, in its truly Protestant form, i.e. that because of faith the sinner possesses the righteousness of Christ and is thereby declared righteous by God, and then may begin the process of becoming righteous himself, sanctification.

The origin of justifying faith is not so commonly treated in the Epistres et evangiles as one might suppose. At times, the authors seem to suggest that it is the result of the presence of the Holy Spirit. They quote Paul in I Corinthians 12:3 saying that the name of Jesus is not able to be said in faith except by the Holy Spirit.<sup>56</sup> More specifically, in discussing the encounter of Thomas with the risen Christ, his confession of faith is seen to be not so much the work of Thomas himself as that of the "Spirit of faith who, with faith, entered into him."<sup>57</sup>

Present also is the belief that faith, like other spiritual blessings, is the gift of God's grace. The authors frequently affirm that anything of value which man has is from God's grace.<sup>58</sup> The fact that anyone is justified is not a work of nature, "but a very special gift of God given to his friends."<sup>59</sup> In reference to I Corinthians 13 faith is seen as a spiritual gift which renders one capable of being the temple of God;<sup>60</sup> and because faith is necessary for justification, there is the prayer that God will "of his grace" inspire such faith.<sup>61</sup> The idea that faith is a good work shows up from time to time, but always as a good work of God and therefore still the result of his grace. It is possible that by the time these homilies were written, Luther's Treatise on Good Works of 1520 could have become available in France and

influenced the authors although there is no clear evidence.<sup>62</sup> In any case there is certainly agreement with Luther that faith is a good work and that no other good works are possible without it.<sup>63</sup> Reference is made both to John 6:29 and to Philippians 1:6 to prove that faith is God's work.<sup>64</sup>

Such justifying faith is a powerful force and will inevitably result in the performance of other good works. Indeed the connection between faith and works is always stressed,<sup>65</sup> as is that between the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. One cannot have any one of these without the others while living in this world.<sup>66</sup> Once again the Epistres et evangiles express an idea already found in Lefèvre's later work. Interestingly, the Sorbonne condemned this notion, even though as Bedouelle and Giacone point out, in stressing the interrelatedness of faith, hope and charity, the authors find themselves plainly within the mainstream of medieval Catholic thought.<sup>67</sup>

In short, the Epistres et evangiles is a puzzling work. This is true not only because of its unknown but multiple authorship, but also because there is in it a tendency toward more radical positions on issues such as images, prayers to the saints, and certain traditional practices of the Church alongside an apparent hesitancy to abandon completely the medieval understanding of justification as a process involving works of faith and charity. This conservatism shows also in the insistence upon the necessary union between the theological virtues.

Lefèvre's influence may be clearly seen in these homilies in choice of language and allegory,<sup>68</sup> in the descriptions of original sin, and in the emphasis on faith not only for justification but for properly

reading and interpreting the Scriptures. The tone of the entire work resembles Lefèvre's other commentaries so that it is possible that he wrote some of the homilies himself as well as influencing the other authors. Lecomte's statement that Lefèvre edited and corrected the work need not rule out this possibility. Heller has shown that Lefèvre's position on the Eucharist, images, and the cult of the saints was changing toward a more Protestant perspective. This would explain the fact that he allowed the passages on these issues, condemned by the Sorbonne, to remain in the work. On the other hand, the doctrine of justification found in the homilies is surprisingly similar to that of Lefèvre in the Catholic Epistles with the exception of the use of the phrase sola fide. One could attribute this either to the input of the more Protestant authors or to the fear of the Sorbonne which might have prevented Lefèvre from using the phrase earlier in his openly published works like the Catholic Epistles. It is also true that Lefèvre addressed the preface of the Catholic Epistles to French chancellor Antoine du Prat in an attempt to gain his support for the evangelical reforms at Meaux. He would have been unlikely to include in such a work, any ideas which might in any way be construed as truly "Lutheran" or radical.

It is tempting to try to conclude from this that Lefèvre secretly espoused a Protestant view of justification but that he feared to openly publish such ideas in France. In the end, this is not an option because the Epistres et evangiles is not always as Protestant as its language may imply and the anonymous authorship prevents this work from being used as a certain source for Lefèvre's true position, even though the Sorbonne was convinced that it reflected his ideas.



In spite of the Sorbonne's animosity, Francis I, once freed from captivity, recalled Roussel and Lefèvre to France and assured them of his protection. Initially, Francis appointed Lefèvre tutor to his children at the court of Blois, but Lefevre soon left to join the court of Marguerite of Navarre at Nerac where he remained until his death in 1536.<sup>69</sup> It was during his stay here that he was visited by the young Calvin who was just on the verge of renouncing his clerical benefices and joining the Protestant cause; and at Nerac Lefèvre published at last his translation of the entire Bible into French.<sup>70</sup>

The Epistres et evangiles thus represents Lefèvre's last participation in the Meaux reform which was discontinued after 1525. It remains an important work of the French reformation for it is the epitome of the practical and evangelical reforms which Briçonnet and Lefèvre had sought to achieve. It presented the Scriptures to the people in their own language and offered them sermons, likewise in French, which contained a simple but warm presentation of the Gospel. In all of these one can discern the influence of Lefèvre.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Lefèvre's Doctrine of Justification

#### In Relation to Luther and the Council of Trent

This survey of Jacques Lefèvre's thought from 1512-1527 shows that his views concerning man's justification remained, throughout his life, firmly within the accepted traditions of the Church. His efforts to reform the Church and his Scriptural commentaries should therefore be seen as the result of his desire to purify the Church's current doctrines on the basis of Scripture and not as the threat to theological and ecclesiastical unity which Protestantism represented.

#### Lefèvre and Luther (1512-1516)

When in 1512 Lefèvre first began to explore the topic of justification in Paul's terminology and spoke of justification by faith. In Lefèvre's explanations, however, works also most often appeared as an important part of justification. Works of the law could not save, and they could not justify on their own. But it was indeed possible to perform such works as a preparation for God's grace and they could cooperate with faith to result in justification. Works of the law could be beneficial if done under grace, not to merit justification, but to prepare for it, retain it, and increase it by enabling the Christian to imitate Christ and be conformed to his image. These works would of course inevitably be present where faith is real and living.

Lefèvre envisioned justification as a continual progress. As justification increased, the remaining vestiges of sin would disappear. In any case, the justified man could no longer be considered sinful in any ultimate sense. He might sin occasionally because of remaining concupiscence, but he had the power not to sin and it was expected that he would most often serve the cause of righteousness, performing the commandments of Christ. The justified man could not be simul iustus et peccator.

The understanding of original sin which appears in Lefèvre's Romans commentary was later condemned by the Council of Trent. In 1512 Lefèvre refers to sin as a tinderbox of concupiscence which can prompt men to sin but is not sinful in itself. The sin of Adam belongs to any individual because of imitation and not because of unavoidable heredity. It was perhaps this more lenient view of original sin which allowed Lefèvre to speak of works as enabling a person to prepare for justification and the reception of grace. Lefèvre did not believe that man was totally incapable of performing good works even if he had not yet received the aid of grace.

As Martin Luther prepared his Romans lectures from 1515-1516, he made use of Lefèvre's 1512 commentary and there were a number of points on which the two men were agreed. There was a common focus upon the need for humility because pride cannot coexist with the grace of God. Human works could therefore neither justify on their own or merit God's grace; but Luther, like Lefèvre, still believed that works could prepare for justification, cooperate with faith, and enable one to make progress in justification. This continual progress was especially important for

Luther because he believed that it was very dangerous to ever assume that one had already been fully justified in this life. The failure to progress could very well signal the beginning of a decline in holiness.

Lefèvre had made the distinction between works of the law done under the law and works of the law done under grace. Luther spoke of the same kinds of works but instead called them works of the law and works of faith. For Luther, works of the law had no part in justification at all for those who performed them trusted in them for salvation. It was the works of faith which participated in justification by preparing for it or helping to retain it.

The most important point to be drawn from Luther's Romans lectures as far as this study is concerned is that Luther had not yet fully developed his evangelical understanding of justification involving the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner because of his faith. His view of justification was still a Catholic one which saw justification as a gradual process of becoming righteous. Because Lefèvre's views of the same time period were so similar to Luther's on most of the important points, it is then possible to see that in 1512 Lefèvre, too, was still a Catholic in his approach to this topic.

If Lefèvre was still essentially a Catholic in 1512 regarding justification, what can be said of him by the end of his active career in 1525-1527? As we have seen in chapter three, despite clear evidence that Lefèvre not only helped to correct the Epistres et evangiles (1525) but may also have contributed some of the homilies himself, they cannot be used as a definitive source for his ideas. There is really no way to be certain which, if any, of the homilies he might have written

because the work is completely anonymous. There is also the problem of multiple authorship. Some of the homilies which seem to reflect Lefèvre's views so clearly may have been written by a reformer greatly influenced by Lefèvre but who actually held beliefs either more conservative or more Protestant than Lefèvre's own.

#### Justification in Lefèvre's Catholic Commentaries

The Commentarii in epistolas catholicas (1527), Lefèvre's last published commentary, remains the best source for examining his final doctrine of justification from the standpoint of possible Lutheran or Zwinglian influence. Using Luther's mature interpretation of justification as a model, it is easy to see that by 1525-1527, Lefèvre has still not come to a Protestant understanding of this issue. It is true that there appears to be some blending of Protestant points of emphasis with Lefèvre's thought. In 1527 there is a new stress on the evil effects of original sin and it is no longer spoken of in terms of imitation. Faith also takes on a more important role in the process of justification and in the Christian life generally. Works do not serve as a means of preparation for justification and are not considered to be good unless they stem from faith. This is true even of the moral works recommended by the best of the ancient philosophers.

Considering all of these things, Lefèvre still continues to reject most of the major Protestant concepts related to justification, in particular, simul iustus et peccator. Justification is being and becoming righteous oneself. There is no use of terminology to specifically suggest Luther's notion of the imputation of Christ's



righteousness as the sole basis for justification, even while a person remains in his sinful state.

Justification for Lefèvre is a process of becoming righteous, that is, of becoming capable of fulfilling the commands of Christ spontaneously out of love for God and the desire to imitate Christ as the model of the perfect life. Justification begins with faith and trust in Christ and in his archetypal saving righteousness. It then moves from a fear of God's power and a minimum understanding of Scripture to the perfection of life which is expressed in a pure reverence for God like that of the angels and which is also possessed of a truly spiritual understanding of the Scriptures inspired by the Spirit himself. Justification is based upon a righteousness created by the grace of God within a person and not, to use Luther's phrase, upon an alien righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, coming from the outside.<sup>1</sup> Lefèvre views justification and sanctification as essentially the same thing.

