

opposition. For while they desire peace, that along with it the kingdom of Christ may flourish, and you, on the other hand, think that all which is gained to Christ is lost to you, it is not strange that you strenuously resist. And you have arts by which you can in one day overturn all that they accomplish for the glory of Christ in many months. I will not overwhelm you with words, because one word will make the matter clear. Our [reformers] offered to render an account of their doctrine. If overcome in argument, they decline not to submit. To whom, then, is it owing that the Church enjoys not perfect peace, and the light of truth? Go now, and charge us as seditious, in not permitting the Church to be quiet!

But (that you might not omit any thing which might tend to prejudice our cause) since, during these few years, many sects have sprung up, you, with your usual candor, lay the blame upon us. See with what fairness, or even with what plausibility! If we deserve hatred on that account, the Christian name also must in times of old have deserved it from the ungodly. Therefore, either cease to molest us on this subject, or openly declare that the Christian religion, which begets so many tumults in the world, ought to be banished from the memory of man! It ought not to hurt our cause in the least that Satan has tried in all ways to impede the work of Christ. It were more to the point to inquire which party has devotedly opposed itself to all the sects which have arisen. It is plain that while you were idle and fast asleep, we alone bore all the brunt.

The Lord grant, Sadoletto, that you and all your party may at length perceive, that the only true bond of ecclesiastical unity would exist if Christ the Lord, who hath reconciled us to God the Father, were to gather us out of our present dispersion into the fellowship of His body, that so, through His one Word and Spirit, we might join together with one heart and one soul.

Strasbourg, September 1, 1539

Appendix on The Justification Controversy

I

Calvin on Justification

The following statement and explanation of the doctrine of justification by faith alone is taken from the final edition (1559) of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book III, Chapter XI, reprinted with permission from Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, tr. Ford Lewis Battles (copyright © 1960, W. L. Jenkins. Vols. XX and XXI of *The Library of Christian Classics*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), I, 725-734.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH: FIRST THE DEFINITION OF THE WORD AND OF THE MATTER

1. Place and meaning of the doctrine of "justification"

I believe I have already explained above, with sufficient care, how for men cursed under the law there remains, in faith, one sole means of recovering salvation. I believe I have also explained what faith itself is, and those benefits of God which it confers upon man, and the fruits it brings forth in him.

Let us sum these up. Christ was given to us by God's generosity, to be grasped and possessed by us in faith. By partaking of him, we principally receive a double grace:

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namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness, we may have in heaven instead of a Judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by Christ's spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life. Of regeneration, indeed, the second of these gifts, I have said what seemed sufficient. The theme of justification was therefore more lightly touched upon because it was more to the point to understand first how little devoid of good works is the faith, through which alone we obtain free righteousness by the mercy of God; and what is the nature of the good works of the saints, with which part of this question is concerned. Therefore we must now discuss these matters thoroughly. And we must so discuss them as to bear in mind that this is the main hinge on which religion turns, so that we devote the greater attention and care to it. For unless you first of all grasp what your relationship to God is, and the nature of his judgment concerning you, you have neither a foundation on which to establish your salvation nor one on which to build piety toward God. But the need to know this will better appear from the knowledge itself.

2. The concept of justification

But that we may not stumble on the very threshold—and this would happen if we should enter upon a discussion of a thing unknown—first let us explain what these expressions mean: that man is justified in God's sight, and that he is justified by faith or works. He is said to be justified in God's sight who is both reckoned righteous in God's judgment and has been accepted on account of his righteousness. Indeed, as iniquity is abominable to God, so no sinner can find favor in his eyes in so far as he is a sinner and so long as he is reckoned as such. Accordingly, wherever there is sin, there also the wrath and vengeance of God show themselves. Now he is justified who is reckoned in the condition not of a sinner, but of a righteous man; and for that reason, he stands firm before God's judgment seat while all sinners fall. If an innocent

2.1.
"man justified in God's sight" meaning.

CALVIN ON JUSTIFICATION

accused person be summoned before the judgment seat of a fair judge, where he will be judged according to his innocence, he is said to be "justified" before the judge. Thus, justified before God is the man who, freed from the company of sinners, has God to witness and affirm his righteousness. In the same way, therefore, he in whose life that purity and holiness will be found which deserves a testimony of righteousness before God's throne will be said to be justified by works, or else he who, by the wholeness of his works, can meet and satisfy God's judgment. On the contrary, justified by faith is he who, excluded from the righteousness of works, grasps the righteousness of Christ through faith, and clothed in it, appears in God's sight not as a sinner but as a righteous man.

2.2.
"justified by works"

2.3.
"justified by faith"

(2) summary

Therefore, we explain justification simply as the acceptance with which God receives us into his favor as righteous men. And we say that it consists in the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

3. Scriptural usage

There are many clear testimonies of Scripture to confirm this fact. First, it cannot be denied that this is a proper and most customary meaning of the word. But because it would take too long to collect all the passages and to compare them, let it suffice to have called them to our readers' attention, for they will readily observe such of themselves. I shall bring forward only a few, where this justification of which we are speaking is expressly treated.

First, when Luke relates that the people, having heard Christ, justified God [Luke 7:29], and when Christ declares that "wisdom is justified by . . . her children" [Luke 7:35], Luke in the former passage (v. 29) does not mean that they confer righteousness. For righteousness always remains undivided with God, although the whole world tries to snatch it away from him. Nor does he, in v. 35, intend to justify the doctrine of salvation, which is righteous of itself. Rather, both

expressions have the same force—to render to God and his teaching the praise they deserve. On the other hand, when Christ upbraids the Pharisees for justifying themselves [Luke 16:15], he does not mean that they acquire righteousness by well-doing but that they ambitiously seize upon a reputation for righteousness of which they are devoid. Those skilled in the Hebrew language better understand this sense: where not only those who are conscious of their crime but those who undergo the judgment of damnation are called “wicked.” For when Bathsheba says that she and Solomon will be wicked [1 Kings 1:21], she does not acknowledge any offense. But she complains that she and her son are going to be put to shame, to be counted among the wicked and condemned. Yet from the context it readily appears that this word, even when it is read in Latin, cannot otherwise be understood than relatively, but not so as to signify any quality.

But, because it pertains to the present case, when Paul says that Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith [Gal. 3:8], what else may you understand but that God imputes righteousness by faith? Again, when he says that God justifies the impious person who has faith in Christ [Rom. 3:26 p.], what can his meaning be except that men are freed by the benefit of faith from that condemnation which their impiety deserved? This appears even more clearly in his conclusion, when he exclaims: “Who will accuse God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who will condemn? It is Christ who died, yes, who rose again . . . and now intercedes for us” [Rom. 8:33–34 p.]. For it is as if he had said: “Who will accuse those whom God has absolved? Who will condemn those whom Christ defends with his protection?” Therefore, “to justify” means nothing else than to acquit of guilt him who was accused, as if his innocence were confirmed. Therefore, since God justifies us by the intercession of Christ, he absolves us not by the confirmation of our own innocence but by the imputation of righteousness, so that we who are not right-

eous in ourselves may be reckoned as such in Christ. Thus it is said in Paul’s sermon in the thirteenth chapter of The Acts: Through Christ is forgiveness of sins announced to you, and everyone who believes in him is justified of all things from which the law of Moses could not justify him [Acts 13:38–39]. You see that, after forgiveness of sins, this justification is set down, as it were, by way of interpretation. You see that it is plainly understood as absolution, you see that it is separated from the works of the law. You see it as the mere benefit of Christ, and you see that it is received by faith. You see finally that a satisfaction is introduced where he says that we are justified from our sins through Christ. Thus, when the publican is said to have gone down from the Temple justified [Luke 18:14], we cannot say that he achieved righteousness by any merit of works. This, therefore, is what is said: after pardon of sins has been obtained, the sinner is considered as a just man in God’s sight. Therefore, he was righteous not by approval of works but by God’s free absolution. Ambrose has, accordingly, fitly expressed it when he calls the confession of sins a lawful justification.

