

# OF **J**USTIFICATION



A REFORMATION TREATISE  
ON IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

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# Of Justification

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## **Of Justification**

Upon the epistle to the Romans, at the end of the 11th chapter. This place is also treated upon in the first epistle to the Corinthians, around the end, and upon Genesis, verse 6 of chapter 15.

It shall now be a profitable thing to discuss justification, which is the focus and goal of all that Paul teaches in the epistle to the Romans.

Let this question be proposed in the following manner: are people justified by works or by faith? But first of all, it shall be good to discuss the terms of the proposed question; and we will begin with the term 'justification'. This verb Tsadac, in Hebrew in the first conjugation, signifies 'to be just'; but if it is transferred into the third conjugation, it signifies 'to transfer righteousness to another and to make just'. For this is the effect of the form of those verbs, which they call Hiphil. Just as Amad signifies 'to stand', so Heemid signifies 'to appoint', that is, 'to make another thing to stand'. Therefore, Hitsdic in Hebrew signifies 'to justify', that is, 'to make one just', which when done by God, is accomplished in two ways. Firstly, when God, with His Holy Spirit, reshapes them and completely renews them by restoring the strength of their minds and freeing the faculties of man from a significant part of his natural corruption; and this is the first righteousness, which adheres to our minds, by the grace of God, through Christ. Secondly, once He has restored and renewed them, He gives just and holy works; through the use and continuation of which works, a quality, or (as they call it) a habit is engendered in our minds, making us compliant to live honestly and godly. We do not deny, but this type of righteousness is in the hearts of the regenerate.

But sometimes God justifies us by absolving us from sins and ascribing and imputing righteousness; then this word Hitsdic, is a term taken from the law, which pertains to judgment, as also the word Heschiah, which signifies 'To declare one to be an offender and a wicked person'. To justify in judgment is by words, testimonies, and affirmation, to count one as just. And as these are the two meanings of the word 'To justify'; namely, either in deed, or in account and estimation; and as God is the author of either of them: which of these two shall we follow in the discussion proposed? Indeed the latter; because the renovation inspired by the Spirit of

God, and our righteousness, as touching the habit acquired by good works, are while we live here so imperfect and maimed, that if judgment were to be passed based on them, we might not be able to stand before the judgment seat of God. Besides that; Paul, arguing on this matter, after he had cited the authority of David, and a testimony from the history of Abraham in Genesis; uses this concept of imputing: and by its proper meaning, he argues concerning this current issue or question. And this I suppose to be sufficient concerning the explanation of the first word; namely, Justification.

## **Faith**

2. Now let us discuss Faith. Aman among the Hebrews in the first conjugation signifies 'To be firm': this very verb in the third conjugation; being called (as I have mentioned) Hiphil, signifies 'To give constancy and assurance to any promise or thing'. Hence, the Latins say; 'Fidem homini aut verbis tribuere', which is in English, 'To give faith or credit to a man, or to words': and it means as much as if a man should say, 'To believe'. Therefore, this Hebrew verb Heemin signifies nothing other than 'To suppose, or think a thing to be firm, constant, and true'. And as for God, he who does not believe Him, makes Him a liar: for John says in his first epistle, the fifth chapter; 'He who does not believe God, makes Him a liar'. How grievous a sin this is, let every person consider for themselves. On the other hand, he who believes God, adorns Him with glory and honour: for in the epistle to the Romans it is written of Abraham, that he did not waver through doubt, through consideration of his own body, or of the womb of Sarah being nearly past childbearing; but gave glory to God, being strong in faith, and fully persuaded that God was able to perform whatsoever He promised. Therefore, there seems to be a certain analogy or proportion between this word, 'To

believe', and that 'To justify'; as we take it in this place: for as, 'To justify', is by way of judging and accounting, to ascribe righteousness to a man; and not to make him to be indeed just: so, 'To believe', is not (indeed) to make the words and promises of any man sure and firm; but to think and determine within ourselves, that so they are.

But this act of believing, of which we now speak, has two kinds of firmness and certainty. Firstly, concerning the things themselves; namely, the words and promises of God, which abide much more firmly than heaven and earth. Secondly, as touching the persuasion itself; which, since it is wrought by the power of God, is also most firm, most certain, and of assured persuasion; that is, that it is never barren, but always accompanied by many and various emotions of the mind. For experience and daily observation teach us that in civil matters, a man being well and fully persuaded of pleasing promises, is filled with confidence, rejoices, shows a merry countenance, is glad, and cheerful, and clings to the one who made the promise, to endorse him by all means: but conversely, when he does not believe the persuasion, he mocks it, neglects and despises it, or becomes indifferent and frowns. Therefore, it can never be that he who truly believes can lack such emotions, which are accustomed to follow a full and strong persuasion. And therefore, those who are the pure professors of the Gospel, rightly affirm that 'To believe' has a very significant connection with the action, or with the motion of confidence, hope, and such like emotions: but most of all, with the sincere and firm trust, which it always carries with it.

Whereby it comes to pass that in the Holy Scriptures, promises are made both to faith and to trust. For just as it is said, "The just man lives by faith"; also, "He who believes in Him shall not be confounded"; and in the New Testament, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life"; again, "We think that a man is justified by

faith". Even so, it is written in the Psalm, "Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him"; and in Isaiah, chapter 26, "He shall keep peace because they trusted in Him"; and in the New Testament, "Hope does not disappoint"; to Titus also, chapter 3, "That we may be heirs, according to the hope of eternal life". Although in the Old Testament we find the promises are often made to hope rather than to faith, yet in the New Testament it is the opposite: the reason for this may be that in the old times, the Hebrews did not err in believing that there was but one God; indeed, they professed the worship of Him only. But what was not well among them was that they did not have a lively faith, which draws with it a trust; otherwise they had by education conceived either a certain opinion or a certain knowledge; and therefore, the scripture exhorted them to truly and effectively believe, which was expressed by the effect, under the name of trust. But in the New Testament, they erred in the understanding, both the Gentiles who were worshippers of idols and many gods; and also the Jews, regarding the conditions of the Messiah: for they expected that He would come in glorious pomp, like a king, and magnificent in worldly empire. Wherefore, faith was often emphasized to them, whereby they might obtain the promises of God: for it was very necessary that they should be rightly instructed in the chief point of the thing that they should believe.

And from this Hebrew verb Aman, is derived this noun Emunah, which signifies Faith; and it sometimes signifies certainty and constancy of words and promises. Wherefore, God is often in the Holy Scriptures called faithful; and His works are called faithful; because they are firm, and do constantly continue: and we read in the Epistle to the Romans, "What if some of them have not believed? Has their unbelief made the faith of God without effect?" Yes, and this Latin word Fides, that is, Faith, if we may believe Cicero, is derived from Fio; because that thing is done indeed, which was

spoken. And sometimes it signifies the assent of our mind, whereby we accept words that are presented to us: as it is said of Abraham; "He believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness". And since in this discourse, we take faith in this manner, it shall not be irrelevant, to define what faith is. Wherefore, Faith is a firm and assured assent of the mind, to the words of God; which assent is inspired by the Holy Ghost, for the salvation of the believers. And therefore it consists in the mind, and is concerned with the words of God, from whence we have the matter thereof. Of the form also, we need not doubt (because it is defined to be an assent). The efficient cause is described as the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. And the end is declared in the last place, when as we say, that this assent is inspired by the Holy Ghost, for the salvation of the believers.