The faith which contributes to justification is not a faith operating alone. Faith must be completed and perfected by works done in faith and by the other virtues of hope and charity. None of these three, fides, spes, caritas, can exist sola. Where one is present the others may likewise be found.

Throughout, Lefèvre insists on the primacy of God's grace. It is the election and drawing power of God which make justification possible. Man's freedom consists in his ability to resist or obey the drawing of God. He can close his heart to God's call as a man can stand with his eyes unopened and receive no benefit from the sunlight. Man is able, on

the other hand, to assent to God and to cooperate with his grace through his works, but the glory for man's justification must remain with God who first called and made a response possible.

### Lefèvre and the Council of Trent

If Lefèvre did not end his career as a Protestant, was he fully Catholic? Without leaving the Roman Church or ever expressing the desire to do so, Lefèvre had called for a reform of the Church, a reform based upon the Scriptures. In 1546, a Church council was convened at Trent for the express purpose of reform and the clarification of Catholic doctrine as opposed to the new heresies of Protestantism. Its decrees became binding upon all members of the Church and those holding dissenting doctrines were firmly condemned.<sup>2</sup> On virtually all of the major issues relating to justification, Lefèvre and Trent are in accord.

The most difficult subjects of comparison between the two are original sin and the sacraments, most importantly baptism. Trent was clear that no man could be justified without the grace of God given in baptism which removed anything which, properly speaking, could be called sin.<sup>3</sup> Lefèvre, however, was most often curiously silent on the issue of baptism in relation to the grace of God and he never really defined this sacrament theologically. His views of original sin as they appeared in his 1512 Romans commentary were condemned by Trent, which adopted the Augustinian position;<sup>4</sup> but, as has been shown, he had probably modified his earlier ideas somewhat by 1527 so that he was at least closer to Trent if not in full agreement. Both Trent and Lefèvre did stress the fact that even in the one baptized and justified, a certain concupiscence remained which provided an inclination to sin but could

not be called real or actual sin. Those who will are able, with the grace of Christ, to resist concupiscence so that it does them no harm.<sup>5</sup>

The Council of Trent, even as Lefèvre, gave all of the glory for man's justification to God alone. Man has no merit whereby he may claim justification as his due. Without the predisposing grace of God man is impotent to move himself to the performance of righteousness by his own will. Once again Lefèvre and Trent agree that man does have free will. His freedom, however, consists in his being able to either resist or cooperate with the grace of God given to him. The initiative remains with God.<sup>6</sup>

On the subject of faith and works as they relate to justification, the resemblance of Trent to Lefèvre is even more obvious. Lefèvre had spoken of justification by faith, a living faith which combined with works of charity to result in justification: nevertheless, he also said that, in the end, neither faith nor works justify, but justification is by the grace of God.<sup>7</sup>

The Council of Trent similarly declares that we are justified by faith, for faith is the foundation and root of justification, but there is nothing which precedes justification, whether faith or works, which merits it. It is given solely by the grace of God.<sup>8</sup> Trent likewise sees justification as a gradual process of becoming holy and righteous. Justification and sanctification appear as identical in the decrees. Justification is both the forgiveness of sins and the sanctification or renewal of the inner man achieved by the willing reception of the grace of God.<sup>9</sup> Faith cooperates with good works to increase the righteousness within a Christian and he is thereby further justified.<sup>10</sup>

Trent is clear that faith alone cannot justify. Unlike Lefèvre, with Trent the issue of those who believe and then die shortly after is not raised and it is not used, as Lefèvre had done, to illustrate the fact that in some cases, faith alone may justify. Trent did, however, indicate that baptized infants are to be included among the faithful.<sup>11</sup>

One final point of concord between Lefèvre and Trent concerns the three virtues of faith, hope and charity. Both had used James 2:17 to point out that faith without works is dead; and both had concluded from this point that living faith is a faith working by charity and that such a faith will have with it not only charity but hope as well. These three do not exist separately. The council stated that faith cannot give eternal life without being accompanied by hope and charity and without these latter two virtues faith alone cannot unite a man perfectly to Christ.<sup>12</sup> When a man is justified he receives forgiveness, and for his inner regeneration, faith, hope and charity are infused at the same time.<sup>13</sup> The righteousness of the justified is active, and those who are just should keep the commands of Christ and suffer with him in order to obtain the heavenly kingdom.<sup>14</sup> Lefèvre, of course, had also indicated that a living faith possessed the infused virtues of hope and charity and that Christian righteousness consisted in keeping Christ's commands and in imitating Christ by suffering for the cause of the Gospel in the world.<sup>15</sup>

Because Lefèvre had looked for a reform of the Church based only upon the Scriptures, he would have been in large measure disappointed with the Council of Trent.<sup>16</sup> The Vulgate, whose authorship and accuracy Lefèvre himself had questioned, was established as the authoritative



version for the Church,<sup>17</sup> and no provision was made for the translation of any portion into the common language of the people, a task which Lefèvre had considered to be of supreme importance. Still, it should be clear by now that regarding justification, Lefèvre's work, though not theologically systematic, had generally foreshadowed the tone as well as a number of the specific propositions of the Tridentine decrees.

Lefèvre was not in any way a schismatic. He was a loyal churchman with an evangelical and pastoral concern both for other biblical scholars and for those who were unable to read the Scriptures themselves. His own training in languages and his personal study of Scripture had convinced him of the ultimate authority of the Bible for the Church's doctrine and worship, but his own interpretation of those writings did not seriously depart from the accepted ecclesiastical position on the central issues of God's grace and man's justification. Lefèvre was not so much a bridge between traditional Catholicism and the new Protestant ideas, although in some ways he may be seen in that light, as he was a link between a Catholic Church in need of reform and the council which met at last to begin that reform.



## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup>Epistola ad Rhomanos, p. 76 v. "At cum dicimus deum ex fide iustificasse Abraham: haec iustificationis gloria dei est, non Abrahae."

### CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>The Council of Trent, Session Six, January 13, 1547, reaffirmed this position. Justification involves not only the forgiveness of sins but also the "sanctification and renovation of the inner man" by divine charity. Faith is the beginning of justification but not the only thing involved. Justification is increased through keeping the commandments. This is a duty and not only the inevitable result of justification. Through sin, justification may be imperiled and lost completely through mortal sin. It may, however, be recovered by acts of penance. In justification, sin is actually taken away; it is not a matter of God simply not imputing sin in the one who resists. See Denzinger, pp. 283, 287-290, 292, 293. It is one of the chief purposes of this chapter to show that Lefèvre, in his 1512 Romans commentary, was basically in accord with the official position of the Church.

<sup>2</sup>Lefèvre's Quincuplex Psalterium appeared in 1509. See above p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Epistola ad Rhomanos (Paris: Henricus Stephanus, December 1512). Subsequent editions of the work appeared in 1515(1516) and 1517. According to John Payne, Helmut Feld has proved that the second edition actually appeared in 1516, because Lefèvre had used Erasmus' Novum Instrumentum in completing it. The commentary was dated 1515 to hide this fact. See John B. Payne, "Erasmus and Lefèvre d'Étaples as Interpreters of Paul," Archive for Reformation History 65(1974): 55, n.4. Payne is using Feld's article "Der Humanisten-Streit um Hebräer 2,7 (Psalm 8,6)," Archive for Reformation History 61(1970): 12 ff. Later editions often carry the title Epistolae divi Pauli Apostoli, cum commentaris Iacobi Fabri Stapulensis.

<sup>4</sup>For this view see especially Jean Barnaud, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, Études d'Histoire Religieuse (Montpellier, XI, 1936), pp. 224-229. "Il ne faut pas s'étonner, dès lors, de voir Lefèvre comprendre et développer, dans toute sa richesse, la doctrine paulinienne de la justification par la foi," p. 224, and "Aussi est-ce la gloire de Lefèvre d'avoir attaqué résolument, au nom de l'Écriture sainte,

plusiers années avant la réforme, la doctrine du mérite des oeuvres et de la justification qu'elles procurent." p. 225. John Woolman Brush also sees Lefèvre as a reformer with Protestant tendencies in the area of justification already in 1512, "Lefèvre d'Étaples: Three Phases of His Life and Work," in Reformation Studies, Essays in Honor of Roland H. Bainton ed. Franklin H. Littell (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962), p. 122.

<sup>5</sup>Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, s. v. "Lefèvre d'Étaples, Jacques," by E. Amann, vol. 9-1, cols. 139-140.

<sup>6</sup>Charles-Henri Graf, Essai sur la vie et les écrits de Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Strasbourg: 1842; Geneva: Slatkin Reprints, 1970), pp. 12-13.

<sup>7</sup>In the preface to his Quincuplex Psalterium Lefèvre says that the monks whom he had questioned found little joy or spiritual nourishment in their study of Scripture. Lefèvre believes this is the result of a focus upon the literal rather than the "literal-spiritual" sense intended by the Spirit who inspired the Scriptures. The monks had complained especially about the Psalms which composed a large percentage of their time both in the liturgy and in private devotions. "Et si quorum ex sacris litteris pastum quaerent, saepius interrogavi quid in illis dulcedinis experirentur, quid saperent. Responderunt plurimi quoties in nescio quem sensum litteralem incidissent, et maxime cum divinorum psalmorum intelligentiam quererent, se multum tristes et animo deiecto ex illa lectione abscedere solitus." The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Related Texts, ed. Eugene F. Rice, Jr. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 193.

<sup>8</sup>The versions included by Lefèvre were three Latin texts of Jerome, an old Latin version preceding the Vulgate, and the Conciliatum, Lefèvre's own critical version.

<sup>9</sup>Jaroslav Pelikan, Luther the Expositor: Introduction to the Reformer's Exegetical Writings, Companion to Luther's Works (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), pp. 46-47. Pelikan states that Luther believed this degree conferred on him the right to be a reformer.

<sup>10</sup>WA 54:185. "Interim eo anno iam redieram ad Psalterium denuo interpretandum, fretus eo, quod exercitator essem, postquam S. Pauli Epistolas ad Romanos, ad Galatas, et eam, quae est ad Ebraeos, tractassem in scholis. Miro certe ardore captus fueram cognoscendi Pauli in epistola ad Rom., sed obstiterat hactenus non frigidus circum praecordia sanguis, sed unicum vocabulum, quod est Cap. 1: Iustitia Dei revelatur in illo. Oderam enim vocabulum istud 'Iustitia Dei,' quod usu et consuetudine omnium doctorum doctus eram philosophice intelligere de iustitia (ut vocant) formali seu activa, qua Deus est iustus, et peccatores iniustosque punit."

<sup>11</sup>See Chapter VI in W. Schwartz, Principles of Biblical Translation: Some Reformation Controversies and Their Background

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), pp.167-212. Also Heiko A. Oberman, ed., Forerunners of the Reformation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), p. 291. Oberman believes that from 1513-1516 Lefèvre's Psalm commentary was an important help to Luther in the development of his own exegetical principles.