4. *Justification as gracious acceptance by God and as forgiveness of sins*

And to avoid contention over a word, if we look upon the thing itself as described to us, no misgiving will remain. For Paul surely refers to justification by the word “acceptance” when in Eph. 1:5–6 he says: “We are destined for adoption through Christ according to God’s good pleasure, to the praise of his glorious grace by which he has accounted us acceptable and beloved” [Eph. 1:5–6 p.]. That means the very thing that he commonly says elsewhere, that “God justifies us freely” [Rom. 3:24]. Moreover, in the fourth chapter of Romans he first calls justification “imputation of righteousness.” And he does not hesitate to include it within forgiveness of sins. Paul says: “That man is declared blessed by David whom God

renders acceptable or to whom he imputes righteousness apart from works, as it is written: 'Blessed are they whose transgressions have been forgiven'" [Rom. 4:6-7 p.; Ps. 32:1]. There he is obviously discussing not a part of justification but the whole of it. Further, he approves the definition of it set forth by David when he declares those men blessed to whom free pardon of sins is given [Ps. 32:1-2]. From this it is clear that the righteousness of which he speaks is simply set in opposition to guilt. But the best passage of all on this matter is the one in which he teaches that the sum of the gospel embassy is to reconcile us to God, since God is willing to receive us into grace through Christ, not counting our sins against us [II Cor. 5:18-20]. Let my readers carefully ponder the whole passage. For a little later Paul adds by way of explanation: "Christ, who was without sin, was made sin for us" [II Cor. 5:21], to designate the means of reconciliation [cf. vs. 18-19]. Doubtless, he means by the word "reconciled" nothing but "justified." And surely, what he teaches elsewhere—that "we are made righteous by Christ's obedience" [Rom. 5:19 p.]—could not stand unless we are reckoned righteous before God in Christ and apart from ourselves.*

13. *Righteousness by faith and righteousness by works*

But a great part of mankind imagine that righteousness is composed of faith and works. Let us also, to begin with, show that faith righteousness so differs from works righteousness that when one is established the other has to be overthrown. The apostle says that he "counts everything as dross" that he "may gain Christ and be found in him, . . . not having a righteousness of [his] own, based on law, but one that is through faith in Jesus Christ, the righteousness from God through faith" [Phil. 3:8-9 p.]. You see here both a com-

* Sections 5 through 12 of this chapter, which have not been reprinted here, discuss and reply to the teaching of Andreas Osiander (1498-1552) regarding justification. Osiander, Lutheran reformer at Nürnberg and later professor at Königsberg, came to hold a doctrine of "essential righteousness" which differed sharply from the Lutheran and Calvinist concept of imputed justification.

parison of opposites and an indication that a man who wishes to obtain Christ's righteousness must abandon his own righteousness. Therefore, he states elsewhere that this was the cause of the Jews' downfall: "Wishing to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to God's righteousness" [Rom. 10:3 p.]. If by establishing our own righteousness we shake off the righteousness of God, to attain the latter we must indeed completely do away with the former. He also shows this very thing when he states that our boasting is not excluded by law but by faith [Rom. 3:27]. From this it follows that so long as any particle of works righteousness remains some occasion for boasting remains with us. Now, if faith excludes all boasting, works righteousness can in no way be associated with faith righteousness. In this sense he speaks so clearly in the fourth chapter of Romans that no place is left for cavils or shifts: "If Abraham," says Paul, "was justified by works, he has something to boast about." He adds, "Yet he has no reason to boast before God" [Rom. 4:2]. It follows, therefore, that he was not justified by works. Then Paul sets forth another argument from contraries. When reward is made for works it is done out of debt, not of grace [Rom. 4:4]. But righteousness according to grace is owed to faith. Therefore it does not arise from the merits of works. Farewell, then, to the dream of those who think up a righteousness flowing together out of faith and works.

14. *Likewise, the works of the regenerated can procure no justification*

The Sophists, who make game and sport in their corrupting of Scripture and their empty caviling, think they have a subtle evasion. For they explain "works" as meaning those which men not yet reborn do only according to the letter by the effort of their own free will, apart from Christ's grace. But they deny that these refer to spiritual works. For, according to them, man is justified by both faith and works provided they are not his own works but the gifts of Christ and the fruit

of regeneration. For they say that Paul so spoke for no other reason than to convince the Jews, who were relying upon their own strength, that they were foolish to arrogate righteousness to themselves, since the Spirit of Christ alone bestows it upon us not through any effort arising from our own nature. Still they do not observe that in the contrast between the righteousness of the law and of the gospel, which Paul elsewhere introduces, all works are excluded, whatever title may grace them [Gal. 3:11-12]. For he teaches that this is the righteousness of the law, that he who has fulfilled what the law commands should obtain salvation; but this is the righteousness of faith, to believe that Christ died and rose again [Rom. 10:5, 9].

Moreover, we shall see afterward, in its proper place, that the benefits of Christ—sanctification and righteousness—are different. From this it follows that not even spiritual works come into account when the power of justifying is ascribed to faith. The statement of Paul where he denies that Abraham had any reason to boast before God—a passage that we have just cited—because he was not righteous by his works, ought not to be restricted to a literal and outward appearance of virtues or to the effort of free will. But even though the life of the patriarch was spiritual and well-nigh angelic, he did not have sufficient merit of works to acquire righteousness before God.

15. *The Roman doctrine of grace and good works*

Somewhat too gross are the Schoolmen, who mingle their concoctions. Yet these men infect the simple-minded and unwary with a doctrine no less depraved, cloaking under the disguise of "spirit" and "grace" even the mercy of God, which alone can set fearful souls at rest. Now we confess with Paul that the doers of the law are justified before God; but, because we are all far from observing the law, we infer from this that those works which ought especially to avail for righteousness give us no help because we are destitute of them.

As regards the rank and file of the papists or Schoolmen,

they are doubly deceived here both because they call faith an assurance of conscience in awaiting from God their reward for merits and because they interpret the grace of God not as the imputation of free righteousness but as the Spirit helping in the pursuit of holiness. They read in the apostle: "Whoever would draw near to God must first believe that he exists and then that he rewards those who seek him" [Heb. 11:6]. But they pay no attention to the way in which he is to be sought. It is clear from their own writings that in using the term "grace" they are deluded. For Lombard explains that justification is given to us through Christ in two ways. First, he says, Christ's death justifies us, while love is aroused through it in our hearts and makes us righteous. Second, because through the same love, sin is extinguished by which the devil held us captive, so that he no longer has the wherewithal to condemn us. You see how he views God's grace especially in justification, in so far as we are directed through the grace of the Holy Spirit to good works. Obviously, he intended to follow Augustine's opinion, but he follows it at a distance and even departs considerably from the right imitation of it. For when Augustine says anything clearly, Lombard obscures it, and if there was anything slightly contaminated in Augustine, he corrupts it. The schools have gone continually from bad to worse until, in headlong ruin, they have plunged into a sort of Pelagianism. For that matter, Augustine's view, or at any rate his manner of stating it, we must not entirely accept. For even though he admirably deprives man of all credit for righteousness and transfers it to God's grace, he still subsumes grace under sanctification, by which we are reborn in newness of life through the Spirit.