3. Not unlike this definition are those things written concerning faith in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 11; namely, that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Where, that which the Latin interpreters have translated as Substantia, that is, "Substance"; in Greek is written as ὑπόστασις. This word Budaeus most learnedly translates in his commentaries as Boldness, strength, or valiance of mind; and it is derived from the verb ὑπομένω, which signifies to sustain, to receive, not to give place to one that rushes upon a man. From here, a soldier is called ὑπομοχθήρ, which means Trustworthy, and who does not turn his back on his enemies but goes against them and resists them. Undoubtedly, in believing, we need this strength and patience, because of the great fight, in which we have experience there. For we must resist the flesh, we must overcome reason, which strongly contends against faith; we must also resist the condemnation of our own conscience, sin, and the wrath of God; and there are many other things besides, by which a faithful assent is both hindered and assaulted. Now this ὑπόστασις, or substance, and those things that

are hoped for, are very well compared together among themselves. For God promises resurrection, but yet to the dead; He promises eternal life, but yet to those who are decayed; He calls them blessed, but yet those who abundantly thirst and hunger and are on every side oppressed; He pronounces men to be justified, but yet those who are covered with sins and filthiness.

Wherefore, seeing these things seem to be so distant from us, it is necessary that we have boldness, strength, and the assurance of a most firm assent; which may make these things abide with us as most assured truths. With such a strong shield of defense ought we to be armed, whereby we may extinguish all the fiery darts of the devil when they are hurled against us, so that we may also overcome even the world: for as John testifies, "This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith." Furthermore, we must note that this word Argumentum, that is, Argument, which in Greek is ἔλεγχος, is rendered by some as Demonstratio, that is, a Declaration; because, by faith are shown and declared those things which do not appear. But it seems to me that Augustine, although perhaps not so elegant in Latin, yet very faithfully translated it as Convictio, that is, an Overcoming; for by faith our mind is overcome, to accept that those things are true which God either speaks or promises.

4. But Hostiensis, discussing the Holy Trinity and the Catholic faith, labors with two reasons to show that faith by these words of the apostle is not defined; because ὑπόστασις, or substance, also agrees with hope. Therefore, as it is not unique to faith, he says, it cannot be applied to its definition. Further, because faith does not only regard things to come and those things which are hoped for but is also referred to things past: for we believe that God created heaven and earth, that Christ was born of a virgin, that He suffered for us, and was raised from the dead; but all these things are past, neither are

they hoped to occur again. These two reasons of Hostiensis are very weak, and they do not prove that these words to the Hebrews cannot be applied to the definition of faith. I indeed concede that the apostle's intent in that place was not to define faith because he spoke chiefly of patience and aimed to show that it is closely linked to faith; because faith is ὑπόστασις, that is, a substance, etc. But by this reasoning, all things that express the nature of faith are addressed. And to the first objection, we say that ὑπόστασις, or substance, must indeed be applied to hope; but yet that ὑπόστασις, which it draws from faith, not that which it has by itself.

It should not seem strange if these things, which are of diverse nature, have something common in their definitions: for a lion, a dog, and a man, although they differ greatly in nature, yet in this they agree, that they are living creatures. And therefore, in their definitions, something is put, which is common to them all; seeing both they are bodies, and are also entities having life, and endowed with senses. Hence, it should not seem marvelous if faith and hope share in that ὑπόστασις; inasmuch as they are distinguished by other differences. For in faith ὑπόστασις is referred to the assent, but in hope to the expectation, whereby we patiently wait until the promises and such things as we have received by faith are fulfilled to us. To the other reason, we answer that Paul made mention of things past, which are made certain and clear to us by faith: for he does not only say that it is a substance of things to be hoped for; but adds, that it is an argument or conviction of things that do not appear. Now these things, which are past, do not appear: for by that word, Paul encompasses whatsoever is believed, and is not evident; whether it be past, or whether it be to come, or whether it be now present. But perhaps you will ask, why in the first place does he make mention of those things which are hoped for? We answer, that it is rightly done; because these things are rightly put first, which are harder to believe:

for perhaps there are some who will easily enough accept that God created all things, that Christ the Son of God came into the world, and was born of the Virgin, and such like; but yet they will greatly doubt the remission of their sins, the resurrection of the flesh to come, and the eternal glory which shall be given to the just. Wherefore, aptly and orderly are those things placed, which are read in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

But what the nature of faith is, Isaiah the prophet has aptly expressed in chapter 26, in which place the church is described as a city built by God. The prophet cries out, "Open your gates, and a just nation shall enter therein." He adds the cause of that righteousness, "Schomer emunim," that is, "Preserving or keeping faith," where you see that by faith the believers are justified. Then he adds the thing in which that faith consists, whereby the people of God are just; namely, "Ietser samuchthitt sor schalom;" that is, "With a constant affection you shall keep peace." This is the true faith by which we are justified; namely, that we believe God will be unto us the author of peace and felicity, and a faithful keeper of his promise. And Augustine, in his fortieth treatise upon John, says, "What is faith, but to believe what you do not see?" Which the same thing he writes about the words of the apostle in his 27th sermon; but in his book *De Spiritu & Litera*, chapter 31, he writes that to believe is nothing else but to consent that what is spoken is true. The Master of the Sentences, in the third book, the 23rd distinction, says that faith sometimes is that which we believe. For in the Creed of Athanasius it is said, "And this is the catholic faith, that we should believe, etc."

Sometimes it is that by which we believe; and in this latter signification, we understand faith in this discourse. He also separates a lively faith from a dead faith, a distinction that is to be appreciated, because James makes mention of a dead faith. But we must know

that a dead faith is only a faith in name; it is no more a faith than a dead man is a man. For just as a dead man is called a man, although he is none, so a dead faith, although called a faith, does not have the nature of faith. There is also another kind of faith, which serves to work miracles, and differs much from the justifying faith, and is common both to the godly and also to the ungodly. Of this, Paul makes mention in the first to the Corinthians, when he says, "To one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another," he says, "is given faith." And it is not likely that in that list of gifts and graces any other faith is meant than that which is the root of miracles, especially when straightaway gifts of healing and of virtues, or powers, are added. And of this kind of faith both Chrysostom and Theophilactus have made mention upon the same first epistle to the Corinthians; where, in chapter 13, it is said, "If I have all faith, so that I can remove mountains, etc."

And, that this kind of faith is granted to the wicked is testified by the fact that it is most certain they do prophesy and work miracles; wherefore Christ shall say unto them, "I know you not," although they boast openly, "Have we not in thy name prophesied? Have we not cast out devils?" We must also distinguish this faith from that faith which endures but for a time, of which the Lord made mention in the parable of the seed sown in the field: for not all falls upon good ground, but some upon stony ground; and when it has sprung up with very good success, it very plainly expresses those who with a glad and joyful mind receive the word of God, but when the burning and fervency of persecution grows hot, they fall away from it, and therefore they are called *πρόσκαιροι*, that is, Men having faith for a season. Therefore, leaving all these significations, we in this discourse understand faith to be that firm assent which is of such great force and efficacy as it draws with it the affection of confidence,

hope, and charity; lastly, all good works, as much as the infirmity of this present life will permit.

6. Therefore, Smith, who wrote against me a book on justification, although he had earlier written it against Luther and Melancthon, speaks much against others and seldom makes mention of me, is herein exceedingly deceived; in that he judges that those are to be sharply reprov'd who say that faith is trust. And he brings a passage from the Epistle to the Ephesians, the third chapter, where it is written; "By whom, namely, by Christ Jesus, we have παρρησία," that is, boldness to speak, and "προσγωγή," that is, access; "έν πεποιθήσει," that is, in trust, which comes by faith. Therefore (he says) seeing trust is by faith, it is not faith. Oh fine man, and witty Divine, who alone saw that these two things, namely, faith and trust, are two distinct and diverse things! What other thing, in essence, do Philip Melancthon and others, our faithful teachers, mean when they call that faith, whereby we are justified, Trust, but that the same is not dead, that it is not idle, that it is not a human persuasion, but of such vehement assent that it has even trust itself most inwardly and closely joined to it? But I do not intend to contend much with this man; all that he babbles, he merely scrapes out of the works of Eck, Pighius, and others of the Roman Antichrist's table, and sets them forth as though they were his own.