<sup>12</sup>Jean-Pierre Massaut, Critique et tradition a la vielle de la réforme en France-étude suivie de textes inédits, traduits, et annotés (Paris: J. Vrin; Librairie Philosophique, 1974), pp. 58-59. Massaut lists the six main points of Fabrist textual exegesis and criticism as found in Clichtove's apology for Lefèvre's 1512 Pauline commentaries. They are a) not to oppose in their criticism the faith of the universal Church b) the superiority of Scripture over its commentators, no matter how prestigious c) the acknowledgment of divergencies among the Fathers d) the right to choose the Scriptural interpretation which follows most closely the guidelines of textual criticism not from a love of criticism as such but in respect for the text and its "sovereign truth." e) the desire to lean on traditions and authorities equal to or if possible superior to the ones whose exegesis they might be opposing. Patristic sources are important even if not the final authority. f) the essential distinction between a central question of faith and a fact which doesn't involve any change in the essence of the faith. In such cases the commentator is free to interpret according to the rules imposed on him by the text and the rules of historical and literary criticism.

<sup>13</sup>Eugene F. Rice, Jr., ed., The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Related Texts (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. xxii. Epistola, p. 76 r. "Purgant igitur opera legis, fides convertit, iustificatio illuminat."

<sup>14</sup>Graf, p. 66.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 62-63.

<sup>17</sup>Augustin Renaudet, "Paris de 1494 à 1517: Église et université, réformes religieuses, culture et critique humaniste," in Courants religieux et humanisme a la fin du XVe et au debut du XVIe siecle, Colloque de Strasbourg, 1957 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959), p. 20.

<sup>18</sup>Heiko A. Oberman, ed., Forerunners of the Reformation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), p. 288. Oberman is referring to Lefèvre's preface to the 1512 commentaries, p. 72 v.

<sup>19</sup>Payne, p. 70.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 70-71.

<sup>21</sup>Meritum de congruo or "partial merit" involved an act performed in a state of sin, to fulfill either natural or divine law. God in his

mercy would accept such a work as worthy of a first infusion of grace. Heiko Oberman, The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 471. Oberman is using Biel, Sent. ii d. 27, q I, Art. 2, Concl. 4.

<sup>22</sup>Payne, p. 72.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 74, Epistola, p. 75 r.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 80, Epistola, p. 90 r.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 73, Epistola, p. 85 v.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 73-74, Epistola, p. 80 v. Payne finds Lefèvre anticipating Luther's description of sin as curvatus in se. Lefèvre, however, applies this only to actual sin done in freedom whereas Luther uses it to express the inborn effect of original sin. Epistola, p. 85 v, "Non ex primo parente, sed ex proprio arbitrio et propria eius incurvatione: non esse negaverium ut est infidelitas, haeresis, et huiusmodi quae a primo parente nulli mortalium sunt insaeminata. Non enim animam ab Adam, sed a deo accepimus. Omnis igitur anima, a deo recta tradita, arbitrium habet ut angelus quo se incurvare potest. Et carni Adae ut servili sponse copulata." On the other hand, Luther concludes that "Nisi Deus per tribulationem nos examinaret, impossibile esset, quod ullus hominum salvus fieret. Ratio est, quia natura nostra vitio primi peccati tam profunda est in seipsam incurva, ut non solum optima dona Dei sibi inflectat ipsisque fruatur (ut patet in iustitiariis et hypocritis), immo et ipso Deo utatur ad illa consequenda, verum etiam hoc ipsum ignoret, quod tam inique, curve et prave omnia, etiam Deum, propter seipsam querat," WA 56:304.

<sup>27</sup>Payne, p. 76, Epistola, p. 82 r-v.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 74, Epistola, p. 76 r.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>30</sup>Epistola, p. 80 v. See p. 82 r for Lefèvre's discussion of Christiformitas and the imitation of Christ. The notion of evil by imitation is found in Sapiientia 2:24-25. "Invidia autem diaboli mors introivit in orbem terrarum: Imitantur autem illum qui sunt ex parte illius." Lefèvre is here directly contradicting Augustine who opposes the idea that original sin exists within a person only through imitating Adam or Satan. Augustine, De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulis, I,q, PL, vol. 44, col. 114, "Sed si Apostolus peccatum illud commemorare voluisset, quod in hunc mundum, non propagatione, sed imitatione intraverit; eius principem, non Adam, sed diabolum diceret . . . Proinde Apostolus cum illud peccatum ac mortem commemoraret quae ab uno in omnes propagatione transisset, eum principem posuit, a quo propagatio generis humani sumpsit exordium." Luther, agreeing specifically with Augustine, opposes the belief that original sin is only by imitation, WA 56:309.



<sup>31</sup>Epistola, p. 85 r. "Omnes dico filii Adam: quos benedictio et gratia aut omnino non praevenit aut non sanavit."

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 71 v. "Si quis enim sponte a sole se avertit et oculos claudit ne solis illuminationem spectet: hic illuminationis defectus non a sole sed ab eo qui se avertit et reddidit incapacem procedit. Quid enim sol aliud vult quam illuminare? Et deus quid nam aliud quam iustificare."

<sup>33</sup>Graf, p. 6, n. 2. Barnaud, p. 11, James D. Jordan, The Church Reform Principles in the Biblical Works of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, unpublished Ph D. dissertation (Durham: Duke University, 1966), p. 12, n. 2. Jordan recommends Joly for a more complete discussion of evidence which opposes the idea that Lefèvre might have received a theological degree. Louis Philippe Joly, Remarques critiques sur le dictionnaire de Bayle, 2 vols. (Paris: E. Ganeau, 1752), vol. I, pp. 346-350.

<sup>34</sup>Epistola, p. 76 v. "Et si operibus legis deberetur iustificatio, paucissimorum esse posset. Sed qui iustificationem gratiam dei esse intelligit qui non ex meritis iustificat sed qui cordium ad se conversorum peccata dimittit (ille enim solus intuetur cor omnium) videt iustificationem ad quamplurimos se extendere posse."

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 77 r. "Iustificatio igitur infirma esset et angusta si esset ex operibus legis. At nunc cum sit ex fide, gratia, et promissione dei, firmissima est et amplissima."

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 71 v. "quaedam eius divinae iustitiae perexilis umbra."

<sup>37</sup>Ibid. Lefèvre cites the example of Dives and Lazarus. Luke 16:19-31.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid. "Neque enim dicit Paulus factores legis iustificantur, sed iustificanbuntur. Non enim opera iustificant quemque; sed opera si bona sunt preparant ad dei iustificationem suscipiendam."

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 76 r. "Et fidem quam non praecedunt, comitantur, aut sequuntur opera, mortuam appellat."

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 77 r. "Et circumcisio quam Hebraei putant iustificare, non iustificat, sed signum est iustificationis ex fide. Similiter et opera quae fidem sequuntur, vivae fidei signum sunt."

<sup>42</sup>Lefèvre does not describe these sects further here or refer to them by a specific name.

<sup>43</sup>Epistola, p. 76 r.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 75 r. "Operandum igitur est quodcunque bonum possumus



etiam instanter; ut iustificationem retineamus. Et non solum retineamus, sed etiam augeatur in nobis."

<sup>45</sup>Payne, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup>Epistola, p. 76 r. "Purgant igitur opera legis, fides convertit, iustificatio illuminat. Opera: tenebrosa purgatio. Fides: applicatio. Iustificatio: mundicia illuminans et omnia serenans."

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 75 r.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 76 v-77 r. "Errabant iudei vehementer: sine circumcissione et operibus legis non credentes quemque iustificari posse. Quos Paulus confutat et illuminat. Nam Abraham neque circumciscus neque ex operibus legis, sed deo credens iustificatus est. Nam cum Abraham nullam adhuc haberet sobolem, eduxit eum dominus foras et ait illi, Suspice coelum, et numera stellas si potes. Et dixit ei, sic erit sementuum. Credidit Abraham deo, et reputatum est illi ad iustitiam."

<sup>49</sup>Lefèvre is commenting on Romans 4:9-10.

<sup>50</sup>Epistola, p. 74 v.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 76 r. "At cum dicimus deum ex fide iustificasse Abraham, haec iustificationis gloria dei est, non Abrahae."

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 76 v. "Fidem igitur et credulitatem Abrahae subsecuta est dei iustificatio."

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 74 v. "Nam ex se et suis operibus salvari non possunt, ex quibus etiam frequentius damnationem merentur quam salutem."

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 77 r. "Firma est enim dei promissio qui fidelis est et verax. Et firma gratia eius. Et firma fuit fides Abrahae. Infirma autem lex et nostra opera. Ampla est dei promissio."

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 77 v. Lefèvre is echoing Romans 4:23-25.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 76 r. "Nam negat Paulus ex operibus Abraham iustificatum: ut credunt illi qui in operibus legis confidunt, quasi ex operibus iustitia fit, et opera ipsa iustificent. Sed eum dicit potius ex fide a deo iustificatum."

<sup>57</sup>See above p. 28.

<sup>58</sup>WA 56:249.

<sup>59</sup>Romans 3.

<sup>60</sup>Epistola, p. 76 r.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 99 v.

62Ibid., p. 76 r. "Ita opera fidei, quae eadem sunt opera regalis legis (sic enim eam appellat, quae decem praecepta continet) signa sunt fidei."

63Ibid., p. 94 r. "Non igitur ex operibus salutem attingere possumus: sed dei electione et gratia illam attingimus. Et qui quaerunt ex operibus illam, caece manent, id operibus tribuentes quod debetur gratiae, id sibi quod deo."

64Ibid., p. 82 r. "Ita et membra corporis Christi si faciunt opera legis (faciunt enim) non ea faciunt tanquam sub lege sint (sunt nanquam sub gratia) sed tanquam ii qui omnino sani, sana faciunt opera. Et imitatione faciunt, ut ipsi sint Christiformes verique Christi imitatores, qui similia fecit opera. At qui sub lege sunt, ut sani sint illa faciunt, etsi illa, perfecte sanare non possunt."

65Ibid., p. 74 v. "Ex illis quidem operibus iustus erit: sed legali iustitia. Legali dico, aut legis naturae aut scriptae. Sed ex hoc nondum iustificatus, nondum iustitiam habens: ex qua vitam habere possit aeternam."

66Ibid. Lefèvre compares works done prior to justification to those done afterward. "Illa, praeparat. Haec, consumat."

67Ibid., p. 82 r. See above n. 64.

68Ibid., p. 75 r, "Sed ex fide iustificamur quemadmodum ex operibus; ex his remotius, ex illa vicinius." See also pp. 91 r-91 v.