16. *Our justification according to the judgment of Scripture*

But Scripture, when it speaks of faith righteousness, leads us to something far different: namely, to turn aside from the contemplation of our own works and look solely upon God's mercy and Christ's perfection. Indeed, it presents this order of

justification: to begin with, God deigns to embrace the sinner with his pure and freely given goodness, finding nothing in him except his miserable condition to prompt Him to mercy, since he sees man utterly void and bare of good works; and so he seeks in himself the reason to benefit man. Then God touches the sinner with a sense of his goodness in order that he, despairing of his own works, may ground the whole of his salvation in God's mercy. This is the experience of faith through which the sinner comes into possession of his salvation when from the teaching of the gospel he acknowledges that he has been reconciled to God: that with Christ's righteousness interceding and forgiveness of sins accomplished he is justified. And although regenerated by the Spirit of God, he ponders the everlasting righteousness laid up for him not in the good works to which he inclines but in the sole righteousness of Christ. When these things are pondered one by one, they will give a clear explanation of our opinion. However, they might be arranged in another order, better than the one in which they have been set forth. But it makes little difference, provided they so agree among themselves that we may have the whole matter rightly explained and surely confirmed.

17. *Faith righteousness and law righteousness according to Paul*

Here we should recall to mind the relation that we have previously established between faith and the gospel. For faith is said to justify because it receives and embraces the righteousness offered in the gospel. Moreover, because righteousness is said to be offered through the gospel, all consideration of works is excluded. Paul often shows this elsewhere but most clearly in two passages. For in comparing the law and the gospel in the letter to the Romans he says: "the righteousness that is of the law" is such that "the man who practices these things will live by them" [Rom. 10:5]. But the "righteousness that is of faith" [Rom. 10:6] announces salvation "if you

believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and that the Father raised him from the dead" [Rom. 10:9 p.j.]. Do you see how he makes this the distinction between law and gospel: that the former attributes righteousness to works, the latter bestows free righteousness apart from the help of works? This is an important passage, and one that can extricate us from many difficulties if we understand that that righteousness which is given us through the gospel has been freed of all conditions of the law. Here is the reason why he so often opposes the promise to the law, as things mutually contradictory: "If the inheritance is by the law, it is no longer by promise" [Gal. 3:18]; and passages in the same chapter that express this idea.

Now, to be sure, the law itself has its own promises. Therefore, in the promises of the gospel there must be something distinct and different unless we would admit that the comparison is inept. But what sort of difference will this be, other than that the gospel promises are free and dependent solely upon God's mercy, while the promises of the law depend upon the condition of works? And let no one here snarl at me that it is the righteousness which men, of their own strength and free will, would obtrude upon God that is rejected—inasmuch as Paul unequivocally teaches that the law, in commanding, profits nothing [cf. Rom. 8:3]. For there is no one, not only of the common folk, but of the most perfect persons, who can fulfill it. To be sure, love is the capstone of the law. When the Spirit of God forms us to such love, why is it not for us a cause of righteousness, except that even in the saints it is imperfect, and for that reason merits no reward of itself?

18. *Justification not the wages of works, but a free gift*

The second passage is this: "It is evident that no man is justified before God by the law. For the righteous shall live by faith [cf. Hab. 2:4]. But the law is not of faith;

rather, the man who does these things shall live in them" [Gal. 3:11-12]. How would this argument be maintained otherwise than by agreeing that works do not enter the account of faith but must be utterly separated? The law, he says, is different from faith. Why? Because works are required for law righteousness. Therefore it follows that they are not required for faith righteousness. From this relation it is clear that those who are justified by faith are justified apart from the merit of works—in fact, without the merit of works. For faith receives that righteousness which the gospel bestows. Now the gospel differs from the law in that it does not link righteousness to works but lodges it solely in God's mercy. Paul's contention in Romans is similar to this: that Abraham had no occasion to boast, for faith was reckoned as righteousness for him [Rom. 4:2-3]; and he adds as confirmation that the righteousness of faith has a place in circumstances where there are no works for which a reward is due. "Where," he says, "there are works, wages are paid as a debt; what is given to faith is free." [Rom. 4:4-5 p.] Indeed, the meaning of the words he uses there applies also to this passage. He adds a little later that we on this account obtain the inheritance from faith, as according to grace. Hence he infers that this inheritance is free, for it is received by faith [cf. Rom. 4:16]. How is this so except that faith rests entirely upon God's mercy without the assistance of works? And in another passage he teaches, doubtless in the same sense, that "the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although it is attested by the Law and the Prophets" [Rom. 3:21 p.]. For, excluding the law, he denies that we are aided by works and that we attain righteousness by working; instead, we come empty to receive it.

19. *Through "faith alone"*

Now the reader sees how fairly the Sophists today cavil against our doctrine when we say that man is justified by faith

alone [Rom. 3:28]. They dare not deny that man is justified by faith because it recurs so often in Scripture. But since the word "alone" is nowhere expressed, they do not allow this addition to be made. Is it so? But what will they reply to these words of Paul where he contends that righteousness cannot be of faith unless it be free [Rom. 4:2 ff.]. How will a free gift agree with works? With what chicaneries will they elude what he says in another passage, that God's righteousness is revealed in the gospel [Rom. 1:17]? If righteousness is revealed in the gospel, surely no mutilated or half righteousness but a full and perfect righteousness is contained there. The law therefore has no place in it. Not only by a false but by an obviously ridiculous shift they insist upon excluding this adjective. Does not he who takes everything from works firmly enough ascribe everything to faith alone? What, I pray, do these expressions mean: "His righteousness has been manifested apart from the law" [Rom. 3:21 p.]; and, "Man is freely justified" [Rom. 3:24 p.]; and, "Apart from the works of the law" [Rom. 3:28]?

Here they have an ingenious subterfuge: even though they have not devised it themselves but have borrowed it from Origen and certain other ancient writers, it is still utterly silly. They prate that the ceremonial works of the law are excluded, not the moral works. They become so proficient by continual wrangling that they do not even grasp the first elements of logic. Do they think that the apostle was raving when he brought forward these passages to prove his opinion? "The man who does these things will live in them" [Gal. 3:12], and, "Cursed be every one who does not fulfill all things written in the book of the law" [Gal. 3:10 p.]. Unless they have gone mad they will not say that life was promised to keepers of ceremonies or the curse announced only to those who transgress the ceremonies. If these passages are to be understood of the moral law, there is no doubt that moral works are also excluded from the power of justifying. These

arguments which Paul uses look to the same end: "Since through the law comes knowledge of sin" [Rom. 3:20], therefore not righteousness. Because "the law works wrath" [Rom. 4:15], hence not righteousness. Because the law does not make conscience certain, it cannot confer righteousness either. Because faith is imputed as righteousness, righteousness is therefore not the reward of works but is given unearned [Rom. 4:4-5]. Because we are justified by faith, our boasting is cut off [Rom. 3:27 p.]. "If a law had been given that could make alive, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But God consigned all things to sin that the promise might be given to those who believe." [Gal. 3:21-22 p.] Let them now babble, if they dare, that these statements apply to ceremonies, not to morals. Even schoolboys would hoot at such impudence. Therefore, let us hold as certain that when the ability to justify is denied to the law, these words refer to the whole law.

20. "Works of the law"

If anyone should wonder why the apostle, not content with naming works, uses such a qualification, there is a ready explanation. Though works are highly esteemed, they have their value from God's approval rather than from their own worth. For who would dare recommend works righteousness to God unless God himself approved? Who would dare demand a reward due unless he promised it? Therefore, it is from God's beneficence that they are considered worthy both of the name of righteousness and of the reward thereof. And so, for this one reason, works have value, because through them man intends to show obedience to God. Therefore, to prove that Abraham could not be justified by works, the apostle declares in another place that the law was given fully four hundred and thirty years after the covenant was made [Gal. 3:17]. The ignorant would laugh at this sort of argument, on the ground that before the promulgation of the law there could have been righteous works. But because he knew that works could have

such great value only by the testimony and vouchsafing of God, he took as a fact that previous to the law they had no power to justify. We have the reason why he expressly mentions the works of the law when he wants to take justification away from them, for it is clearly because a controversy can be raised only over them.