That faith which does not draw trust, and other holy motions of the mind, drives men to despair; so far is it from being able to justify: which thing the miserable ends of Cain and Judas clearly testify. But that which is a firm faith continually trusts; yea, it seals our faith in the church by this common word "Amen," used among the faithful. This word is derived from this Hebrew word, Aman, which I previously spoke of; and signifies (as David Kimhi testifies), "It shall be ratified and firm; so shall the Lord bring to pass." Those who pray

without such faith waste their effort. In this faith, undoubtedly, men quiet themselves with tranquility and unspeakable peace; and are like one who found a most ample treasure and precious pearl, wherein he so contented himself, that he sold all that he had to buy it. Hence it came that in the seventh chapter of Isaiah, the prophet said to the wicked king Ahaz, exhorting him to true faith, "Hisschameer vehaschet," that is, "Take heed and be quiet," for the prophet wanted the king to beware of incredulity and to rely on the word of God, which is the property and nature of faith; as, conversely, the nature of infidelity is to waver and be unsteady. For those who do not believe are shaken by every blast of doctrine and opinions, and always waver and doubt. Therefore, in Joshua chapter 7, the people are reprov'd because their hearts melted away like water; and that undoubtedly happened only due to their incredulity.

7. Therefore, since it now appears what we understand by faith, and among the many meanings of this word, which of them we follow in this question, we must now discuss works. There is one kind of work, which, after the action and motion, remains outwardly, and appears after it is finished; such as the image which Phidias made, is called a work; and the temple of Jerusalem was called the work of Solomon. But otherwise, the actions of men, and their voluntary and reasonable motions, are called works; and in this manner, we now consider works, which are nevertheless variously distinct from each other. For there are some which are inward, such as To believe, To love, To favor, To fear, and To pity; others are outward, such as To travel abroad, To give alms, To preach, To teach, and such like; and our question concerns both these types of works. They also divide works into those that pertain to ceremonies, and those they call moral; and we similarly embrace both types. Furthermore, the time in which good works are performed must be distinguished; for some are done before we are justified and have obtained the benefit of

regeneration, and others follow and are considered the fruits of a new life, and of righteousness begun. And since we cannot discuss these latter works, being such as follow justification, we will speak only of the former; for this only is called into controversy; whether works justify us. For those which follow justification cannot bring forth justification because it is already obtained.

8. These points being first handled and ordered, we will resolve this whole question by three propositions, which are these: Justification is not of works; Justification is obtained by faith; Justification is given by faith only. These three things, if we confirm by reasons taken from the Holy Scriptures, and defend them from the objections and quibblings of our adversaries, we suppose that then we will have sufficiently answered the question. May God grant and work with us to bring this to the effect we desire! As to the first proposition, when we say that men are not justified by works, it is not to be thought that this happens through the fault of good works; for if they could be performed by us as the law commands them, then we would be justified by them. For God, because He is just, as He does not acquit the wicked, so would He by His sentence justify those who satisfy the law. But there is no one who can fully accomplish such works as the law commands. And as if a man should owe a thousand crowns of gold, and had toward the payment thereof but only a thousand pieces of lead or brass money, undoubtedly he would not be discharged of the debt, neither might he be pronounced clear or quit; which would not happen through the fault of the crowns of gold, but through the fault of his inadequate money, and for that he lacks money of gold. Even so, we say that the law is indeed spiritual, holy, just; and he who could do all the things that it commands should live by them, for it is set forth unto us as life. But since none of us either does or can do it, as it is given by God; therefore, we are not justified by works.

Moreover, also, if faith itself should be considered as it is our work, we cannot be justified by it, as it is a work maimed and imperfect, and far beneath what the law requires. But therefore, we are said to be justified by it; for by it we grasp the promises of God, and the righteousness and merits of Christ, and apply them to ourselves. Suppose there were a beggar with a very loathsome and leprous hand, with which he receives the alms of him that offers it to him; undoubtedly, that beggar is not at all helped by the loathsomeness or leprosy of his hand, but by the alms which he received with his hand, whatever condition his hand may be in. There is none endowed with true piety, but must grievously lament and be sorry when he sees many (who are called Christians) ignorant of whether works justify or not; seeing this doctrine is the head, fountain, and stay of all religion, and therefore, above all things, we ought to be most sure and certain. But nowadays, it is not only called into controversy but many disagree from one another, and perilously stray from the true doctrine.

But if by complaining I might prevail, I would complain at length about this misfortune; but since that which is so, we can by no means bring to pass, but that it be so: only this will I prevent as much as I can; namely, that we do not fall into those opinions, which diminish the glory of God, and are contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and also are harmful to our consciences. Perhaps some expect that I should chiefly respond to the cursed utterances, slanders, and reproaches, with which the adversaries most importunately and tragically defame us regarding this matter; but I am not so foolish, to think that these things should be preferred before the setting forth and defense of the truth. Therefore, first of all, I will address the matter, and then when I have confirmed our own opinion, I will select such wicked objections as are laid against us, and according to the strength that God has given me, I will refute them. And to show manifestly that

men are not justified by works (which was our first proposition), I will outline in due order the sequence of reasons which Paul has in the epistle to the Romans; whereby it may more easily be perceived that I agree completely with him, neither do I deviate one hair's breadth from his doctrine.

9. In the first chapter, he began to reprove the Gentiles because, before they came to the knowledge of Christ, although by their philosophy they knew the true God, they did not worship Him as they should have; nor did they give thanks to Him as the author of all good things. Instead, becoming foolish, they became vain in their reasoning and thoughts; and by changing the glory of God, they transferred it from Him, and gave it not only to the images of men but also to birds, four-footed beasts, and serpents. Therefore, God delivered them over to the passions and desires of their own hearts, by means of which they lived most shamefully and became, as it is written there, full of all iniquity, maliciousness, fornication, avarice, and those vices which follow there. And if they were such, and lived in that manner, undoubtedly they could not be justified by their works; neither would Paul's argument against the Gentiles have had any force to prove to them that the religion of Christ was necessary for justifying them, unless he had taught that they were universally as he described them to be in that first chapter. For who would consider it to be an effective argument, which appears to be true only of some, and not of all?

And in the second chapter, he writes in a similar vein about the Jews; "Behold," he says, "you are called a Jew, and you trust in the law, and make your boast of God, and know His will, and approve the things that are beneficial, being instructed by the law. You boast that you are a leader of the blind, a light of those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of the ignorant, as one who has the

form of the teaching that is by the law. You, then, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one should not steal, do you steal? You who say a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you commit sacrilege? And you who make your boast of the law, do you dishonor God by transgressing the law? For the name of God, as it is written, is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." Thus, the Jews were without Christ; therefore, they could by no means be justified by their works, or else they might have answered Paul that they were so grievously accused without cause.

10. But what the situation of men was before they received the faith of Christ is more clearly shown in the third chapter. There we read: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands or seeks after God. All have turned aside, and have become unprofitable; there is none who does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their paths, and the way of peace they have not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes." These testimonies Paul gathered together from various places in the Holy Scriptures to depict the nature of man, destitute of God's grace. And to ensure that no one might say that only the idolatrous and wicked Gentiles are signified by these words, the apostle clearly shows that these conditions also extended to the Jews, who considered themselves the holiest of all. He adds, "But we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law." To confirm that his intention was to provide a general argument, he adds, "because by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified." By 'the flesh', he means a person not yet regenerated.