69Lefèvre warns that the word of faith ought never to depart from a Christian's heart and mouth. Ibid., p. 92 v. "A corde quidem, ut semper iustificemur. Ab ore vero, ut alios tanquam dei ministri et cooperatores salvemus, iustitiam dei in nobis adaugentes. Adaugemus enim, non quam aliter, fortius, aut intensius influat deus, sed quatenus bona agentes reddimur gratiae dei et infusionis iustitiae eius capaciores."

70Ibid., p. 76 v. "At qui dicit iustificationem debitum esse: omnem a deo aufert gratiam, facitque homines erga deum ingratos et iccirco indignos iustificatione."

71Ibid., p. 75 r. "Neque fides, neque opera iustificant: sed praeparant ad iustificationem. Quandoquidem unus est deus qui iustificat circumcisionem ex fide, et praeputium per fidem."

72Ibid., p. 82 r. "Sed et sub gratia esse et peccare est impossibile: neque illa se simul admittunt, ut neque sanum et aegrum. Nam qui sub gratia est, subest iustitiae, ut qui sanus est, sanitati. Et qui peccat subditur peccato, ut qui aegrotat, aegritudini. Sed qui fieri potest ut simul quis subdatur iustitiae et peccato?"

<sup>73</sup>Ibid. "Peccatores omnes qui ad Christum venerunt: servi fuerunt peccati. Ubi autem a Christo in proprio eius corpore recepti sunt: liberati a peccato servi facti sunt iustitiae."

<sup>74</sup>The insistence on increasing justification may be seen as a confusion of justification and sanctification according to Protestant thought. Luther first begins to clearly separate justification and sanctification in his Sermon on Twofold Righteousness of 1519. Although in 1519 Luther had still not abandoned the notion of justification as a lifelong process, it is clear that by this time he had entirely eliminated human works and righteousness as the basis for any part of justification and had begun to form a conception of sanctification which was distinct from justification. Martin Luther, Sermo de duplici iustitia (1519), WA2:146-147.

<sup>75</sup>Epistola, p. 75 r.

<sup>76</sup>Erich Vogelsang, Die Anfänge von Luthers Christologie nach der Ersten Psalmenvorlesung (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1929), p. 57, n. 2. See WA 56:215. "Unde non hic loquitur de iustitia, qua ipse iustus est, sed qua iustus est et nos iustificat et ipse respectu nostri solus iustus."

<sup>77</sup>Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), p. 137.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., pp. 182-183. Karl Holl, Die Rechtfertigungslehre in Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Frage der Heilsgewissheit (Tübingen: 1923), pp. 119-128.

<sup>81</sup>Rupp, pp. 184-185.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>83</sup>Uuras Saarnivaara, Luther Discovers the Gospel (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), p. 74.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., pp. 74-75.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., pp. 76-77.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>93</sup>Lowell C. Green, How Melanchthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel (Fairbrook, California: Verdict Publications, 1980), p. 62.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 69. See Augustine, De spiritu et littera, 9, PL, vol. 44, col. 209, "'Justitia,' inquit, 'Dei manifestata est,' non dixit, Justitia hominis vel justitia propriae voluntates; sed justitia Dei; non qua Deus justus est, sed qua induit hominem, eum justificat impium."

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., pp. 63-64.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., pp. 99-100.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>102</sup>Martin Luther, Lectures on Romans, trans. and ed. Wilhelm Pauck, Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 3. All English translations of Luther's lectures are Pauck's and will be subsequently referred to as "Pauck." WA 56:157. "Summarium huius Epistolae est destruere et evellere et disperdere omnem sapientiam et iustitiam carnis (id est quantacunque potest esse in conspectu hominum, etiam coram nobis ipsis), quantumvis ex animo et synceritate fiant, et plantare ac constituere et magnificare peccatum (quantumvis ipsum non sit aut esse putabatur)."

<sup>103</sup>WA 56:229. "Nunc autem Deus revelavit, quid de nobis sentiret ac Iudicaret, scilicet quod omnes sint in peccato. Huic ergo revelationi suae sive sermonibus suis debemus cedere et credere ac sic Iustificare et verificare eos ac per hoc nos ipsos (quod non cognoveramus) secundum eos peccatores confiteri."

<sup>104</sup>Pauck, p. 121. WA 56:200. "Omnis enim lex dat occasionem peccandi, nisi assit gratia et favor, affectus, Voluntas ad legem." WA 56:234. "Quia non satis est opera legis facere ad extra, Sed neque facere satis est ad intra, nisi accedat primum Iustificatio ex Christo. Si tamen ab intra quis facere dicendus est opera legis sum ex corde et sensu (ut ait Scriptura) proni semper simus ad malum ac per hoc Inviti ad legem et ad bonum; quare nec facimus bonum."

<sup>105</sup>Pauck, p. 88. WA 56:237. "Primo, quod non sit possibile hominem ex seipso hanc voluntatem habere, cum sit semper ad malum inclinatus, adeo ut non nisi per gratiam Dei possit erigi ad bonum. Igitur nondum seipsum cognovit, qui tantum de se praesumpsit." In spite of the pervasiveness of sin in man's nature, Luther still holds in 1516 a belief that there is yet a small part of him which is inclined to the good. Following the mystics Luther calls this the "synteresis." "Quia non sic inclinati sumus ad malum omnino, quin reliqua sit portio, quae ad bonum sit affecta, ut patet in Syntheresi."

<sup>106</sup>Pauck, p. 141. WA 56:287. "Ideo omnes in iniquitate i. e. iniustitia nascimur, morimur, sola autem reputatione miserentis Dei per fidem verbi eius iusti sumus."

<sup>107</sup>Pauck, p. 86. WA 56:235. "Quare nisi per gratiam Dei (quam credentibus in Christum promisit et largitur) sanetur ista voluntas, . . . semper sub peccato sumus." Lefèvre's statement about man's inborn inclination to sin is similar; however, in Lefèvre it is always inclination and not sin itself. Epistola, p. 85 r. "Omnes dico filii Adam: quos benedictio et gratia aut omnino non praevenit aut non sanavit."

<sup>108</sup>Pauck, p. 48. WA 56:199. "Quid enim aliud tota Scriptura docet quam humilitatem?"

<sup>109</sup>WA 56:246. "Sed omnium predictorum causa est superbia, que reddit incapacissimos. Timor enim Dei humilitat omnia, humilitas autem capacem facit omnium."

<sup>110</sup>Pauck, p. 5. WA 56:159. "Quod tunc Facit Deus, si ipse humilis fuerit et non prevenerit Deum iustificando seipsum et reputando."

<sup>111</sup>WA 56:228. "Valet autem (sin) per se et proprie ad commendationem veritatis Dei moraliter sive tropologicè; i. e. credulitas, qua Deo credimus nos esse in peccatis, licet noster sensus id vel nesciat vel non putet, ipsa est, que nos peccatores constituit et Deo gloriam dat acceptando sermones gratiae et veritatis tanquam sibi necessarios." WA 56:212. "Sed tunc iustificatur Deus in sermonibus suis, quando sermo eius a nobis iustus et verax reputatur et suscipitur, quod fit per fidem in eloquia eius."

<sup>112</sup>WA 56:214. "Tibi (Psalm 51) enim ponitur, ut Deus Iustificetur, per confessionem peccati nostri. Quia licet sit in se iustus et verax, tamen non in nobis, donec confessi dicamus: 'Tibi soli peccavi' etc.; tunc enim agnoscitur solus iustus. Et ita in nobis quoque fit iustus."

<sup>113</sup>Pauck, pp. 76-77. WA 56:225-226. "Quia iustificari hoc est credere. . . . Et non solum iustificabitur ab iis, qui credunt, sed etiam vincit, cum iudicatur, i. e. dum reprobatur ab aliis regantibus Christum esse missium et impleta promissa. Ii enim hos sermones iudicant et condemnant et nequaquam iustificant i. e. iustos et veros credunt, immo Deum in iis iudicant et condemnant, quem alii iustificant."



Sed non prevalent. Vincit enim et obtinet, quia quantumlibet resistunt, perseverat haec fides Dei, ista 'iustificatio Dei in sermonibus suis' (i. e. credulitas in verbum eius). Iustificatio Dei et credulitas in Deum idem est. Prevalet enim et permanet, immo semper proficit et crescit, ubi ii, qui non credunt, deficiunt et pereunt."

114Pauck, p. 77. WA 56:226-227. "Per hoc autem 'iustificari Deum' nos iustificamur. Et iustificatio illa Dei passiva, qua a nobis iustificatur, est ipsa iustificatio nostri active a Deo. Quia illam fidem, que suos sermones iustificat, reputat iustitiam. . . . Et econtra: iudicatio Dei passive, qua iudicatur ab incredulis, est ipsa damnatio suiipsorum. Quia illam incredulitatem, qua suos sermones iudicant ac damnant, reputat iniustitiam et damnationem. . . . Iustificat vincit enim in verbo suo, dum nos tales facit, quale est verbum suum, hoc est iustum, verum, sapiens etc."

115Pauck, p. 109. WA 56:255. Luther answers those who would have God give his righteousness without Christ. "Non vult neque potest. Quia Christus quoque Deus est. Non dabitur nisi per fidem Ihesu Christi."

116WA 56:255-256. "Sed hic aperiant oculos ii quoque, de quibus supra dixi, qui in Christum credunt, sed non in verbum Christi . . . quando 'fides Christi' dicitur, fides in Christum et in verbum cuiuscunque, in quo ipse loquitur, intelligitur."

117WA 56:173. "Ita desinat proficere i. e. incipiat deficere."

118Pauck, p. 91. WA 56:239. "Et ubi incipimus nolle fieri meliores, desinimus esse boni." Luther is quoting Bernard of Clairvaux, Ep. 91.

119Pauck, p. 135. WA 56:281. "Mater igitur hipocritarum et causa hipocrisis est ipsa securitas. Deus enim ideo nos in peccato isto, in fomite, in concupiscentia derelinquit, ut nos in timore sui et humilitate custodiat, ut sic ad eius gratiam semper recurramus, semper pavidi, ne peccemus i. e. semper orantes, ne nobis imputet et peccatum dominari sinat."

120Pauck, p. 99. WA 56:247. "In nostris autem (sicut incerti sumus, quando nostra sunt) semper timendum est coram Deo."

121WA 56:248. "Et potest fieri, ut iustus ex lege et litera pulchriora et speciosiora opera faciat quam iustus ex gratia. Sed tamen non ideo iustus est, sed eo magis per haec impeditur ad iustitiam et ad opera gratiae pervenire."