Yet he sometimes excepts all works without any qualification, as when on David's testimony he states that blessedness is imparted to that man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works [Rom. 4:6; Ps. 32:1-2]. Therefore no cavils of theirs can prevent us from holding to the exclusive expression as a general principle.

Also, they pointlessly strive after the foolish subtlety that we are justified by faith alone, which acts through love, so that righteousness depends upon love. Indeed, we confess with Paul that no other faith justifies "but faith working through love" [Gal. 5:6]. But it does not take its power to justify from that working of love. Indeed, it justifies in no other way but in that it leads us into fellowship with the righteousness of Christ. Otherwise, everything that the apostle insists upon so vigorously would fall. "Now to him who works the pay is not considered a gift but his due," says he. [Rom. 4:4] "But to one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness." [Rom. 4:5] Could he have spoken more clearly than in contending thus: that there is no righteousness of faith except where there are no works for which a reward is due? And then that faith is reckoned as righteousness only where righteousness is bestowed through a grace not owed?

21. Justification, reconciliation, forgiveness of sins

Now let us examine how true that statement is which is spoken in the definition, that the righteousness of faith is reconciliation with God, which consists solely in the forgiveness of sins. We must always return to this axiom: the wrath

of God rests upon all so long as they continue to be sinners. Isaiah has very well expressed it in these words: "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you lest he hear" [Isa. 59:1-2]. We are told that sin is division between man and God, the turning of God's face away from the sinner; and it cannot happen otherwise, seeing that it is foreign to his righteousness to have any dealings with sin. For this reason, the apostle teaches that man is God's enemy until he is restored to grace through Christ [Rom. 5:8-10]. Thus, him whom he receives into union with himself the Lord is said to justify, because he cannot receive him into grace nor join him to himself unless he turns him from a sinner into a righteous man. We add that this is done through forgiveness of sins; for if those whom the Lord has reconciled to himself be judged by works, they will indeed still be found sinners, though they ought, nevertheless, to be freed and cleansed from sin. It is obvious, therefore, that those whom God embraces are made righteous solely by the fact that they are purified when their spots are washed away by forgiveness of sins. Consequently, such righteousness can be called, in a word, "remission of sins."

22. *Scriptural proof for the close relation between justification and forgiveness of sins*

Paul's words, which I have already quoted, express both of these points very beautifully: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting men's trespasses against them, and has entrusted to us the word of reconciliation" [II Cor. 5:19]. Then Paul adds the summation of Christ's embassy: "Him who knew not sin he made to be sin for us so that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" [II Cor. 5:21]. Here he mentions righteous-

ness and reconciliation indiscriminately, to have us understand that each one is reciprocally contained in the other. Moreover, he teaches the way in which this righteousness is to be obtained: namely, when our sins are not counted against us. Therefore, doubt no longer how God may justify us when you hear that he reconciles us to himself by not counting our sins against us. Thus, by David's testimony Paul proves to the Romans that righteousness is imputed to man apart from works, for David declares that man "blessed whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered, to whom the Lord has not imputed iniquity" [Rom. 4:6-8; Ps. 32:1-2]. Undoubtedly, he there substitutes blessedness for righteousness; since he declares that it consists in forgiveness of sins, there is no reason to define it differently. Accordingly, Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, sings that the knowledge of salvation rests in the forgiveness of sins [Luke 1:77]. Paul followed this rule in the sermon on the sum of salvation that he delivered to the people of Antioch. As Luke reports it, he concluded in this way: "Through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and every one that believes in him is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses" [Acts 13:38-39 p.]. The apostle so connects forgiveness of sins with righteousness that he shows them to be exactly the same. From this he duly reasons that the righteousness that we obtain through God's kindness is free to us.

And this ought not to seem an unusual expression, that believers are made righteous before God not by works but by free acceptance, since it occurs so often in Scripture, and ancient writers also sometimes speak thus. So says Augustine in one place: "The righteousness of the saints in this world consists more in the forgiveness of sins than in perfection of virtues." Bernard's famous sentences correspond to this: "Not to sin is the righteousness of God; but the righteousness of

man is the grace of God." And he had previously declared: "Christ is our righteousness in absolution, and therefore those alone are righteous who obtain pardon from his mercy."

23. *Righteous—not in ourselves but in Christ*

From this it is also evident that we are justified before God solely by the intercession of Christ's righteousness. This is equivalent to saying that man is not righteous in himself but because the righteousness of Christ is communicated to him by imputation—something worth carefully noting. Indeed, that frivolous notion disappears, that man is justified by faith because by Christ's righteousness he shares the Spirit of God, by whom he is rendered righteous. This is too contrary to the above doctrine ever to be reconciled to it. And there is no doubt that he who is taught to seek righteousness outside himself is destitute of righteousness in himself. Moreover, the apostle most clearly asserts this when he writes: "He who knew not sin was made the atoning sacrifice of sin for us so that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" [II Cor. 5:21 p.].

You see that our righteousness is not in us but in Christ, that we possess it only because we are partakers in Christ; indeed, with him we possess all its riches. And this does not contradict what he teaches elsewhere, that sin has been condemned for sin in Christ's flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us [Rom. 8:3-4]. The only fulfillment he alludes to is that which we obtain through imputation. For in such a way does the Lord Christ share his righteousness with us that, in some wonderful manner, he pours into us enough of his power to meet the judgment of God. It is quite clear that Paul means exactly the same thing in another statement, which he had put a little before: "As we were made sinners by one man's disobedience, so we have been justified by one man's obedience" [Rom. 5:19 p.]. To declare that by him alone we are accounted righteous, what

else is this but to lodge our righteousness in Christ's obedience, because the obedience of Christ is reckoned to us as if it were our own?

For this reason, it seems to me that Ambrose beautifully stated an example of this righteousness in the blessing of Jacob: noting that, as he did not of himself deserve the right of the first-born, concealed in his brother's clothing and wearing his brother's coat, which gave out an agreeable odor [Gen. 27:27], he ingratiated himself with his father, so that to his own benefit he received the blessing while impersonating another. And we in like manner hide under the precious purity of our first-born brother, Christ, so that we may be attested righteous in God's sight. Here are the words of Ambrose: "That Isaac smelled the odor of the garments perhaps means that we are justified not by works but by faith, since the weakness of the flesh is a hindrance to works, but the brightness of faith, which merits the pardon of sins, overshadows the error of deeds."

And this is indeed the truth, for in order that we may appear before God's face unto salvation we must smell sweetly with his odor, and our vices must be covered and buried by his perfection.

II

The Council of Trent on Justification

The following document is the decree concerning justification and the accompanying canons promulgated at the sixth session of the Council of Trent on January 13, 1547, reprinted with permission from *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, tr. H. J. Schroeder (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1941), pp. 29-46. For an evaluation, see Jedin, II 307 ff.

DECREE CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

Since there is being disseminated at this time, not without the loss of many souls and grievous detriment to the unity of the Church, a certain erroneous doctrine concerning justification, the holy, ecumenical and general Council of Trent, lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost, the most reverend John Maria, Bishop of Praeneste de Monte, and Marcellus, priest of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, cardinals of the holy Roman Church and legates Apostolic *a latere*, presiding in the name of our most holy Father and Lord in Christ, Paul III, by the providence of God, Pope, intends, for the praise and glory of Almighty God, for the tranquillity of the Church and the salvation of souls, to expound to all the faithful of Christ the true and salutary doctrine of justification, which the *Sun of justice*,¹ Jesus Christ, the *author and finisher of our faith*,² taught, which the Apostles transmitted and which the Catholic Church under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost has always retained; strictly forbidding that anyone hence-

¹ Mal. 4:2.