Some have interpreted 'the flesh' as referring to the lower parts of the mind, which are crude and entangled with shameful lusts. However, Paul excludes this interpretation when he says, "By the works of the law," that is, by the works commanded by God in the law, which must necessarily come from reason and not from the strength of the lower parts of the mind. Moreover, the Scripture, in Hebrew phraseology, understands 'the flesh' to mean the whole person; we have this more abundantly expressed elsewhere. Afterwards, to further confirm this statement, he says, "That every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be accountable to God." Undoubtedly, if men were justified by works, their mouths would not be stopped, nor would they be accountable before God. They would always have something to say; namely, that they are absolved from sins because they have earned it by works. But now, when people perceive the contrary, they dare not even open their mouths. Furthermore, he says, "But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been made known, which is attested by the law and the prophets." What person would assert that something could be the cause of our righteousness, without which righteousness may still be obtained? Undoubtedly, no wise person would do so, seeing that the nature of causes is such that without them the effects cannot be achieved.

To the same effect also serves what follows: "Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith." He wants us to understand that all just cause for glory is excluded and removed from us; for all the glory of our righteousness should be attributed and yielded to God. But if we were justified by works, then it would not be so: for the glory would be ours, and every person would consider themselves justified because they have lived virtuously and justly. And how certain and assured this was to the apostle is shown by what follows: "We

maintain, therefore, that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law." Why, then, should we deny what the apostle so vehemently affirms? Undoubtedly, it would be most presumptuous to do so. Therefore, let us agree with him and not resist such a significant testimony of his. But besides these points, let us weigh and consider the essence of Paul's argument: "If we were justified by works," he says, "we would not only have something to boast about; but also the occasion for our boasting and rejoicing in God, and for praising and commending His favour towards us, would be taken away." For it is most praiseworthy and glorious for us to acknowledge that the benevolence and gracious favour of God towards us through Christ is so great that He delivers us, miserable beings, from our sins and receives us into favour, even though we are covered with the most grievous loathsomeness and dregs of sins. If we were justified by works, then surely we could not truly boast, brag, or glory in this.

11. But it is better for us to hear what the apostle himself says at the beginning of the fourth chapter: "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered?" For if Abraham were justified by works, he would have something to boast about, but not before God. For what do the scriptures say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." But to the one who works, the reward is not considered a gift, but an obligation. Therefore, to ensure that this sweet consolation of the love and benevolence of God towards us is not taken away, let us firmly affirm with the apostle that we are not justified by works. To better persuade us of this, he emphasizes the term 'logizomai', which we understand as to impute, to ascribe to a man righteousness, or to count a man as just; and he presents it as a contrast to merit or debt: so that to him, to whom anything is imputed, it is not deserved, nor received as a debt. But he who obtains anything as a debt does not

consider it as imputed or ascribed to him. Paul did not think it sufficient to bring up the scripture concerning Abraham alone; he also cites David: "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." From these words, we understand not only that the righteousness by which we are said to be justified does not reside in our minds, but is imputed by God; and that it is an imputation not based on works but on God's mere mercy.

Furthermore, the apostle confirms his view by another characteristic of good works, specifically that works are signs or seals of the righteousness already obtained: he says of Abraham, "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised." Seeing therefore that good works are signs and also seals, which testify to the righteousness already received, they cannot be the causes thereof. This property is not only true for ceremonies but also for those works called moral when they are pleasing and acceptable before God; for they too are signs and tokens of our righteousness. Therefore, Peter exhorts us to make our calling and election sure by living uprightly and performing good works. Moreover, the form of the promise God made to Abraham, which is diligently to be weighed, did not include a condition of the law or of works. And since God added none, what audacity would it be for us to presume to do so? Paul says, "For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified, for the law brings wrath. Where there is no law, there is no transgression." Hence, if we do not fulfill the law, the promise will not take effect. And to believe in a promise that will never be fulfilled would be futile; this would undoubtedly be the case

if it were contingent on our fulfillment of the law, when no one can perfectly keep the law.

But the apostle goes further, and by the judgment of the most merciful counsel of God decrees as follows: "Therefore, the promise is by faith, by grace, to ensure that it is guaranteed." As if he should say, "If the promise depended on works, our minds would continually waver; no one could be certain of their own salvation: for their conscience would constantly accuse them of not having performed the works on which the promise was made." Therefore, to prevent us from wavering, God determined that our justification should be through faith and grace, so that the promise might be secure. The same is also deduced from what is said about Abraham, how he "against hope believed in hope." He is described as believing in hope, against hope, which either in himself or in nature sees or feels nothing that might encourage hope. Just as Abraham was a hundred years old, his body was practically dead, his wife was elderly and barren; all these natural factors discouraged hope, yet overcoming them all, he hoped. But if we had merits or good works by which we might obtain righteousness, then we would not be hoping against hope, but in hope, and in accordance with hope. Therefore, our justification must be understood no differently than it was for Abraham, for he is the father of us all; just as it was credited to him, so it shall be credited to us.

## **The condition of men before they are regenerated**

12. But now let us turn to the fifth chapter. There again, Paul explicitly describes the condition of men before they are regenerated, saying, "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for

the ungodly. And God demonstrates His love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." He adds, "For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life." From this, we gather that before regeneration, men are weak, sinners, ungodly, and enemies of God. Who then can attribute to such men the power to obtain righteousness at will, whenever they decide to do good works? Others may believe it, but the godly will never be so persuaded.

This point is further supported when he outlines the cause of such great evil, saying, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." As if to say, "We have been lost and condemned from the beginning, by the first man." And lest you should think infants are exempt, he states, "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's transgression." The mass of perdition encompasses all those born; from this corruption, the Holy Scriptures teach that it is not possible for men to escape by their works and claim justification for themselves.

Continuing in the sixth chapter, our apostle says, "What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life." What else do these words mean than that all actions performed by men before they believe in Christ are deserving of nothing but disgrace and shame? There is no fruit of sanctification, but it follows regeneration itself. And who will claim that we are justified by those things full of disgrace and shame?

But now let us consider what is said at the beginning of the seventh chapter: "Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law has authority over someone only as long as that person lives? For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man." In the same way, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. Paul uses this analogy to explain that before our faith in Christ, we were, as it were, married to the law and to the flesh, from which union no fruits could come except those that are harmful and deadly. But now, having been liberated by God's grace, we are joined to Christ by the Spirit—to Christ who was raised from the dead—through which union we now bear fruit for God, and not for death and condemnation.

And he further clarifies, or rather explains, when he adds, "When we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death." Note that as long as we were in the flesh, we were subject to wicked passions, which were effective in our bodies by the law. How then could we be justified by our works? Further, in the same chapter, he writes, "For I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature." Here, as it clearly appears, he discusses the works of men. Although I have effectively shown in interpreting these words that they are to be understood as

the works of the godly, who are already justified, I now leave it to the adversaries to interpret as they will. If they concede that these are works done before justification, and as they are neither approved nor good, how can they merit righteousness? For they are called evil, and no one is justified by an evil action. But if we understand these works, as here described, to be the works of those who are justified, then I argue from the greater: If those works, which might seem most acceptable, just, and holy to God, are called evil and are not approved by a now-renewed sense of reason, how can we assert then that those works, which are of sinners, are such that they can justify?

13. Lest anyone should say that we base our argument only on what happens due to the slothfulness of people, whereas the debate is about what could be done if people were to apply their goodwill (for many are not justified by their good works, whereas they could be justified by them if they wished), we answer with the apostle in the eighth chapter. He says, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh." This passage reminds us that the righteousness required by the commandments could not be achieved by the aid of the law, due to the corruption and weakness of the flesh; and for that reason, Christ was sent by the Father to accomplish what we could not. He also teaches us shortly thereafter: after stating that "the mind governed by the flesh is death," he further adds that it is "hostile to God; for it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so." Therefore, whatever we do by our own natural strength and ability (which is termed 'flesh'), resists God; for our corrupted nature cannot be made subject to God's law. And since this is the case, we cannot be justified by such deeds. Later in the same chapter, we read, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." In these

words, the apostle points to the origin and chief cause of all our goodness, namely, the purpose of God; which is so foundational to our salvation that all our goodness depends on it, yet it is not influenced by any of our deeds.