122WA 56:248. "Responsio: Apostolus distinguit inter legem et fidem, sive inter literam et gratiam, ita et inter opera earum. Opera legis dicit, quae fiunt extra fidem et gratiam et ex lege per timorem cogente vel promissionem temporalium alliciente facta. Opera autem fidei dicit, quae ex spiritu libertatis amore solo Dei fiunt."

123WA 56:248. "Et haec fieri non possunt nisi a iustificatis per fidem, ad quam iustificationem opera legis nihil cooperantur, immo vehementer impediunt, dum non sinunt hominem sibi iniustum videri et iustificatione indigentem." Lowell Green believes that this distinction between the two types of works is based upon Augustine's concept of the two laws, a law of works and a law of faith as it appeared in his treatise De Spiritu et littera, Chaps. 17-22, Green, pp. 86-87.

124WA 56:249. "Igitur quando b. Iacobus et Apostolus dicunt ex operibus hominem iustificari, contra falsam intelligentiam disputant eorum, qui fidem sine operibus suis sufficere putabant, cum Apostolus non dicat, quod fides sine suis propriis operibus (quia tunc nec fides esset . . . ), sed sine operibus legis iustificat. Igitur iustificatio requirit non opera legis, sed vivam fidem, quae sua operetur opera."

125WA 56:264. "Unde quando Apostolus dicit, quod 'sine operibus legis iustificamur (3:28),' non loquitur de operibus, quae pro iustificatione quaerenda fiunt. Quia haec iam non legis opera sunt, sed gratiae et fidei, cum qui haec operatur, non per haec sese iustificatum confidat, sed iustificari cupiat nec legem se per haec implese putat, sed impletionem ipsius quaerit." WA 56:233. "Alioquin studiosissime fieri eiusmodi debent et omni fervore exerceri, eo scilicet fine, ut per ipsa tanquam preparatoria tandem apti et capaces fieri possimus iustitiae Dei, non ut sint iustitia, sed ut querant iustitiam. Ac per hoc iam non sunt iustitia nostra, dum nos ipsa non pro iustitia nobis imputamus. Parare enim illis omnibus oportet viam Domini venturi in nobis."

126WA 56:255. "Immo nec opera precedentia nec sequentia iustificant, quanto minus opera legis. Precedentia quidem, quia preparant ad iustitiam; sequentia vero, quia requirunt iam factam iustificationem. Non enim iusta operando iusti efficimur, sed iusti effendo iusta operamur. Ergo sola gratia iustificat."

127Pauck, p. 54. WA 56:204. "Unde ergo accipiemus defendentes? Non nisi a Christo et in Christo. Cor enim credentis in Christum, si reprehenderit eum et accusaverit eum contra eum testificans de malo opere, mox avertit se et ad Christum convertit dicitque: Hic autem satisfecit, hic iustus est, hic mea defensio, hic pro me mortuus est, hic suam iustitiam meam fecit et meum peccatum suum fecit. Quod si peccatum meum suum fecit, iam ego illud non habeo et sum liber. Si autem iustitiam suam meam fecit, iam iustus ego sum eadem iustitia, qua ille. Peccatum autem meum illum non potest absorbere, sed absorbetur in abysso iustitiae eius infinita, cum sit ipse Deus benedictus in saecula." WA 56:268. "Sancti intrinsece sunt peccatores semper, ideo extrinsece iustificantur semper."

128Augustine, De spiritu et littera, Chap. 27.

129See above n. 74.

## CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>Jean Barnaud, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, Études d'Histoire Religieuse (Montpellier, xi, 1936), p. 261. Charles Henri Graf, Essai sur la vie et les écrits de Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Strasbourg: 1842; Geneva: Slatkin Reprints, 1970), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Graf, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Lefèvre had already gathered a group of students about him while still in the monastery, some of whom followed him to Meaux. Barnaud, p. 254. Two students who had sought a scholarly refuge with Lefèvre at St. Germain-des-Prés were Michel Pontanu and François Vatable. Graf, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>A. L. Herminjard, ed., Correspondance des réformateurs dans les pays de langue française, 9 vols. (Genève: H. George, 1866-1897; Nieuwkoop: B. De Graf, 1965-1966), I, p. 3, n. 2.

<sup>5</sup>Graf, p. 94.

<sup>6</sup>Although published in 1527, it appears that the Catholic Commentaries may have actually been written as early as 1524 or 1525, at the same time that the Epistres et evangiles was being produced. The date on the preface is 1525.

<sup>7</sup>Henry Heller, "The Evangelicalism of Lefèvre d'Étaples: 1525," Studies in the Renaissance 19(1972): 44.

<sup>8</sup>Heiko Oberman suggests that Lefèvre's exegetical principles affected his doctrine of justification. See above, chapter 1, p. 11. For a good summary of Lefèvre's hermeneutics see David C. Steinmetz, Reformers in the Wings (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 43 ff.

<sup>9</sup>Jordan, "Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples: Principles and Practice of Reform at Meaux," p. 114.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>11</sup>James Daniel Jordan, The Church Reform Principles in the Biblical Works of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Ph. D. dissertation, Duke University, 1966), p. 157.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 163 and 165. Jordan is using comments by Lefèvre on I Corinthians 3 and Matthew 10.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 175-176.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 167. Epistola ad Rhomanos, p. 60 r.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 168. Epistola ad Rhomanos, p. 59 r.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 169 and 177.

<sup>19</sup>See discussion below on justification pp. 43-46.

<sup>20</sup>See Comment. in epist. cath., pp. 9 r-9 v. "Sed qui fidem habet dum tempus adest operandi, opera bona habeat necesse est: et qui bona opera habet, fidem habeat oportet. . . . Secus forsitan fuerit, si exercendi opera fidei nondum advenit tempus, ut in parvulis, quibus sola fides sufficit ad iustitiam, aut ipsis artificio spiritus infusa suo tempore manifestanda, aut parentum et susceptorum fides, interim dum in fide adolescent." "

<sup>21</sup>Denzinger, pp. 90-92.

<sup>22</sup>Jordan, The Church Reform Principles, p. 171.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 173-174.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 339-340.

<sup>27</sup>Heller, "The Evangelicalism of Lefèvre d'Étaples: 1525," p. 44.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 72-73.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 73. Steven Ozment has also researched the connection between mysticism and dissent, concluding that there are some aspects of mysticism, especially its tendency to bypass the sacraments and preaching as ways to God, which can serve the cause of dissent or reform. Steven E. Ozment, "Mysticism, Nominalism and Dissent," in The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion, ed., Charles Trinkaus and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), pp. 67-92.

<sup>31</sup>Heller, p. 47.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 57. Lefèvre believed not only that the Dionysian works were in fact the work of St. Paul's convert (Acts 17:34) but he also believed the commonly held theory that the author of the Corpus Dionysiaca, Dionysius the Areopagite, and the Dionysius sent to preach

to the Gauls and described by Gregory of Tours were the same person. See Eugene F. Rice, Jr., The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Related Texts, p. xxi. Lefèvre published his own edition of the Dionysian works in 1499. In his preface he tried to prove the reliability of the Dionysian tradition. Rice, "Epistle 20", pp. 60-66.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 58. Heller is summarizing Fritz Hahn, "Faber Stapulensis und Luther," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 14(1925): 377.

<sup>38</sup>E. Amann, "Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples," Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, vol. 9-1, col. 139.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., col. 143.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., col. 140. Amann refers here to Lefèvre's well known statement in the Romans commentary, "Neque fides, neque opera iustificat; sed praeparat ad iustificationem, quandoquidem unus est deus qui iustificat circuncisionem ex fide et praeputium per fidem." Epistola ad Rhomanos, p. 75 r.

<sup>42</sup>Martin Luther, Luther's Works, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, vol. 30: The Catholic Epistles (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), p. 12. "For when one wants to preach the Gospel, one must treat only of the resurrection of Christ. He who does not preach this is no apostle. For this is the chief article of our faith. And those books that teach and stress this most are indeed the noblest books, as has been stated above. This enables one to observe that the Epistle of James is no truly apostolic epistle, for it does not contain a single word about these things." Luther's views on this issue are also found in Luther's Works, vol. 35, pp. 395-397.

<sup>43</sup>See above, pp. 36-37.

<sup>44</sup>James 1:6.

<sup>45</sup>Comment. in epist. cath., p. 4 v. "Fides tua te salvum, aut salvam fecit." Luke 8:48.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 17 v. "Fide et perfecta in Christo fiducia, qui sanat omnes languores nostros. . . . Fides orantium et infirmorum apud Dei clementiam remissionem obtinebat peccatorum."

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 4v. "Ipse verax est in promississ quem si talem esse viva fide credimus, fiet nobis quod petierimus. Et cum multa fiducia bonitatis divinae, non nostrae sufficientiae, petere debemus,"



48Ibid.

49Ibid.

50Ibid. "Veruntamen haec fiducia, sine credulitate non est, quae etiam fides nominatur, sed non est perfecta, nisi etiam adsit perfecta fiducia."

51Ibid., p. 9 r. "Et habere fidem sine operibus, ut credere duntaxat scripturis, et verbo fateri, id non iustificat."

52Ibid., p. 4 v. "Quae charisma et donem est spiritus,"

53Ibid., p. 4 r.

54Aquinas had defined faith almost entirely as a matter of cognition, the assent of the intellect to the official teachings of the Church. This assent could be considered meritorious for it began with the will. Seeberg, vol. 2: The Preservation, Transformation, and Further Development of Doctrine in the Middle Ages, p. 103. Summa Theol. ii. ii. qu. 1 ff. Later medieval theologians likewise remained within this Thomistic understanding of faith. Duns Scotus distinguished between fides infusa, a supernatural habitus of faith infused into the intellect by the sacraments, and fides acquisita, faith obtained in addition to infused faith. Both, however, were directed toward an acceptance of the traditions and doctrines of the Church. Seeberg, vol. 2, p. 150. Scotus, Sent. iii. d. 23, I, 4 and iii. d. 23, 14. Occam and Biel also referred to faith as a matter of the intellect assenting to the truth when commanded by the will to do so. Seeberg, vol. 2, p. 195. Biel, Sent. iii. d. 23, 9. 2, 9. 1 D.

55Comment. in epist. cath., p. 11 v. "Aut arborem malam esse dominante et regante carne, spiritu autem nunquam suscepto aut ablato. Proinde non potest homo simul bona et mala facere, simul esse spiritualis et carnalis."

56Ibid., p. 11r.

57Ibid., p. 5 v.

58Ibid., p. 12 v. "Omnia mala homini christiano ex concupiscentiae, fomes est peccati omnibus."

59Ibid., p. 5 v. Lefèvre does not specifically state here the way in which such freedom is given, whether it occurs in baptism or in some other way.

60Ibid. "Concupiscentiae radix, fomes est peccati omnibus a protoplastis insitus, nisi quem deus liberarit, qui et concupiscentia dicitur, et originale peccatum."