² Heb. 12:2.

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forth presume to believe, preach or teach otherwise than is defined and declared in the present decree.

CHAPTER I

THE IMPOTENCY OF NATURE AND OF THE LAW TO JUSTIFY MAN

The holy council declares first, that for a correct and clear understanding of the doctrine of justification, it is necessary that each one recognize and confess that since all men had lost innocence in the prevarication of Adam,³ having become unclean,⁴ and, as the Apostle says, *by nature children of wrath*,⁵ as has been set forth in the decree on original sin,⁶ they were so far *the servants of sin*⁷ and under the power of the devil and of death, that not only the Gentiles by the force of nature, but not even the Jews by the very letter of the law of Moses were able to be liberated or to rise therefrom, though free will, weakened as it was in its powers and downward bent,⁸ was by no means extinguished in them.

CHAPTER II

THE DISPENSATION AND MYSTERY OF THE ADVENT OF CHRIST

Whence it came to pass that the heavenly Father, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort,⁹ when the blessed ful-

³ Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:22.

⁴ Is. 64:6.

⁵ Eph. 2:3.

⁶ Cf. Sess. V.

⁷ Rom. 6:17, 20.

⁸ Cf. II Synod of Orange (529), c.25. Hardouin, II, 1101.

⁹ See II Cor. 1:3.

ness of the time was come,¹⁰ sent to men Jesus Christ, His own Son, who had both before the law and during the time of the law been announced and promised to many of the holy fathers,¹¹ that he might redeem the Jews who were under the law,¹² and that the Gentiles who followed not after justice¹³ might attain to justice, and that all men might receive the adoption of sons. Him has God proposed as a propitiator through faith in his blood¹⁴ for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for those of the whole world.¹⁵

CHAPTER III

WHO ARE JUSTIFIED THROUGH CHRIST

But though He died for all,¹⁶ yet all do not receive the benefit of His death, but those only to whom the merit of His passion is communicated; because as truly as men would not be born unjust, if they were not born through propagation of the seed of Adam, since by that propagation they contract through him, when they are conceived, injustice as their own, so if they were not born again in Christ, they would never be justified, since in that new birth there is bestowed upon them, through the merit of His passion, the grace by which they are made just. For this benefit the Apostle exhorts us always to give thanks to the Father, who hath made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light, and hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have redemption and remission of sins.¹⁷

¹⁰ Gal. 4:4.

¹¹ Gen. 49:10, 18.

¹² Gal. 4:5.

¹³ Rom. 9:30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:25.

¹⁵ See I John 2:2.

¹⁶ See II Cor. 5:15.

¹⁷ Col. 1:12-14.

CHAPTER IV

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE SINNER
AND ITS MODE IN THE STATE OF GRACE

In which words is given a brief description of the justification of the sinner, as being a translation from that state in which man is born a child of the first Adam, to the state of grace and of the adoption of the sons of God through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, our Savior. This translation however cannot, since the promulgation of the Gospel, be effected except through the laver of regeneration or its desire, as it is written: *Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*¹⁸

CHAPTER V

THE NECESSITY OF PREPARATION FOR JUSTIFICATION IN
ADULTS, AND WHENCE IT PROCEEDS

It is furthermore declared that in adults the beginning of that justification must proceed from the predisposing grace of God through Jesus Christ, that is, from His vocation, whereby, without any merits on their part, they are called; that they who by sin had been cut off from God, may be disposed through His quickening and helping grace to convert themselves to their own justification by freely assenting to and co-operating with that grace; so that, while God touches the heart of man through the illumination of the Holy Ghost, man himself neither does absolutely nothing while receiving that inspiration, since he can also reject it, nor yet is he able by his own free will and without the grace of God to move

¹⁸ John 3:5.

himself to justice in His sight. Hence, when it is said in the sacred writings: *Turn ye to me, and I will turn to you*,¹⁹ we are reminded of our liberty; and when we reply: *Convert us, O Lord, to thee, and we shall be converted*,²⁰ we confess that we need the grace of God.

CHAPTER VI

THE MANNER OF PREPARATION

Now, they [the adults] are disposed to that justice when, aroused and aided by divine grace, receiving *faith by hearing*,²¹ they are moved freely toward God, believing to be true what has been divinely revealed and promised, especially that the sinner is justified by God *by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*,²² and when, understanding themselves to be sinners, they, by turning themselves from the fear of divine justice, by which they are salutarily aroused, to consider the mercy of God, are raised to hope, trusting that God will be propitious to them for Christ's sake; and they begin to love Him as the fountain of all justice, and on that account are moved against sin by a certain hatred and detestation, that is, by that repentance that must be performed before baptism;²³ finally, when they resolve to receive baptism, to begin a new life and to keep the commandments of God. Of this disposition it is written: *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and is a rewarder to them that seek him*,²⁴ and, *Be of good faith, son, thy sins are forgiven thee*,²⁵ and,

¹⁹ Zach. 1:3.

²⁰ Lam. 5:21.

²¹ Rom. 10:17.

²² *Ibid.*, 3:24.

²³ Cf. Sess. XIV, chap. 4.

²⁴ Heb. 11:6.

²⁵ Matt. 9:2; Mark 2:5.

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The fear of the Lord driveth out sin,²⁶ and, *Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*,²⁷ and, *Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*,²⁸ finally, *Prepare your hearts unto the Lord*.²⁹

CHAPTER VII

IN WHAT THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE SINNER CONSISTS,
AND WHAT ARE ITS CAUSES

This disposition or preparation is followed by justification itself, which is not only a remission of sins but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man through the voluntary reception of the grace and gifts whereby an unjust man becomes just and from being an enemy becomes a friend, that he may be *an heir according to hope of life everlasting*.³⁰ The causes of this justification are: the final cause is the glory of God and of Christ and life everlasting; the efficient cause is the merciful God who *washes and sanctifies*³¹ gratuitously, signing and anointing *with the holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance*,³² the meritorious cause is His most beloved only begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ, who, *when we were enemies*,³³ *for the exceeding charity wherewith*

²⁶ Ecclus. 1:27.

²⁷ Acts 2:38.

²⁸ Matt. 28:19 f.

²⁹ See I Kings 7:3.

³⁰ Tit. 3:7.

³¹ See I Cor. 6:11.

³² Eph. 1:13 f.

³³ Rom. 5:10.

he loved us,³⁴ merited for us justification by His most holy passion on the wood of the cross and made satisfaction for us to God the Father; the instrumental cause is the sacrament of baptism, which is the sacrament-of faith,³⁵ without which no man was ever justified; finally, the single formal cause is the justice of God, not that by which He Himself is just, but that by which He makes us just, that, namely, with which we being endowed by Him, are *renewed in the spirit of our mind*,³⁶ and not only are we reputed but we are truly called and are just, receiving justice within us, each one according to his own measure, which the Holy Ghost distributes to everyone as He wills,³⁷ and according to each one's disposition and cooperation. For though no one can be just except he to whom the merits of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated, yet this takes place in that justification of the sinner, when by the merit of the most holy passion, *the charity of God is poured forth by the Holy Ghost in the hearts*³⁸ of those who are justified and inheres in them; whence man through Jesus Christ, in whom he is ingrafted, receives in that justification, together with the remission of sins, all these infused at the same time, namely, faith, hope and charity. For faith, unless hope and charity be added to it, neither unites man perfectly with Christ nor makes him a living member of His body.³⁹ For which reason it is most truly said that *faith without works is dead*⁴⁰ and of no profit, and *in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by charity*.⁴¹ This faith, conformably to Apostolic tradition, catechumens ask of the Church before the sacrament of baptism, when they ask for the faith that

³⁴ Eph. 2:4.