The true causes of man's blessedness are then orderly and distinctly described; among which there is no mention at all of our good works. "For those God foreknew, He also predestined; those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; and those He justified, He also glorified." This sequence is linked together with all the means and aids by which God brings us to salvation. But since there is no mention made of the works of the law and of merits, it is sufficiently clear that we are not justified by them. Furthermore, when it is stated, "Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." If by God's judgment we were to be justified by works, it would have been sufficient to say, "The elect will be accused in vain, because they have good merits; and since by their virtuous and holy works they shall obtain absolution." He does not say this; instead, he states, "It is God who justifies." And the response might have been, "No one will condemn the elect, seeing their works are such that they deserve both absolution and a reward." But he offers no such response, instead asserting, "It is Christ who died, etc." Why then should we presume to mix our works with this, seeing the Scripture instructs us in no uncertain terms not to do so?

## **Providence and Justification**

14. Now let us consider the ninth chapter, where the providence of God, which directs and orders all things, is discussed. Undoubtedly, we should understand that the nature of providence and justification is identical: both are given freely, not by works. The apostle writes that of two brothers, not yet born and who had done neither good nor evil (so that God's election would stand, not based on works but on His calling), it was said, "The older will serve the younger," as it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." Here, works are most manifestly excluded. Also, to Moses, it was stated, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." These words further declare that the forgiveness of sins and the means by which men are received into favor depend not on their deeds, but purely on God's merciful benevolence. And the following also clarifies, "It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy." Again, "He has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wants to harden." If justification could be attained by our will or works, then it would indeed depend on those who desire it and strive for it. Neither would conversion depend only on those whom God has mercy, but also on those who have the most compassion on themselves; nor would God harden anyone since all could easily reconcile themselves to God through good works and be justified. But the truth is quite different; those who rely on works stray too far from the true righteousness we are discussing.

Toward the end of the ninth chapter, the apostle says, "Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained to that law." And why not? Because they did not pursue it by faith but as though it could be attained by works. If the works of the law hindered the Jews from achieving justification, what hope should we then have in them?

The apostle states similarly in the tenth chapter, "They being ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness." These words imply nothing else but that those who attribute too much to their own righteousness, namely to works, fall from God's righteousness. There is such a contradiction between grace and works that the outcomes stemming from one cannot come from the other. For Paul states, "A remnant will be saved by grace. If it is by grace, then it is no longer by works; otherwise, grace would no longer be grace."

Lastly, what shall we say when the apostle exclaims, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" By this exclamation, Paul indicates that it is profoundly difficult to understand whether God acts justly in predestining and justifying whom He will, without regard to merit or conditions. Human reason is greatly troubled by this, and our nature continuously protests. But if either justification or election were based on works and merits, there would be no contention or obstacle. However, because it is quite the opposite and because we cannot rationalize the will of God, Paul rightly and justifiably exclaims in astonishment, and all who are wise must agree with his view.

In Romans 14, it is written, "Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves." But anyone who doubts is condemned if they eat because their eating is not from faith; for everything that does not come from faith is sin. This teaches us that those lacking true faith can perform no action that is not sinful.

I understand that some interpret these words to refer to conscience, but they cannot prove that faith means conscience. And although Paul initially teaches that we should not act against our conscience, he later introduces a general rule, stating, "Everything that does not

come from faith is sin." As if to say: When attempting any action, one must be convinced by the Spirit and the Word of God that what they are about to do is acceptable to God; without this conviction, they undoubtedly sin. If I were to accept that faith here means conscience, I would add that the conscience must be informed by the Word of God, for many have such a misguided conscience that whether they follow it or not, they sin grievously.

But let us not linger long on interpreting this place. Let us consider what is said in the fourth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians: "My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me." Paul speaks here of his ministry, now converted to Christ, now an apostle, whom no one could justly accuse regarding his function. And if such a friend of God pronounces this about himself and his works, what makes us think that justification can be attributed to the works of those not yet regenerated? If the works of the godly, even the chief apostle of Christ, could not merit it, how then could it be granted to those still estranged from Christ?

## **No Flesh Shall be Justified by the Works of the Law**

15. In the second chapter to the Galatians, Paul reiterates what he had written in the third chapter to the Romans; specifically, that no flesh shall be justified by the works of the law. This statement, clear enough and previously discussed, needs no further explanation. However, he adds in the same chapter, "If righteousness could be gained through the law, then Christ died for nothing." This phrase, 'for nothing', signifies in vain and without purpose, which would certainly be true. For if true righteousness before God could have

been attained by any means other than through Christ, why then would He have died and been crucified? He also questions, "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? So again, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you do it by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?" Those who are justified receive the Holy Spirit; for without it, it is utterly impossible to be justified, and if it is not given through works, then neither can justification be through works.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that justification comes from the goodwill and favor of God, as it enables men to be received into grace, adopted as His children, and made heirs of eternal life. However, those occupied with the works of the law before justification are under a curse; thus, they cannot enjoy the favor of God. For the apostle adds, "All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse." To ensure we do not consider this his own opinion, he cites the Scripture, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." He then argues from the standpoint of human agreements: "Even though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is ratified, no one annuls it or adds to it." Moreover, the promises were made to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "and to seeds," meaning many, but "and to your seed," meaning one, who is Christ. "This is what I mean: The law introduced 430 years later does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise."

If a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on the law. But this logic of the apostle is incomplete without stating that the law cannot impart life. As stated to the Romans, "It was weakened by the flesh," even though it contained commandments that promised life. Since it is

certain that the law cannot impart life, neither can it justify. "Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith." If the law serves as a guardian, it would be a great disservice to God and Christ, who are like parents to us, to attribute to the guardian what belongs to them. It is not the guardian who makes us heirs, adopts us, or grants us everything; it is the Father. Therefore, let us attribute our justification to God and Christ, not to the law, works, or our merits.

Paul challenges those who wish to be under the law, asking, "Do you not hear what the law says?" For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and the other by a free woman. The son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but the son by the free woman was born as a result of a divine promise. These things are taken figuratively: the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. It is critical to note that the law engenders only bondage, as Hagar did. But if works could justify, they would lead to freedom; for what is justification if not a release from sin? Yet since the law is called a servant and engenders bondage, we should not expect it to provide justification. In Galatians 5, it is stated, "If you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all." Paul argues that anyone who accepts circumcision is obligated to obey the entire law. He asserts that if believers accept circumcision after faith, Christ will benefit them in no way, reinforcing the point: "If righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!" This affronts the cross, where sinners are justified through

faith in the crucified Christ, a concept offensive to human reason. But God insists on this 'foolishness' to save those who believe.

16. In the second chapter to the Ephesians, it is written, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you once walked following the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just like the rest of mankind." Let us note that before coming to Christ, humans are dead in sin; thus, they are incapable of aiding themselves to live and be justified. Who has ever seen a dead person help themselves? Moreover, these words show that they were under the power of the prince of darkness, who operates in the children of disobedience. Given they were governed by him, how could they possibly work toward justification? To ensure we do not think he speaks only of certain ungodly individuals, he includes, "All of us also once lived among them." What did we do then? We indulged in the desires of our flesh. To clarify that these desires were not only the vile affections of the baser part of the soul, it follows, "fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind," meaning we followed also the designs and thoughts of human reason. If this was our condition, whence then comes salvation and justification? But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our sins, made us alive together with Christ.

But through what means did He grant us salvation? For, "By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast." Could works be more clearly excluded? Where then do we place them? Certainly, they follow justification, for the apostle adds, "For we are

His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." But these could not exist in us before, which is aptly described thus: "At that time you were without Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." Being in this state, who could claim to possess good works by which they might merit justification?