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 6 v. "Contemplatur qualis sit ex prima generatione, caro scilicet, peccatum, exors fidei, filius irae, vetus homo morti gehennaeque addictus, impotens ad omne opus bonum."

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 13 v. Lefèvre once again uses the metaphor of the sun's light to illustrate the freedom of man to turn to God. "Si apertis oculis fugis tenebras, lumini appropinquas, et sol oculis tuis se ingerit. Sic te aperi domino, et ipse se tibi insinuabit, teque clementibus misericordiae suae oculis intuebitur, infundetque se tibi."

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 5 v.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid. "Concipit autem concupiscentia, cum eruptura est in actum. Parit autem, cum exit in actum, qui peccatum est non originale, sed ex originali actuale. Consummatur aut peccatum, cum illi voluntas consentit, quod et plerunque in opus ipsum externum egreditur: sed nihil refert, egrediatur vel non egrediatur, consentiente voluntate, peccatum consummatum est, dominatur et regnat. Sed si non consentit, sed spiritu supprimit et mortificat venenatum fomitis concupiscentiaeque partum, peccatum non imputatur, neque dominatur, neque regnat."

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 5 r. "Sic igitur malignus tentando praeveniens, eius appetitum excitavit, quo usus est ut instrumento ad fallendum et perdendum genus humanum, qui et in fonte corruptus, concupiscentia dicitur."

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 5 v. "Nonnunquam etiam tentatio sequitur concupiscentiam, ut in Iuda proditore concupiscentiam avaritiae sequuta est tentatio maligni, ut ipse proderet dominum suum."

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 64 v. "Quia hic iniustitia et iniquitas, est divinae legis transgressio: et omnis talis transgressio, peccatum est."

<sup>68</sup>James 2:10.

<sup>69</sup>Comment. in epist. cath., 8 v. "Et qui unius mandati, certe de charitate, transgressor est, etsi caetera servaverit, factus est omnium reus, id est, condemnabitur, neque caeterorum observatio prodesse poterit ad salutem."

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 5 v. James 1:15.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 6 v.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 9 v.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 9 r. "Nam omne quod non est ex fide, peccatum est."

<sup>74</sup>Ibid. "Caeterum si fidem non habes, infidelis es et arbor mala: nam caro et vetus homo. At attestante domino, non potest mala arbor fructus bonos facere . . . Alia autem opera quae non sunt ex fide, etiam per dilectionem, sed humanam, qualia opera virtutum moralium secundum philosophos, et etsi bona esse videantur, revera bona non sunt."

75 Luke 23:42.

76 Comment. in epist. cath., p. 9 v. "Et cum opere fidei habuit regni vitae aeternae promissionem."

77 Martin Luther, "Treatise on Good Works," in Selected Writings of Martin Luther, 1517-1520, trans. W. A. Lambert, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 105-106. "The first, highest, and most precious of all good works is faith in Christ. . . . For in this work all good works exist, and from faith these works receive a borrowed goodness." Luther's text is John 6:28-29. "This is the good work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." WA 6:202-276.

78 Joshua 2:11.

79 Lefèvre doesn't specify here whether Rahab's faith was belief only or also a trusting faith but since it proved to be fruitful we may assume that Lefèvre viewed it as the latter.

80 Comment. in epist. cath., p. 9 v. "Et non solum hanc fidem habuit, sed et fidei adiecit opera, et liberavit Hebraeos. Et haec, et ille ex fide iustificatus est, sed ex fide non infructuosa, verum quam opus pro fructu vivam declaravit."

81 Ibid. Genesis 22:1-4.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid. "Et cui haec fides adest, is continuo iustus est, et iustus et iustificatus, reputante deo huiusmodi fidem ad iustitiam, id est, deo iustificante: alioqui nondum iustificato opus sequens, bonum non esset. Sine fide sane sic Abraham non fuisset operatus: sed fides operibus eius per dilectionem erga deum cooperabatur. Sic omnium fidelium fides per dilectionem cooperari debet, ut sit fides viva, perfectaque atque consummata."

84 Ibid., p. 9 r. "Sed qui fidem habet, dum tempus adest operandi, opera bona habeat necesse est: et qui bona opera habet, fidem habeat oportet."

85 Ibid., p. 17 v. "Hoc tamen interest, quod infidelibus peccata semper imputantur, fidelibus autem dominante fide et spiritu non imputantur."

86 Luther believed that while works of the law could not justify, both faith and the works of faith which sprang from it were essential to justification. Luther had abandoned this position by 1519.

87 Lefèvre perhaps believed that he had dealt with this problem sufficiently in 1512. The Vulgate renders James 2:21 and 25, "Abraham pater noster nonne ex operibus iustificatus est, offerens Issac filium

suum super altare?" "Similiter et Rahab meretrix, nonne ex operibus iustificata est suscipiens nuntios, et alia via eiiciens?"

<sup>88</sup>Comment. in epist. cath., p. 14 r.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 9 r.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 14 r. "At voluntarie eligere mundi miseriam, luctum, ploratum, moerorem, carnales nequaquam possunt: nisi adepto fidei dono, quod solum praebet dei verbum, et doctrinae evangelicae thesaurus."

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 6 r.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 13 v. "At quomodo purificabuntur, nisi per gratiam domini nostri Iesu Christi, per iustitiam fidei, amplectendo pure et sincere doctrinam evangelii."

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 14 r. "Ergo nitantur omnes peccatores quantumcunque sint peccatores, adipisci fidem."

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 5 r. Lefèvre does not discuss the inevitability of this close relationship as clearly in James as he does elsewhere in the Catholic Commentaries. See p. 46 v, "Perfecta autem fides, secum habet integram spem, et solidam charitatem: nec secus haec ab se invicem separari possunt, quam lux, illuminatio et calor abinvicem."

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 4 r.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 6 v. "Et haec religio, in sola fide Iesu Christi quae par charitatem operatur, sita est. Nam in hac, qui diligit, legem implevit, legem dico Christi et perfectae libertatis."

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 5 r. "Magna est fides, magna patientia, magna spes: sed maxima est charitas, quae omnia illa secum trahit et colligat: quae omnia perficit ac consummat."

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 14 v. "Fideles, fidei spiritu reguntur et charitate."

<sup>99</sup>See above p. 40.

<sup>100</sup>Comment. in epist. cath., p. 4 r. "Quae si adsit, firma est et probe, secum firmam, velut anchoram in coelestibus fixam, trahens in deo spem totamque fiduciam. Patientia, externa respicit et visibilia: spes et fiducia, interna et invisibilia. Verum haec tam pulchra patientia secum habens fidei probationem, et spem tota fiducia deo haerentem, minime languens esse debet et ociosa, sed sibi adiungere opus perfectum, quod est divinae charitatis opus, et, quae scripturis exprimitur, divinae voluntatis impletio."

<sup>101</sup>Since Lefèvre was not a trained theologian he may not have been as likely to use standard theological terms. Also, in light of Jordan's idea that Lefèvre was chiefly concerned to provide an evangelical guide



to the Scriptures, such technical language may have seemed unnecessary to him.

<sup>102</sup>Comment. in epist. cath., p. 9 r.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 9 v.

<sup>104</sup>Amann, col. 140.

<sup>105</sup>Comment. in epist. cath., p. 11 r. Lefèvre is offering a paraphrase of I John 3:9. "Ergo dices: Spiritualis nunquam peccat. Verum ais, neque potest ex novitate creaturae, dicente Ioanne: Scimus quod omnis qui natus est ex deo non peccat: sed si peccat quandoque: hoc est ex infirmitate veteris Adae. Quod si vetus Adam et caro dominetur: novus homo et spiritus non manet. Non enim possunt simul regnare. Sed oportet arborem bonam esse a dominante et regnante spiritu."

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 45 r. "Et si dei gratia peccata nobis non imputantur, sed remittuntur, sed praesentia lucis et spiritus Christi teguntur et non fomes concupiscentiarum quod est omne peccatum" Also pp. 46 r, and 53 r.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., p. 24 r. "Neque satis est vere fidelibus ad altiora peregrinantibus vitare concupiscentias, et quicquid praecipitans caro suggerit; nisi et bona opera sua quae sunt fidei et charitatis, iis inter quos peregrinantur ostendant" Also 21 r, and 31 v.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., p. 50 r. "Iustitia ergo, est facere quod nobis in evangelio mandat faciendum, quod nemo facit, nisi qui ex deo natus est; nam solus talis spiritum fidei accepit, per quem operatur iustitiam et opera fidei, per quam iustificatur." Lefèvre never says specifically that justification is a process but this is implied by the fact that whenever he speaks of it he discusses both faith and the works which come from it as did Luther in his Romans lectures.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid. "Ergo ut vere sciamus et cognoscamus quia ex deo nati sumus, nunquam ab evangelica doctrina discedamus, nunquam a voluntate patris facienda, quod sanctum continet evangelium. . . . Et haec est iustitia, et hoc iustitiam facere, per quod vere cognoscimus quod ex deo nati sumus, et conversatione et vita quodammodo similes proprio, connaturali et consubstantiali filio dei, qui voluntatem patris facit semper."

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., p. 46 v.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., p. 48 v. "Filiorum lucis vita, habitus est, aut potius quaedam viva energia . . . illi voluntatem patris, id est dei semper faciunt."

<sup>112</sup>Louise Salley connects Lefèvre with the Brethren of the Common Life and through them with the concepts both of imitation and of a



threefold ascent to God. Claudia Louise Salley, "Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples: Heir of the Dutch Reformers of the Fifteenth Century," in The Dawn of Modern Civilization: Studies in the Renaissance, Reformation, and Other Topics, Presented to Honor Albert Hyma, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Ann Arbor Publishers, 1962), pp. 79, 108-109.

113Comment. in epist. cath., p. 58 r.

114Ibid., p. 63 r.

115Ibid., p. 75 r. "Quum nos Christus, idem deus et dei fillius suo sanguine acquisierit, et similes angelis esse velit, imo amplius sibi similes ac conformes qui deus est."

116Ibid., p. 27 v.

117Ibid., p. 29 v. Lefèvre is drawing his statements from the beatitudes of Matthew 5.

118Ibid., p. 51 v.

119Ibid., p. 52 v.

120Ibid. "Et qui hanc ideam suam quae est Christus, deus et dei filius, ab aeterno iustus, fide imitando facit iustitiam, est ex deo, et imitatione in vero filio dei, dei filius. Sic qui facit iniustitiam quod est peccatum, transgressio mandate, et voluntati divinae contrarium, est ex diabolo, qui iniustus est a mundi conditione, et imitatione filius diaboli est."