³⁵ C.76, D.IV de cons.

³⁶ Eph. 4:23.

³⁷ See I Cor. 12:11.

³⁸ Rom. 5:5.

³⁹ Cf. *infra*, chap. 10.

⁴⁰ James 2:17, 20.

⁴¹ Gal. 5:6, 6:15.

gives eternal life, which without hope and charity faith cannot give. Whence also they hear immediately the word of Christ: *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*.⁴² Wherefore, when receiving true and Christian justice, they are commanded, immediately on being born again, to preserve it pure and spotless, as *the first robe*⁴³ given them through Christ Jesus in place of that which Adam by his disobedience lost for himself and for us, so that they may bear it before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ and may have life eternal.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW THE GRATUITOUS JUSTIFICATION OF THE SINNER
BY FAITH IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD

But when the Apostle says that man is justified by faith and freely,⁴⁴ these words are to be understood in that sense in which the uninterrupted unanimity of the Catholic Church has held and expressed them, namely, that we are therefore said to be justified by faith, because faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and root of all justification, *without which it is impossible to please God*⁴⁵ and to come to the fellowship of His sons; and we are therefore said to be justified gratuitously, because none of those things that precede justification, whether faith or works, merit the grace of justification. For, *if by grace, it is not now by works, otherwise*, as the Apostle says, *grace is no more grace*.⁴⁶

⁴² Matt. 19:17.

⁴³ Luke 15:22.

⁴⁴ Rom. 3:24; 5:1.

⁴⁵ Heb. 11:6.

⁴⁶ Rom. 11:6.

CHAPTER IX

AGAINST THE VAIN CONFIDENCE OF HERETICS

But though it is necessary to believe that sins neither are remitted nor ever have been remitted except gratuitously by divine mercy for Christ's sake, yet it must not be said that sins are forgiven or have been forgiven to anyone who boasts of his confidence and certainty of the remission of his sins,⁴⁷ resting on that alone, though among heretics and schismatics this vain and ungodly confidence may be and in our troubled times indeed is found and preached with untiring fury against the Catholic Church. Moreover, it must not be maintained, that they who are truly justified must needs, without any doubt whatever, convince themselves that they are justified, and that no one is absolved from sins and justified except he that believes with certainty that he is absolved and justified,⁴⁸ and that absolution and justification are effected by this faith alone, as if he who does not believe this, doubts the promises of God and the efficacy of the death and resurrection of Christ. For as no pious person ought to doubt the mercy of God, the merit of Christ and the virtue and efficacy of the sacraments, so each one, when he considers himself and his own weakness and indisposition, may have fear and apprehension concerning his own grace, since no one can know with the certainty of faith, which cannot be subject to error, that he has obtained the grace of God.

⁴⁷ Cf. *infra*, can. 12 and 13. [See the discussion of this controversial point in Stephen Plürner, *Luther and Aquinas on Salvation*, tr. Edward Quinn (New York, 1965). Ed. note.]

⁴⁸ *Infra*, can. 14.

CHAPTER X

THE INCREASE OF THE JUSTIFICATION RECEIVED

Having, therefore, been thus justified and made the friends and domestics of God,⁴⁹ advancing from virtue to virtue,⁵⁰ that they are renewed, as the Apostle says, *day by day*,⁵¹ that is, *mortifying the members*,⁵² of their flesh, and presenting them as instruments of justice unto sanctification,⁵³ they, through the observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, faith cooperating with good works, increase in that justice received through the grace of Christ and are further justified, as it is written: *He that is just, let him be justified still*,⁵⁴ and, *Be not afraid to be justified even to death*,⁵⁵ and again, *Do you see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only?*⁵⁶ This increase of justice holy Church asks for when she prays: "Give unto us, O Lord, an increase of faith, hope and charity."⁵⁷

CHAPTER XI

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE COMMANDMENTS AND THE NECESSITY AND POSSIBILITY THEREOF

But no one, however much justified, should consider himself exempt from the observance of the commandments; no

⁴⁹ Eph. 2:19.

⁵⁰ Ps. 83:8.

⁵¹ See II Cor. 4:16.

⁵² Col. 3:5.

⁵³ Rom. 6:13, 19.

⁵⁴ Apoc. 22:11.

⁵⁵ Ecclus. 18:22.

⁵⁶ James 2:24.

⁵⁷ Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

one should use that rash statement, once forbidden by the Fathers under anathema, that the observance of the commandments of God is impossible for one that is justified. For God does not command impossibilities, but by commanding admonishes thee to do what thou canst and to pray for what thou canst not, and aids thee that thou mayest be able.⁵⁸ His *commandments are not heavy*,⁵⁹ and *his yoke is sweet and burden light*.⁶⁰ For they who are the sons of God love Christ, but they who love Him, keep His commandments, as He Himself testifies,⁶¹ which, indeed, with the divine help they can do. For though during this mortal life, men, however holy and just, fall at times into at least light and daily sins, which are also called venial, they do not on that account cease to be just, for that petition of the just, *forgive us our trespasses*,⁶² is both humble and true; for which reason the just ought to feel themselves the more obliged to walk in the way of justice, for *being now freed from sin and made servants of God*,⁶³ they are able, *living soberly, justly and godly*,⁶⁴ to proceed onward through Jesus Christ, by whom they have access unto this grace.⁶⁵ For God does not forsake those who have been once justified by His grace, unless He be first forsaken by them. Wherefore, no one ought to flatter himself with faith alone, thinking that by faith alone he is made an heir and will obtain the inheritance, even though *he suffer not with Christ, that he may be also glorified with him*.⁶⁶ For even Christ Himself, as the Apostle says, *whereas he was the Son of God, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and being consummated, he became to all who obey him the cause of*

⁵⁸ St. Augustine, *De natura et gratia*, c.43 (50), PL, XLIV, 271.

⁵⁹ See I John 5:3.

⁶⁰ Matt. 11:30.

⁶¹ John 14:23.

⁶² Matt. 6:12.

⁶³ Rom. 6:18, 22.

⁶⁴ Tit. 2:12.

⁶⁵ Rom. 5:1 f.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 8:17.

eternal salvation.⁶⁷ For which reason the same Apostle admonishes those justified, saying: *Know you not that they who run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain. I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty; I so fight, not as one beating the air, but I chastise my body and bring it into subjection; lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway*.⁶⁸ So also the prince of the Apostles, Peter: *Labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election. For doing these things, you shall not sin at any time*.⁶⁹ From which it is clear that they are opposed to the orthodox teaching of religion who maintain that the just man sins, venially at least, in every good work;⁷⁰ or, what is more intolerable, that he merits eternal punishment; and they also assert that the just sin in all works, if, in order to arouse their sloth and to encourage themselves to run the race, they, in addition to this, that above all God may be glorified, have in view also the eternal reward,⁷¹ since it is written: *I have inclined my heart to do thy justifications on account of the reward*,⁷² and of Moses the Apostle says; that *he looked unto the reward*.⁷³

CHAPTER XII

RASH PRESUMPTION OF PREDESTINATION IS TO BE AVOIDED

No one, moreover, so long as he lives this mortal life, ought in regard to the sacred mystery of divine predestination, so far presume as to state with absolute certainty that he is among

⁶⁷ Heb. 5:8 f.

⁶⁸ See I Cor. 9:24, 26 f.

⁶⁹ See II Pet. 1:10.

⁷⁰ Cf. *infra*, can. 25.

⁷¹ Cf. *infra*, can. 31.

⁷² Ps. 118:112.

⁷³ Heb. 11:26.