And to the Philippians in the third chapter: "If anyone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless." Given that Paul had so many commendable attributes before his conversion and had reasons to boast in the flesh, let us hear his final judgment on all these things: "But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ." If righteousness could be obtained through these things, should such profitable, precious, and holy things be considered loss, vile, and garbage? Let us heed Paul's words; rather, let the readers beware that they do not trust sophists more than Paul.

To the Colossians in the first chapter: "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation." Each word should be carefully noted to understand that those alienated from God cannot possess anything through which they may return to grace and favor; that enemies in mind cannot

achieve the peace associated with justification; and that it is impossible for those said to be engaged in evil deeds to perform good works before they are transformed. What kind of deeds these were is shown in the second chapter: "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us." In his second letter to Timothy, the first chapter: "He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus." He speaks of the effective calling, which justifies us, not the general calling open to all through the preaching of the word. Since this calling is not based on merit or works, neither can justification be. To Titus, it is written, "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy." To the Hebrews, there is affirmed only one sacrifice and offering, namely, the death of Christ, by which sins are atoned for and satisfaction made for humanity. Therefore, justification cannot be expected from works; it should suffice that the good works we perform after justification are sacrifices of thanksgiving, not propitiatory sacrifices, lest we do great injury to Christ.

## **Other Scriptures**

17. But setting aside the epistles of Paul, let us seek testimonies also from other parts of the Holy Scriptures. Christ in the seventh chapter of Matthew says, "Every good tree brings forth good fruit, but a bad tree brings forth bad fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bring forth good fruit." To better explain the nature of those who are not regenerated, He adds, "Therefore, just as

a good tree cannot produce bad fruit, neither can a bad tree produce good fruit." Wherefore, seeing Christ asserts that this cannot be so, how dare some claim it might be, saying that men may be justified by works? Christ uses the same analogy in the twelfth chapter of Matthew, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for by the fruit the tree is known. O generation of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things." These words of Christ declare that those who are not yet regenerated are evil trees, which cannot produce good fruit, and they confirm that the wicked cannot speak good things, much less can they perform good works; from an evil heart, only evil can be expected. Given this, consider whether those alienated from Christ should be deemed evil.

Also, in Luke chapter 17, Christ asks, "Which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what was our duty to do.'" These words, spoken to His disciples and apostles—already converted and destined for salvation—imply that if even their works are considered unprofitable, what should we think of those who have not yet received the faith of Christ? Yet, sophists have misled the world into thinking that works before justification somehow deserve it; and those works that follow are deemed most profitable. Therefore, people count their prayers as if making a transaction with God,

tallying how many prayers they have said, using them to supposedly bind God to their service.

In John chapter 15, Christ compares Himself to a vine and us to the branches, saying, "Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." Those not abiding in me are cast out as branches and are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. Given these words of the Lord, how can it be argued that men, strangers to Christ and not yet regenerated, can perform good works that justify them, seeing they are likened to dry branches destined for the fire? It is affirmed that only those who cleave to Christ as branches to the vine can bear fruit. To further clarify His intent, Christ adds, "Without me, you can do nothing." This statement, often obscured by those who suggest it refers merely to Christ's role as God in sustaining all creation, misses the point. Christ did not come to teach about the general conservation of natural entities but about the fruit leading to salvation and eternal life, focusing on those who adhere to His teachings or remain apart from them.

18. Moreover, the Son of God commanded that the faithful should say in their prayers, "Forgive us our trespasses," signifying thereby that the faithful also need forgiveness for their actions; for our works are imperfect and are unable to satisfy. Therefore, if our works, which we perform after our regeneration, require cleansing through the merit of Christ and we pray they may be so cleansed, how can they be propitiatory? Even less can we think of those works performed before regeneration as being acceptable and pleasing to God. Furthermore, no one can rightly claim they are exempt from this need since God has commanded all people to pray in this

manner, and His will is not for anyone to lie in their prayers. And John also writes, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I assume there is no one who would deem it appropriate to suggest that there should be many mediators when there is only one mediator between God and man, namely, the man Christ Jesus. But if, besides Him and His merits, our works could also justify us, then they would be placed between God and us, and Christ would not be the only mediator.

Moreover, the prophets everywhere pray, and David too, that God would wash, cleanse, purify, and purge their sins, specifically through forgiveness and remission. But if they could have attained this through their works, then they would not have needed to request it through prayer, or at least not with such fervency.

In Job chapter 15, it is written that even the heavens are not pure in God's sight; and in chapter 4, he declares that not even the angels are pure. What then can be said of humans before they obtain justification? David also cries out in the Psalms, "If you, Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?" Isaiah calls the thirsty to the waters and bids them to buy without money. Yet, our contemporaries seek to merit and be justified by merits, works, and even money. Moreover, in Isaiah chapter 40, when he heard a voice say, "Cry out," and he asked, "What shall I cry?" he was told to proclaim, "All flesh is grass, and its steadfast love, or piety, or the mercy by which one helps his neighbor, is like the flower of the field," that is, something fleeting that soon fades away and cannot endure. He reaffirms this in chapter 64, saying, "All our righteousnesses are like filthy rags." Whether this sentence is applied to works done after regeneration or before matters little, for either interpretation supports our case. And in the same chapter, he adds, "O Lord, we are the clay, and you our potter; we are all the work of your hand." This

metaphor of clay and the potter is also used by Paul in Romans chapter 9 to illustrate that we are as incapable of contributing to our justification as clay is of shaping itself.

We might also cite testimonies about the maliciousness of our hearts from Genesis and Jeremiah, but I believe I have already provided sufficient evidence to support our argument.

I will only add that some have been so bold as to attribute some merit of justification not only to honest and morally good works but also to superstitious practices that they themselves have devised. Who is unaware of the common charms ascribed to holy water? "By holy water may your sins be erased, and let it be to you praise and life." They also attribute the forgiveness of sins to monks' cowls, to candles, and the ashes from olive and palm branches, and to pilgrimages. They have been led to such foolish and irreligious nonsense through their perverse interpretation of the scriptures regarding merits. Undoubtedly, only those who have experienced it can understand how difficult it is for a heart, crushed and burdened with sin, to find peace in God's free promises through Christ; such a heart struggles mightily to establish firm faith. If we were to heed the sophists and advise people to consider their works, they would never find peace but would always be tormented, forever doubting their salvation, ultimately leading to despair. Let no one think that in discussing this matter, we engage in pointless debate or mere wordplay. This issue defends the honor of Christ and His unique role—to justify and forgive sins. We insist that these attributes should not be ascribed to works or anything else of ours. We seek to ensure that the promise is secure and that troubled consciences find comfort in God's words and promises. Lastly, we seek to distinguish clearly between the Gospel and the law; but those who ascribe justification to works confuse and dangerously conflate the two. Although I could

offer many more arguments, the ones presented here should suffice; those unmoved by these reasons will likely remain unaffected by any others.

19. Nevertheless, I think it not prudent to overlook the trivial shifts and cunning deceits by which sophists attempt to evade and obscure this doctrine that we have set forth. They argue that the Holy Scriptures, whenever they deny the justifying power of works, refer only to the ceremonies of the old law, and not to just and upright works, which they commonly call moral works. The extent to which people are misled in this matter is clearly evidenced by the testimonies of the Scriptures, particularly those of Paul, whom they claim supports their position most strongly regarding this issue. Although this apostle discusses many aspects that seem to pertain to the rites and ceremonies of the law, his explanations also encompass a great many other aspects, indicating that he is not speaking solely of ceremonies but also of other laws of righteousness and goodness—indeed, particularly those related to behavior and even to the ten commandments.

In the first chapter, when he reproves the Gentiles, stating that without faith in Christ they could not be justified, he highlights their deeds, namely idolatry and shameful lusts. And towards the end of the chapter, he lists a long catalog of vices with which they were afflicted, mentioning nothing about the ceremonies of Moses. Therefore, since the vices he mentions contravene the ten commandments and the moral law, it is reasonable to assume that these are also what he refers to in his writings.