121Ibid., "Et haec non est per aequalitatem. Ubique enim, quum nostra ad ea quae Christi sunt, hoc modo conseruntur; particula sicut imitationem et similitudinem dicit, non veritatis adaequationem; quia imitatio nunquam veritatem attingit, ut suae veritati sit aequa; neque vestigium exemplar, neque plasma suum platem. Sed haec imitatio placet deo, et accepta est in sua veritate. Veritas enim salvat, non vestigium; sicut veritas in archetypis est summa gloria summaque vita."

122Ibid., p. 55 r.

123Ibid., p. 55 v. "Hic scripturas intelligit supra hominem, et secundum spiritum. Primi non intelligunt, credunt simpliciter. Secundi aliquantulum intelligunt; at non multum supra hominem," See also 26 r, and 43 r.

124Ibid., p. 26 r.

125Ibid., p. 60 v.

126Ibid., p. 50 r. "Unde ferme nostra aetas non solum exhortatione, sed maxime doctrina eget, et is urgentissime implendum domini verbum; Praedicate evangelium omni creaturae"

<sup>127</sup>John 15:16.

<sup>128</sup>Comment. in epist. cath., p. 66 r-v. "Ut non voluntati nostrae in divinis perfectionibus aliquid tribuatur, sed glorificetur in omnibus illa infinite bona dei voluntas divinaque electio, quae est omnis boni ratio, non creata voluntas." See also 68 r.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., p. 57 r.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., p. 47 r.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid., p. 61 r.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., p. 64 v.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., p. 19 v. "Per patrem, qui sua voluntate elegit eos in praegnotione et praefinitione aeterna; ut intelligant non sua voluntate, non sua scientia ad christum venisse, ad quem nemo venit nisi pater traxerit illum, etsi sua ipsorum tractui obedierit voluntas. Per spiritum sanctum, qui sanctificavit eos, ne putent sanctificationem suam esse humanam, et operibus legis eis obvenisse."

<sup>134</sup>Lefèvre often speaks of the gifts of God's grace and charity as infused, however he does not connect this infusion with the sacramental system. See pp. 46 v, 57 v, and 58 r.

### CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>Guy Bedouelle and Franco Giaccone, eds., Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples et Ses Disciples: Epistres et evangiles pour les cinquante et deux dimanches de l'an (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), p. xx; and Richard M. Cameron, "The Charges of Lutheranism Brought Against Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1520-1529)," Harvard Theological Review 63(1970): 134-135. Cameron cites Herminjard, ep. 135, pp. 320-323. Wolfgang Capito (1478-1541), as an accomplished Hebraist, had worked with Erasmus and had also served as the cathedral preacher in Basel and as a professor of law, medicine and theology. At one point he had even been chancellor and chaplain to archbishop Albert of Mainz. Capito came to Strasbourg as provost of the collegiate church of St. Thomas and was convinced by reformer Matthew Zell to join the cause of reform already underway in the city. In March of 1528, while Lefèvre was engaged at Blois as a tutor of Francis' children, Capito wrote to Marguerite of Navarre, who had herself spent part of the winter at Blois. His comments reveal his high regard for Lefèvre and are interesting as an illustration of the impression which Lefèvre could make on others who knew him closely. "You are able, besides, any time that you desire, and I know that you often desire it, to talk with that friendly, wise, and devout old fellow, Lefèvre d'Étaples, whose serious intelligence, tempered by a sort of playfulness which is becoming to his age, treats the mysteries of our faith with a graciousness full of charm whenever one asks him." Herminjard, vol. 4, ep. 227, pp. 119-121.

<sup>2</sup>Cameron, "The Charges of Lutheranism," p. 120.

<sup>3</sup>Bedouelle and Giacone, p. xx. The major sources for the original records of the Sorbonne's actions against Meaux are Charles Duplessis d'Argentré, Collectio iudiciorum de novis erroribus qui . . . in ecclesia proscripti sunt, 3 vols. (Lutetiae Parisiorum: A. Cailleau, 1728-1736); l'Abbe A. Clerval, ed., Registre des procès-verbaux de la faculté de théologie de Paris (Paris: Lecoffre, 1917); and Cesar Egasse DuBoulay, Historia Universitatis Parisiensis . . . authore Cesare Bulaeo, 6 vols. (Parisiis: F. Noëlet, P. de Bresche, 1665-1673).

<sup>4</sup>Bedouelle and Giacone, p. xxii.

<sup>5</sup>Henri Hauser and Augustine Renaudet, Les débuts de l'âge moderne, 3rd ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1946), p. 240. Marguerite became known as an author of several religious works, the most famous of which is the Miroir de l'ame pecheresse published in 1531. Her letters to Briçonnet have now been edited and published in Christine Martineau and Michel Veissière, eds., Guillaume Briçonnet, Marguerite d'Angoulême: Correspondence (1521-1524), Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance (Geneve: Droz, 1975). In January of 1523 Marguerite wrote to Briçonnet expressing her confusion in trying to interpret difficult passages of Scripture and seeking his aid in understanding such obscure places. Briçonnet, in return, referred Marguerite to Lefèvre's commentaries for the assistance she sought. Herminjard, vol. 2, eps. 54 and 55, pp. 104-106.

<sup>6</sup>Cameron, "The Charges of Lutheranism," p. 130.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 130-131. Cameron cites DuBoulay, Historia, vol. 6, p. 183.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Richard M. Cameron, "The Attack on the Biblical Work of Lefèvre d'Étaples, (1514-1521)," Church History 38(1969): 9. Lefèvre was condemned in 1519 for his criticism of the Vulgate which appeared in the 1512 Pauline commentaries. This particular attack came from Jacobus Lapidus Stunica in the Annotationes contra Jacobum Fabrum Stapulensem (Paris: Impressum in Acad. Complutensi per Arnoldum Guillaume de Brocariis, 1519).

<sup>10</sup>Cameron, "The Charges of Lutheranism," p. 128. The Sorbonne at this time also examined and condemned works by Erasmus and Louis de Berquin, who was later burned for heresy on April 17, 1529.

<sup>11</sup>Bedouelle and Giacone, p. xix.

<sup>12</sup>James Jordan, "Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples: Principles and Practice of Reform at Meaux," in Contemporary Reflections on the Medieval Christian Tradition: Essays in Honor of Ray C. Petry, ed.

George H. Shriver (Durham: Duke University Press, 1974), p. 112. Jordan adds that Guillaume Farel probably left Meaux at this time.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 114. Jordan states that the homilies were used by the priests either to explain the texts or as prepared sermons to be read to the congregations. He believes that there is evidence that Briconnet ordered this to be done.

<sup>14</sup>Cameron, "The Charges of Lutheranism," p. 127.

<sup>15</sup>Bedouelle and Giacone, p. xxvii.

<sup>16</sup>Henry Heller, "The Evangelicalism of Lefèvre d'Étaples: 1525," Studies in the Renaissance 19 (1972): 44. Heller is using the report of one of Lefèvre's followers at Meaux, Jean Lecomte d'Étaples. Lecomte's statements may be found in full in J. Vuillemier, "Quelques pages inédits d'un réformateur trop peu connu," Revue de théologie et de philosophie 19(1886): 337. Lecomte's remarks are quoted by James Jordan in "Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples: Principles and Practice of Reform at Meaux," pp. 112-113. "There already exists, to be sure, some short Exhortations for the Fifty-Two Sundays of the Year. I myself collaborated on it, the fourth one to do so, when I was at Meaux under the evangelical episcopacy of Guillaume Briconnet. . . . Those exhortations, composed in relation to the circumstance of that place and time, were revised and corrected by my patron and fellow-citizen Lefèvre, the ornament not only of our town of Étaples but of all the French and even of the entire world . . ."

<sup>17</sup>Bedouelle and Giacone, p. xxxiii.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. xxxi.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. xxxix.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. xl. Bedouelle and Giacone have taken their information on Roussel from C. Schmidt, Gérard Roussel (Strasbourg, 1845), pp. 135-50.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. xvii. According to Bedouelle and Giacone, the Sorbonne's condemnation of Lefèvre in 1526 and by the Parlement in 1543 represent our best sources for even connecting Lefèvre with the Epistres et evangiles. The 1526 censure is found in Annotationum Natalis Bede . . . in Jacobum Fabrum Stapulensem libri duo, et in Desiderium Erasmus Roterodamum liber unus (Paris: Jodocus Badius Ascensius, 1526). Bede spoke out again three years later against Lefèvre and other "Lutherans" in Apologia Natalis Bedae theologi adversus clandestinos Lutheranos (Paris: Ascensius, 1529).

<sup>22</sup>See Chapter Two, p. 55.

<sup>23</sup>Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, "Preface to the French Translation of the Gospels, 1523," in The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre

d'Étaples and Related Texts, ed. Eugene F. Rice, Jr. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), p. 450. "Voicy maintenant le temps acceptable, voicy maintenant les jours de salut. Aussi maintenant le temps est venu que nostre seigneur Jesuchrist, seul salut, verité et vie, veult que son Evangile soit purement annoncee par tout le monde."

<sup>24</sup>Heller, p. 72.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 68-70.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>30</sup>Epistres et evanziles, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup>See Chapter Two, p. 46.

<sup>33</sup>Epistres et evangiles, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 66. Romans 4:25.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 257. "La difference entre exteriore apparente, et sainte, interiore, veritable et parfaicte justice. La premiere est justice hypocritique, justice de loy, justice pharisaique. La seconde est justice invisible, justice chrestienne, justice de foy." Additional examples of this idea are on pp. 242, 258, and 333.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 80-81. "La creature raisonnable engendrée, et venant sur terre, elle, à cause de la transgression du premier Adam, retient une inclination qui l'induit tousjours à peché, (et demeure en elle une promptitude a peche et racine de mal), laquelle ne demande tousjours que produire l'arbre d'infidelité, dont procedent tous mauvais fruictz, qui sont les pechéz de mort. Pour laquelle chose, l'homme, estant en ceste vie mortelle, doibt soigneusement prendre peine de oster du tout ceste mauvaise inclination et les concupiscences d'icelle." cf. Chapter Two pp. 11 and 12.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 46. cf. Chapter Two, p. 11.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 72. Epistola ad Rhomanos, p. 85 r.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 330.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 52. "Et n'est nul de nous (combien que par la foy et parolle de Jesuchrist misericodieusement soyons adoptéz à la vie



eternelle) qui ne aye esté conceu en peché, et ne aye esté né enfant d'ire."

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>43</sup>Epistola ad Rhomanos, p. 79 r. Romans 5:18 and 3:20.

<sup>44</sup>Epistres et evangiles, p. 259. "O loy divine immaculée, où est le cueur qui devant toy sera trouvé monde et net? Certes ce seul commandement, ainsi à la verité entendu et exposé, nous damne tous."