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the number of the predestined,⁷⁴ as if it were true that the one justified either cannot sin any more, or, if he does sin, that he ought to promise himself an assured repentance. For except by special revelation, it cannot be known whom God has chosen to Himself.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GIFT OF PERSEVERANCE

Similarly with regard to the gift of perseverance, of which it is written: *He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved*,⁷⁵ which cannot be obtained from anyone except from Him who is able to make him stand who stands,⁷⁶ that he may stand perseveringly, and to raise him who falls, let no one promise himself herein something as certain with an absolute certainty, though all ought to place and repose the firmest hope in God's help. For God, unless men themselves fail in His grace, as *he has begun a good work, so will he perfect it, working to will and to accomplish*.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, let those who think themselves to stand, take heed lest they fall,⁷⁸ and with fear and trembling work out their salvation,⁷⁹ in labors, in watchings, in almsdeeds, in prayer, in fastings and chastity. For knowing that they are born again unto the hope of glory,⁸⁰ and not as yet unto glory, they ought to fear for the combat that yet remains with the flesh, with the world and with the devil, in which they cannot be victorious unless they be with the grace of God obedient to the Apostle who says: *We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh; for if you live*

⁷⁴ Cf. c. 17, C. XXIV, q. 3.

⁷⁵ Matt. 10:22; 24:13.

⁷⁶ Rom. 14:4.

⁷⁷ Phil. 1:6; 2:13.

⁷⁸ See I Cor. 10:12.

⁷⁹ Phil. 2:12.

⁸⁰ See I Pet. 1:3.

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*according to the flesh, you shall die, but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live.*⁸¹

CHAPTER XIV

THE FALLEN AND THEIR RESTORATION

Those who through sin have forfeited the received grace of justification, can again be justified when, moved by God, they exert themselves to obtain through the sacrament of penance the recovery, by the merits of Christ, of the grace lost.⁸² For this manner of justification is restoration for those fallen, which the holy Fathers have aptly called a second plank after the shipwreck of grace lost.⁸³ For on behalf of those who fall into sins after baptism, Christ Jesus instituted the sacrament of penance when He said: *Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.*⁸⁴ Hence, it must be taught that the repentance of a Christian after his fall is very different from that at his baptism, and that it includes not only a determination to avoid sins and a hatred of them, or a *contrite and humble heart*,⁸⁵ but also the sacramental confession of those sins, at least in desire, to be made in its season, and sacerdotal absolution, as well as satisfaction by fasts, alms, prayers and other devout exercises of the spiritual life, not indeed for the eternal punishment, which is, together with the guilt, remitted either by the sacrament or by the desire of the sacrament, but for the temporal punishment which, as the sacred writings teach, is not always wholly remitted, as is done in baptism, to those who, ungrateful to the

⁸¹ Rom. 8:12 f.

⁸² Cf. *infra*, can. 23 and 29.

⁸³ C. 72, D. I de poenit.

⁸⁴ John 20:22 f.

⁸⁵ Ps. 50:19.

grace of God which they have received, have grieved the Holy Ghost⁸⁶ and have not feared to *violate the temple of God*.⁸⁷ Of which repentance it is written: *Be mindful whence thou art fallen; do penance, and do the first works*,⁸⁸ and again, *The sorrow that is according to God worketh penance, steadfast unto salvation*,⁸⁹ and again, *Do penance, and bring forth fruits worthy of penance*.⁹⁰

CHAPTER XV

BY EVERY MORTAL SIN GRACE IS LOST, BUT NOT FAITH

Against the subtle wits of some also, who by *pleasing speeches and good words seduce the hearts of the innocent*,⁹¹ it must be maintained that the grace of justification once received is lost not only by infidelity, whereby also faith itself is lost, but also by every other mortal sin, though in this case faith is not lost; thus defending the teaching of the divine law which excludes from the kingdom of God not only unbelievers, but also the faithful [who are] *fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, liars with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, railers, extortioners*,⁹² and all others who commit deadly sins, from which with the help of divine grace they can refrain, and on account of which they are cut off from the grace of Christ.

⁸⁶ Eph. 4:30.

⁸⁷ See I Cor. 3:17.

⁸⁸ Apoc. 2:5.

⁸⁹ See II Cor. 7:10.

⁹⁰ Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Luke 3:8.

⁹¹ Rom. 16:18.

⁹² See I Cor. 6:9 f.; I Tim. 1:9 f.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FRUITS OF JUSTIFICATION, THAT IS, THE MERIT OF GOOD WORKS, AND THE NATURE OF THAT MERIT

Therefore, to men justified in this manner, whether they have preserved uninterruptedly the grace received or recovered it when lost, are to be pointed out the words of the Apostle: *Abound in every good work, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord*.⁹³ *For God is not unjust, that he should forget your work, and the love which you have shown in his name*,⁹⁴ and, *Do not lose your confidence, which hath a great reward*.⁹⁵ Hence, to those who work well *unto the end*⁹⁶ and trust in God, eternal life is to be offered, both as a grace mercifully promised to the sons of God through Christ Jesus, and as a reward promised by God himself, to be faithfully given to their good works and merits.⁹⁷ For this is the crown of justice which after his fight and course the Apostle declared was laid up for him, to be rendered to him by the just judge, and not only to him, but also to all that love his coming.⁹⁸ For since Christ Jesus Himself, as the head into the members and the vine into the branches,⁹⁹ continually infuses strength into those justified, which strength always precedes, accompanies and follows their good works, and without which they could not in any manner be pleasing and meritorious before God, we must believe that nothing further is wanting to those justified to prevent them from being considered to have, by those very works which have been done in God, fully satisfied

⁹³ See I Cor. 15:58.

⁹⁴ Heb. 6:10.

⁹⁵ Heb. 10:35.

⁹⁶ Matt. 10:22.

⁹⁷ Rom. 6:22.

⁹⁸ See II Tim. 4:8.

⁹⁹ John 15:1 f.

the divine law according to the state of this life and to have truly merited eternal life, to be obtained in its [due] time, provided they depart [this life] in grace,¹⁰⁰ since Christ our Savior says: *If anyone shall drink of the water that I will give him, he shall not thirst forever; but it shall become in him a fountain of water springing up unto life everlasting.*¹⁰¹ Thus, neither is our own justice established as our own from ourselves,¹⁰² nor is the justice of God ignored or repudiated, for that justice which is called ours, because we are justified by its inheritance in us, that same is [the justice] of God, because it is infused into to us by God through the merit of Christ. Nor must this be omitted, that although in the sacred writings so much is attributed to good works, that even *he that shall give a drink of cold water to one of his least ones*, Christ promises, *shall not lose his reward*,¹⁰³ and the Apostle testifies that, *That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory*,¹⁰⁴ nevertheless, far be it that a Christian should either trust or glory in himself and not in the Lord,¹⁰⁵ whose bounty toward all men is so great that He wishes the things that are His gifts to be their merits. And since *in many things we all offend*,¹⁰⁶ each one ought to have before his eyes not only the mercy and goodness but also the severity and judgment [of God]; neither ought anyone to judge himself, even though he be not conscious to himself of anything,¹⁰⁷ because the whole life of man is to be examined and judged not by the judgment of man but of God, *who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man*

¹⁰⁰ Apoc. 14:13.

¹⁰¹ John 4:13 f.

¹⁰² Rom. 10:3; II Cor. 3:5.

¹⁰³ Matt. 10:42; Mark 9:40.

¹⁰⁴ See II Cor. 4:17.

¹⁰⁵ See I Cor. 1:31; II Cor. 10:17.

¹⁰⁶ James 3:2.