In the second chapter, he reproves the Jews for similar sins, saying, "You who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say people should not

commit adultery, are you an adulterer? And you who abhor idols, do you rob God of his honor?" It is evident that these issues are encompassed within the law of the ten commandments.

In the third chapter, he more clearly addresses the same issues, writing, "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." These matters are clearly related to behavior. If the apostle had intended to speak only of ceremonial laws, he would not have mentioned these aspects. This is further evidenced when, after stating, "No one is justified before God by the law," he adds, "because through the law comes the knowledge of sin." Therefore, the law that informs us of sin does not justify. Accordingly, he also states in the fourth chapter, "The law brings wrath," far from justifying. It is apparent to everyone that sins are more readily recognized, and God's wrath against transgressors is more provoked by the ten commandments than by ceremonial precepts.

I will also not dwell on the general statement made in the fourth chapter that, "To the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation." Also, "God intended that the inheritance be based on grace, so that the promise might be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring, not just to those who adhere to the law, that boasting may be excluded," which applies equally to moral works as it does to ceremonies. It is further written in the fifth chapter that, "The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more," which cannot be limited only to ceremonies.

Moreover, in the sixth chapter, when it was argued that by diminishing the importance of the law and works, he seemed to be

encouraging a lax and sinful lifestyle—as is often alleged against us today—he responded that we should not continue in sin because we have died to it. "Through baptism," he says, "we are buried with Christ so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." He admonishes us to consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. He adds that we must take care not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies and that we should not offer our body parts as instruments of wickedness for sin, but rather offer ourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and our body parts as instruments of righteousness leading to sanctification.

20. These things we have discussed, and those that follow even to the end of the chapter, do they relate to the ceremonies of Moses or rather to a just, sincere, and moral life? The matter is so clear that it hardly needs questioning; yet, the passages in the seventh chapter are even more explicit. Paul states that the passions in our members were stirred by the law to produce fruit leading to death. What are these passions if not lusts, filthy desires, anger, hatred, and envy, which are listed in the catalog to the Galatians where the works of the flesh are distinguished from the works of the spirit? There is no doubt that all these relate to the Ten Commandments. To better understand this, Paul adds, "What then shall we say? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Yet I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.' The law is indeed holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good. Moreover, the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin; for what I do, I do not understand. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, that I do. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how

to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." Anyone who carefully considers these testimonies will easily see that the apostle is speaking entirely of the Ten Commandments, which he explicitly mentions in these words.

But the words that follow in the eighth chapter, "What the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh," cannot be explained as referring only to the law of ceremonies, much less what follows: "Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live." This cannot be referred only to ceremonies, any more than what is written to the Galatians, "The law was added because of transgressions." It is certain that boasting cannot be excluded, nor can the promise be secure, if our justification depends on adherence to the Ten Commandments and moral precepts, regardless of whether you remove the rites and ceremonies of Moses. But even more solid is the statement from the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, "If it is by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace."

This antithesis is universal and cannot in any way be limited to ceremonies. I will not mention what Paul writes to the Philippians, how besides those precepts of Moses, he also lived blamelessly in terms of the righteousness that comes from the law. For what he writes to the Ephesians in the second chapter, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast," he writes to the Gentiles. Therefore, the works he excludes from justification cannot be understood as merely ceremonial since the Gentiles did not observe them. But what will they say about the epistle to Timothy, where in the first chapter it is plainly and absolutely stated that we are called, "not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace"? Also, to Titus, "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy."

21. All these points are so clear and obvious that they require no interpretation. There is no one so unperceptive that upon hearing these arguments, they wouldn't immediately understand how they cannot, without considerable distortion, be applied to the ceremonies and rites of Moses. However, I am curious about why some people deny the justifying power of ceremonial works yet readily attribute it to our moral works. Isn't it a matter of good and commendable conduct to worship God with certain prescribed rites, which God has commanded? Weren't the rites and holy services prescribed to the people of the Jews at that time commanded in the Ten Commandments? Indeed, the Sabbath observance includes these aspects. And do not these very Sophists today attribute the forgiveness of sins and the conferring of grace to their sacraments, just as in the Old Testament these were attributed to circumcision? What kind of inconsistency is this, to say at one time that the rites of Moses had no power to justify, and at another time to admit that they

were sacraments for the patriarchs, and that circumcision forgave original sin in infants?

We certainly do not assert this; rather, we completely deny that any sacraments confer grace. They indeed present grace, but through representation. In the sacraments, the words, and the visible signs, the promise of God through Christ is conveyed to us. If we seize this promise by faith, we receive greater grace than we had before, and also, with the seal of the sacraments, we confirm God's gift which we have embraced through faith. But I am continually astonished at those who affirm and deny the same thing simultaneously.

Indeed, they respond, but not with any significant consideration, as is their usual manner. They do not completely remove the justifying power from the sacraments of the forefathers, especially circumcision, but only from the time the gospel was proclaimed, which, as they say, sparked Paul's argument that the rites of Moses should no longer be observed. But here again, in their usual manner, they are both misled and mislead others. Since the apostle teaches that Abraham was not justified by circumcision but received it after being justified by faith, he clearly removes the justifying power from that ceremony, even during the time of Abraham when it was first instituted.

David, when he asserts that blessedness consists in sins not being imputed (which, as we now discuss, is tantamount to being justified), was he speaking of his own time or another? And Habakkuk, when he says that "the righteous shall live by faith" and excludes works from justification (as Paul clearly explains), was he speaking only of his time? Undoubtedly, he spoke of both our time and his own. Finally, when Paul explicitly writes to the Galatians in the third chapter, "All who rely on observing the law are under a curse," and

supports this statement, from where, I ask you, does he draw his evidence? Undoubtedly, from the law itself. He says, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Therefore, since the law speaks thus and, as Paul states, condemns all who transgress its commandments to a curse, it necessarily follows that no one can be justified by works pertaining to it.

22. However, these individuals resort to another evasion. They argue that not all those who are to be justified are in the same situation: some are Hebrews and some Gentiles converted to the faith of Christ and become Christians; others, having once embraced Christ, fall into grave sins and require restoration. They claim that the circumstances of these groups differ: those who have professed Christianity and then fallen cannot regain righteousness except through good works, such as almsgiving, weeping, fasting, confession, and other similar acts, which they consider preparatory and meritorious. These requirements are not deemed necessary for those converting directly from unbelief to Christ. But I ask these learned individuals, from which part of the Holy Scriptures do they derive this distinction? Given that the method of justification is uniformly the same for everyone, why should one group approach it differently from another? Moreover, why do they grant that those who have lapsed in Christianity can merit justification through good works, yet not extend the same principle to those converting from unbelief? Surely, those who have once known the sweet word of God and then fallen away are in a worse state than newcomers. As it is said, "The servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows." Also, "Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

They concede that converts from unbelief may perform good deeds and perhaps partially deserve justification, at least to the extent they term 'congruity', but they deny that the same requirement applies to both groups equally.

However, as I have taught elsewhere, all their works before conversion are sinful; how then can they perform good works acceptable to God? Moreover, why are good works not required before they come to Christ and are baptized, given that no one regenerated by Christ can truly believe without sincerely repenting of their past life? True belief involves deep remorse for past sins and an acknowledgment of having grievously erred; without this, there is no genuine faith. This is illustrated by Augustine in his "Confessions" and by the Ephesians in the Acts of the Apostles, who not only confessed their sins but also burned the books they had used for superstitious practices upon converting to Christianity.