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 155. "Il a satisfaict à tout, et pour tous; p. 297, "Jesuchrist, qui seul a satisfaict et acomply la loy pour nous."

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 297. "Saint Paul en ceste epistre nous veut donner à entendre que grace et benediction ne nous est point donnée par saint ne sainte, (patriarche, ne prophete), ne mesme par l'observation de la loy, mais par la seule foy et fiance que on a en Jesuchrist." The censure of the Sorbonne reads "Haec propositio Sanctorum auxilia a fidelibus expetita et observationem mandatorum divinatorum a necessitate salutis secludens, et solam ponens fidem seu confidentiam in Christum necessariam, in Spiritum sanctum qui per Paulum locutus est, blasphemia est et haeretica."

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 87. "Celux qui estoient pecheurs, ennemys de Dieu qui ne povoient estre justifiéz par la loy, ne par quelque oeuvre qu'ilz peussent faire, ilz ont esté justifiés par la foy en JesuChrist."

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 333.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 359. "Se tu as ceste foy que Jesuchrist est mort pour toy, et pour effacer tes pechez, il est ainsi, et tes pechez sont effacés. Et sa mort est tienne, et le merite de sa mort tien. Et se tu crois aussi qu'il est resuscité pour ta justification, il est ainsi, et sa resurrection est tienne et ta justification, et es vraiment justifié par foy."

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 214. "Dieu veut faire à tous misericorde et accepter tous les hommes de toutes nations s'ils ont crainte de lui et font les oeuvres de foi par laquelle il veut tout justifier."

<sup>55</sup>Comment. in epist. cath., p. 50 r. See Chapter Two, n. 110.

<sup>56</sup>Epistres et evangiles, p. 126. "La volenté de nostre seigneur (dit saint Paul), c'est vostre sanctification, c'est que vous soyez

sanctifiéz en luy. Et pour estre sanctifiéz en luy, il faut faire deux choses. Premièrement, il fault scavoit posséder son vaisseau en sanctification, honneste et pure. . . . La seconde chose qu'il fault faire pour estre justifiéz en Dieu, est que nul ne face à son prochain et à son frere chrestien aucune circonvention, aucun griefvement, aucune (tromperie ou deception) en quelque noçoce que ce soit." See also p. 262.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 174. "Et ce faict, Thomas le confesse son Seigneur et son Dieu. Et certes, non tant Thomas, que l'esperit de foy qui avec la foy entra en luy."

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 205. "Certes tout ce que nous avons, c'est grace de Dieu."

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 164. "Aussi nul ne ira en Hierusalem celeste, sinon par foy parfaite de la fructueuse mort et glorieuse resurrection de nostre seigneur Jesuschrist. Dieu doncques de sa grace nous inspire ceste justifiante et vivifiante foy."

<sup>62</sup>Martin Luther, "Treatise on Good Works," in Selected Writings of Martin Luther, ed. Theodore G. Tappert, vol. 1:1517-1520 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 105. "The first, highest, and most precious of all good works is faith in Christ. For in this work all good works exist." WA 6:202-276.

<sup>63</sup>Epistres et evangiles, pp. 217-218. "Car il n'est nulle bonne oeuvre sinon foy et celles qui sont faictes en foy, comme nostre seigneur dit: 'Cecy est l'oeuvre de Dieu: que vous croyez en celuy lequel il a envoyé; Jn VI, 29.'"

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 218 and 345.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 46. "Nous vivions sobrement quant à nous mesmes, justement, quant à nostre prochain, et fidlement quant à Dieu, lequel est servi par foy, laquelle est morte sans bonnes oeuvres;" p. 182, "et faisons cecy, et toutes bonnes oeuvres, volontairement, en foy et en charite, comme estans en liberte. . . . Faisons doncques toutes noz oeuvres en liberte de foy, comme servz a Dieu et de justice."

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 113. "En l'epistre du jourd'hui, est faicte mention de trois dons du saint esperit, qui sont necessaires a ung chascun pour aller au royaume de paradis, c'est assavoir foy, esperance et charite, qui ne se separent point en ce monde cy, car il est impossible d'avoir l'ung sans l'autre parfaitement."

<sup>67</sup>Bedouelle and Giacone, p. xlvi. For some reason the Sorbonne attacked this idea on textual grounds. "Haec propositio textui Apostolico contraria est, et ideo haeretica."

<sup>68</sup>It would be easy to compare the Epistres et evangiles to Lefevre's work in order to point out the many instances of similar ideas, language or metaphor but such a task is not within the scope of this paper.

<sup>69</sup>Cameron, "The Charges of Lutheranism," pp. 134-135.

<sup>70</sup>John T. McNeill. The History and Character of Calvinism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 113.

#### CONCLUSIONS

<sup>1</sup>WA 2:146. "Haec igitur iusticia aliena et sine actibus nostris per solam gratiam infusa nobis, trahente intus scilicet patre nos ad Christum, opponitur peccato originali." It is interesting that in 1519 Luther is still speaking of an infused rather than an imputed righteousness of Christ.

<sup>2</sup>Denzinger, p. 284. "Districtius inhibendo, ne deinceps audeat quisquam aliter credere, praedicare aut docere, quam praesenti decreto statuitur ac declaratur." In addition the condemnation, "Anathema sit," was applied to any who would in fact presume to hold any other than the accepted position.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 283. "Si quis per Iesu Christi Domini nostri gratiam, quae in baptisate confertur, reatum originalis peccati remitti negat, aut etiam asserit, non tolli totum id, quod veram et propriam peccati rationem habet. . . . Anathema sit." Trent also stated that the translation from a state of original sin to one of adoption as a son of God "post Evangelium promulgatum sine lavacro regenerationis aut eius voto fieri non potest," p. 285.

<sup>4</sup>A typical statement by Lefèvre on baptism comes in his comments on the third chapter of II Peter and says just enough to make one wish that he had said more. Following Peter, he refers to baptism in terms of Noah and the flood, "Noe figura prophetarum et apostolorum: arca, ecclesiae quam ipsi aedificaverunt, finis illius seculi, finis mundi. Etsi nullus nisi in arca salvari potuit, et hoc per aquam, nullus profecto in fine mundi salvabitur nisi in ecclesia, et hoc per baptismum," Comment. in epist. cath., p. 41 v. Trent specifically attacked the view of original sin as imitation. Denzinger, p. 282. "Si quis hoc Adae peccatum, quod origine unum est et propagatione, non imitatione transfusum omnibus inest unicuique proprium. . . . Anathema sit."

<sup>5</sup>Comment. in epist. cath., p. 45 r. Denzinger, p. 283. "Manere autem in baptizatis concupiscentiam vel fomitem, haec sancta Synodus fatetur et sentit; quae cum ad agonem relicta sit, nocere non consentientibus et viriliter per Christi Iesu gratiam repugnantibus non valet."

<sup>6</sup>Comment. in epist. Cath., p. 61 r. Denzinger, p. 286. "Declarat praeterea, ipsius iustificationis exordium in adultis a Dei per Christum Iesum praeviente gratia sumendum esse, hoc est, ab eius vocatione, qua nullis eorum existentibus meritis vocantur, ut qui per peccata a Deo aversi erant, per eius excitantem atque adiuvantem gratiam ad convertendum se ad suam ipsorum iustificationem, eidem gratiae libere assentiendo et cooperando, disponantur, ita ut, tangente Deo cor hominis per Spiritus Sancti illuminationem, neque homo ipse nihil omnino agat, inspirationem illam recipiens, quippe qui illam et abicere potest, neque tamen sine gratia Dei movere se ad iustitiam coram illo libera sua voluntate possit."

<sup>7</sup>In this case the reference is not to Lefèvre's Catholic Commentaries but to his Romans commentary, p. 60 r.

<sup>8</sup>Denzinger, p. 288. "Ut scilicet per fidem ideo iustificari dicamur, quia 'fides est humane salutis initium,' fundamentum et radix omnis iustificationis."

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 287. "Hanc dispositionem seu praeparationem iustificatio ipsa consequitur, quae non est sola peccatorum remissio sed et sanctificatio et renovatio interioris hominis per voluntariam susceptionem gratiae et donorum."

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 289. "In ipsa iustitia per Christi gratiam accepta, cooperante fide bonis operibus, crescunt atque magis iustificantur."

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 302. "Si quis dixerit, parvulos eo, quod actum credendi non habent, suscepto baptismo inter fideles computandos non esse. . . . Anathema sit."

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 288. "Nam fides, nisi ad eam spes accedat et caritas, neque unit perfecte cum Christo."

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. "Unde in ipsa iustificatione cum remissione peccatorum haec omnia simul infusa accipit homo per Iesum Christum, cui inseritur: fidem, spem et caritatem."

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 290. "Nemo autem, quantumvis iustificatus, liberum se esse ab observatione mandatorum putare debet. . . . Itaque nemo sibi in sola fide blandiri debet, putans fide sola se heredem esse constitutum hereditatemque consecuturum, etiamsi Christo non compatiatur, ut et conglorificetur (Rom. 8:17)."

<sup>15</sup>Comment. in epist. cath., pp. 46 v, 50 r, and 29 v.

<sup>16</sup>Although Trent liberally quoted the Scriptures in support of its decrees, an extra-Scriptural tradition, handed down verbally from Christ to the Apostles and thence preserved within the Church was also accepted as authoritative. Denzinger, p. 279.

<sup>17</sup>Denzinger, p. 280.

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## VITA

Donna Spivey Ellington was born in Charlotte, North Carolina on January 9, 1955. She attended elementary schools in Gastonia, North Carolina and graduated from Ashbrook High School in May, 1973 as a member of the National Honor Society. The following September Ellington entered Appalachian State University to pursue a degree in History. While studying toward the degree she was an instructional assistant for one semester in the Department of Religion and also became a member of Phi Alpha Theta, the national honor society for history. In the summer of 1977 Ellington received a BA in history and graduated magna cum laude.

Ellington once again entered Appalachian State University in the fall of 1981 to begin work on a Master of Arts degree in history. She was given a two year assistantship to teach the freshman history survey course, World Civilizations until 1650. During graduate school Ellington's studies centered on intellectual history of the late medieval and Reformation periods. On April 14, 1984 she read a paper, The Doctrine of Justification in the Commentarii in epistolas catholicas of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1527), at a regional Phi Alpha Theta meeting in Greensboro, North Carolina, and then she received the MA degree in May of the same year.

Ellington has been given a Medieval-Renaissance Fellowship from Duke University and will begin work toward a Ph.D. in the fall of 1984. Her current address is P. O. Box 1963, Boone, North Carolina. Her parents are Mrs. Doris C. Spivey of Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Mr. John Carroll Spivey of Lexington, North Carolina. She is married to Alfred Steven Ellington, originally from Cramerton, North Carolina.