¹⁰⁷ See I Cor. 4:3 f.

have praise from God,¹⁰⁸ who, as it is written, *will render to every man according to his works*.¹⁰⁹

After this Catholic doctrine on justification, which whosoever does not faithfully and firmly accept cannot be justified, it seemer good to the holy council to add these canons, that all may know not only what they must hold and follow, but also what to avoid and shun.

CANONS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION

Canon 1. If anyone says that man can be justified before God by his own works, whether done by his own natural powers or through the teaching of the law,¹¹⁰ without divine grace through Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.

Can. 2. If anyone says that divine grace through Christ Jesus is given for this only, that man may be able more easily to live justly and to merit eternal life, as if by free will without grace he is able to do both, though with hardship and difficulty, let him be anathema.

Can. 3. If anyone says that without the predisposing inspiration of the Holy Ghost¹¹¹ and without His help, man can believe, hope, love or be repentant as he ought,¹¹² so that the grace of justification may be bestowed upon him, let him be anathema.

Can. 4. If anyone says that man's free will moved and aroused by God, by assenting to God's call and action, in no way cooperates toward disposing and preparing itself to obtain the grace of justification, that it cannot refuse its assent if it wishes, but that, as something inanimate, it does nothing whatever and is merely passive, let him be anathema.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 4:5.

¹⁰⁹ Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; Apoc. 22:12.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *supra*, chaps. 1, 3.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 5.

¹¹² Rom. 5:5.

Can. 5. If anyone says that after the sin of Adam man's free will was lost and destroyed, or that it is a thing only in name, indeed a name without a reality, a fiction introduced into the Church by Satan, let him be anathema.

Can. 6. In anyone says that it is not in man's power to make his ways evil, but that the works that are evil as well as those that are good God produces, not permissively only but also *proprie et per se*, so that the treason of Judas is no less His own proper work than the vocation of St. Paul, let him be anathema.

Can. 7. If anyone says that all works done before justification, in whatever manner they may be done, are truly sins, or merit the hatred of God; that the more earnestly one strives to dispose himself for grace, the more grievously he sins, let him be anathema.

Can. 8. If anyone says that the fear of hell,¹¹³ whereby, by grieving for sins, we flee to the mercy of God or abstain from sinning, is a sin or makes sinners worse, let him be anathema.

Can. 9. If anyone says that the sinner is justified by faith alone,¹¹⁴ meaning that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema.

Can. 10. If anyone says that men are justified without the justice of Christ,¹¹⁵ whereby He merited for us, or by that justice are formally just, let him be anathema.

Can. 11. If anyone says that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and *the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost*,¹¹⁶ and remains in them, or also that the grace by which we are

¹¹³ Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:5.

¹¹⁴ *Supra*, chaps. 7, 8.

¹¹⁵ Gal. 2:16; *supra*, chap. 7.

¹¹⁶ Rom. 5:5.

justified is only the good will of God, let him be anathema.

Can. 12. If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy,¹¹⁷ which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, let him be anathema.

Can. 13. If anyone says that in order to obtain the remission of sins it is necessary for every man to believe with certainty and without any hesitation arising from his own weakness and indisposition that his sins are forgiven him, let him be anathema.

Can. 14. If anyone says that man is absolved from his sins and justified because he firmly believes that he is absolved and justified,¹¹⁸ or that no one is truly justified except him who believes himself justified, and that by this faith alone absolution and justification are effected, let him be anathema.

Can. 15. If anyone says that a man who is born again and justified is bound *ex fide* to believe that he is certainly in the number of the predestined,¹¹⁹ let him be anathema.

Can. 16. If anyone says that he will for certain, with an absolute and infallible certainty, have that great gift of perseverance even to the end, unless he shall have learned this by a special revelation,¹²⁰ let him be anathema.

Can. 17. If anyone says that the grace of justification is shared by those only who are predestined to life, but that all others who are called are called indeed but receive not grace, as if they are by divine power predestined to evil, let him be anathema.

Can. 18. If anyone says that the commandments of God are, even for one that is justified and constituted in grace,¹²¹ impossible to observe, let him be anathema.

Can. 19. If anyone says that nothing besides faith is com-

¹¹⁷ *Supra*, chap. 9.

¹¹⁸ *Supra*, chap. 9.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*; chap. 12.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 13.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, chap. 11.

manded in the Gospel, that other things are indifferent, neither commanded nor forbidden, but free; or that the ten commandments in no way pertain to Christians, let him be anathema.

Can. 20. If anyone says that a man who is justified and however perfect is not bound to observe the commandments of God and the Church, but only to believe,¹²² as if the Gospel were a bare and absolute promise of eternal life without the condition of observing the commandments, let him be anathema.

Can. 21. If anyone says that Christ Jesus was given by God to men as a redeemer in whom to trust, and not also as a legislator whom to obey, let him be anathema.

Can. 22. If anyone says that the one justified either can without the special help of God persevere in the justice received,¹²³ or that with that help he cannot, let him be anathema.

Can. 23. If anyone says that a man once justified can sin no more, nor lose grace,¹²⁴ and that therefore he that falls and sins was never truly justified; or on the contrary, that he can during his whole life avoid all sins, even those that are venial, except by a special privilege from God, as the Church holds in regard to the Blessed Virgin, let him be anathema.

Can. 24. If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works,¹²⁵ but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema.

Can. 25. If anyone says that in every good work the just man sins at least venially,¹²⁶ or, what is more intolerable, mortally, and hence merits eternal punishment, and that he is

¹²² Cf. chap. cit.

¹²³ *Supra*, chap. 13.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. 14.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. 10.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 11 at the end.

damned for this reason only, because God does not impute these works unto damnation, let him be anathema.

Can. 26. If anyone says that the just ought not for the good works done in God¹²⁷ to expect and hope for an eternal reward from God through His mercy and the merit of Jesus Christ, if by doing well and by keeping the divine commandments they persevere to the end,¹²⁸ let him be anathema.

Can. 27. If anyone says that there is no mortal sin except that of unbelief,¹²⁹ or that grace once received is not lost through any other sin however grievous and enormous except by that of unbelief, let him be anathema.

Can. 28. If anyone says that with the loss of grace through sin faith is also lost with it, or that the faith which remains is not a true faith, though it is not a living one, or that he who has faith without charity is not a Christian, let him be anathema.

Can. 29. If anyone says that he who has fallen after baptism cannot by the grace of God rise again,¹³⁰ or that he can indeed recover again the lost justice but by faith alone without the sacrament of penance, contrary to what the holy Roman and Universal Church, instructed by Christ the Lord and His Apostles, has hitherto professed, observed and taught, let him be anathema.

Can. 30. If anyone says that after the reception of the grace of justification the guilt is so remitted and the debt of eternal punishment so blotted out to every repentant sinner, that no debt of temporal punishment remains to be discharged either in this world¹³¹ or in purgatory before the gates of heaven can be opened,¹³² let him be anathema.

Can. 31. If anyone says that the one justified sins when he

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 16.

¹²⁸ Matt. 24:13.

¹²⁹ *Supra*, chap. 15.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, chap. 14.

¹³¹ Cf. Sess. XIV, chap. 8.

¹³² Cf. Sess. XXV at the beginning.

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performs good works with a view to an eternal reward,¹³³ let him be anathema.

Can. 32. If anyone says that the good works of the one justified are in such manner the gifts of God that they are not also the good merits of him justified; or that the one justified by the good works that he performs by the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ, whose living member he is, does not truly merit an increase of grace, eternal life, and in case he dies in grace, the attainment of eternal life itself and also an increase of glory, let him be anathema.

Can. 33. If anyone says that the Catholic doctrine of justification as set forth by the holy council in the present decree, derogates in some respect from the glory of God or the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, and does not rather illustrate the truth of our faith and no less the glory of God and of Christ Jesus, let him be anathema.

¹³³ *Supra*, chap. 11 at the end.