The misunderstanding arises perhaps from readings in the Church Fathers, who placed significant emphasis on tears, fasting, alms, and other pious acts of the penitent. However, these discussions were about ecclesiastical satisfactions, not about our deeds by which we might appease God or deserve forgiveness of sins. The Church, unable to see the inward faith of the fallen (since many, unwilling to endure the shame of excommunication, might feign some semblance of conversion and repentance to be more readily reconciled and readmitted into the community), required visible signs of faith and conversion such as fasting, confessions, and alms as evidence of genuine transformation. Misunderstanding this, they muddle everything and foster abhorrent hypocrisy.

## **Some Argue the Works of Non-Believers are Not Sins**

23. However, there is another objection: some argue that the works of non-believers are not sins, even though they are performed without faith in Christ. They suggest that there exists a kind of general, vague belief in God, which, even without belief in Christ, enables people to perform commendable deeds that may please God and, to some extent, merit justification. They argue that non-believers donate generously, honor their parents, deeply love their country, regret their wrongdoings, live moderately, and perform many other virtuous acts deliberately because they believe in a God who values such behavior, and thus they strive to make themselves acceptable to Him. Furthermore, they illustrate their point with an analogy: a stake or post planted in the earth might not take root or truly live, yet it draws some sustenance from the soil and produces leaves and buds as if it were alive. Similarly, they say, those who are estranged from Christ, although not living by the heavenly spirit, perform praiseworthy deeds inspired by some spiritual influence.

However, those of us educated by the Holy Scriptures recognize no faith that can please God other than that which is in Christ Jesus. "There is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved," except the name of our Saviour, Christ. Paul, whenever he mentions the faith that justifies, consistently refers to it as the faith that connects us deeply with Christ and His Gospel.

But lest it seem that only Paul teaches this, let us delve deeper into the matter. Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." What did he believe? Specifically, that he would have a descendant through whom all nations would be blessed, as Paul

explains, referring to Christ. This promise was confirmed by God in Christ; indeed, the Lord Himself said, "He saw my day and rejoiced." Likewise, Job declared, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another."

This faith is not vague or general; it distinctly encompasses the key tenets of Christ's role: as a Redeemer indicating the forgiveness of sins, His Second Coming, and the resurrection of the dead, affirming that we will be restored in our own bodies, and acknowledging Christ's humanity visible to our eyes.

What, then, is the nature of the faith that these opponents claim non-believers possess? True and firm belief in God's promises naturally brings about all good mental dispositions. How can they claim such individuals possess faith while they remain mired in idolatry and blatant sins?

They might have some form of belief shaped by upbringing, persuasion, or ingrained opinion, but possessing true faith while leading such lives is impossible unless they also claim that even those who follow radically different creeds, like the Turks who assent to many of our beliefs, have faith. However, Paul's words in 1 Corinthians complicate their position: "If I have all faith, so that I can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing." They interpret this to mean that true faith can exist without love, yet concede that such faith is ultimately worthless. How then does this reconcile with Paul's teaching, especially when they argue that a vague, general faith can produce good works that merit justification and please God, while Paul asserts that even true faith is futile without love?

Their analogy of the stake in the ground further undermines their argument. Although the stake may appear alive, it is, in reality, dead; a discerning gardener recognizes that its sprouting is futile and discards such deceptive growth as worthless. Similarly, God views the works they so embellish and present as merely superficial.

24. However, there is another argument proposed, which is not much unlike the former: some argue that the deeds performed by non-believers are not without grace. They assert that there exists a sort of general grace available to all people, including those not regenerated, which somewhat assists them in meriting justification and performing deeds pleasing to God. By asserting this, they inadvertently align with the heresy of Pelagius, who also believed that people, through the virtue and strength of their nature and by adhering to the law, could perform good works leading to justification without the grace of Christ. This claim does not help their case, even if they distinguish these deeds from nature by attributing them to grace, which Pelagians explicitly denied. In doing so, they seem to verbally disagree with Pelagianism while substantively agreeing with it, for by assigning a type of grace that attains righteousness without Christ, they contradict Christ, the Milevitan Council, and the Holy Scriptures. Furthermore, by making grace common to all, they transform it into a natural attribute, arguing some will utilize it and others will not. They distinguish between a 'preventing' grace and a subsequent 'more absolute' grace. We do not dispute this categorization, provided it is correctly understood: we acknowledge a grace that precedes and another that follows. However, the divine favor through Christ, which both initiates our willingness to do good and subsequently aids us in living righteously, is singular.

No one should doubt that we are first moved by God to change and be renewed in Christ. To argue that in our conversion we preempt God's assistance is folly. God loves us first, enabling us to love Him in return; He moves us by His grace and Spirit before we can will or consider anything good.

The error arises if we assume that individuals receive Christ's grace before they are regenerated or renewed in Him. Sometimes enlightenment is granted, but unless this is forceful enough to transform their minds, it serves only for their judgment and condemnation, which their sins merit. To clarify the intentions of those making these claims, it is crucial to understand that they argue Paul only excludes from justification those works performed solely through free will and the assistance of the law.

What, then, are these works performed by individuals? They are certainly not the grave sins like murder or theft, which are driven not by the law but by fleshly impulse and demonic influence. Nor are they mere natural activities like playing or farming, as these are not prescribed by law. What remains are the decent, civil, or moral actions like honoring parents or expressing remorse for wrongdoing—actions commanded by the law and presumably performable by free will, which they claim do not justify.

What other good works could there be, unless they mean those performed by individuals already justified? If all works, including sins, natural acts, and moral deeds commanded by law, are excluded, no works remain by which they claim people can be justified. They should heed the scripture, "If of grace, then not of works; if of works, then not of grace," and avoid contradictory claims that Paul only excludes works devoid of faith or grace. How can they argue this when they dispute the assertion that people are justified by faith

alone, accusing others of adding "only" without scriptural basis, yet they do the same?

For adding "only" to faith, we rely on strong scriptural support, employing a phraseology embraced by the fathers. Let's consider their rebuttal: they suggest Paul focused primarily on Jews who believed they could be justified by works without Christ, hence his emphasis. But I maintain that whatever Paul wrote was meant for the church, comprising both Jews and Gentiles, all of whom confessed Christ. Is it plausible that any among them hoped for salvation without Christ? Certainly, some overvalued ceremonies alongside Christ, but none excluded Him. Moreover, Paul instructed not only Jews but Gentiles too, evident in his letter to the Ephesians where he explicitly addresses Gentiles, asserting, "A man is justified by faith, not of yourselves, lest any man should boast," specifically referring to the Gentiles in the second chapter. Thus, their argument distinguishing between works for justification based on one's religious background is baseless and misleading.

25. Now, let us address their primary and most staunch argument. They propose two types of merits: one of congruity and the other of worthiness. They admit that works performed before justification do not merit justification out of worthiness, but only out of congruity. If you ask what they mean by merit of congruity, they explain that it pertains to those actions which inherently do not deserve salvation but are considered as such due to God's particular kindness. According to them, such are the moral actions performed by many before justification. Conversely, they define the merit of worthiness as that which fully deserves the reward. This, they attribute to deeds performed by the righteous after regeneration. They believe this distinction secures their argument, but since it is not derived from the Holy Scriptures, there is no reason to take pleasure in it.

What if we argue, based on scripture, that this distinction clearly contradicts God's word? Would they then admit that this celebrated invention was crafted merely to deflect our objections? Paul discusses justified individuals, including Christ's martyrs who endured severe persecutions for their faith, offering them consolation with these words: "The sufferings of this time are not worthy of the glory to come, which shall be revealed in us." In contrast, they claim such sufferings are indeed worthy, directly opposing Paul's statement. How can these views be reconciled, or rather, how clearly do they contradict each other?

Moreover, since they claim that merit of congruity depends only on God's promises and not the nature of the action, let them demonstrate where God ever promised rewards for actions performed without faith and Christian devotion. Additionally, it's evident how illogical this terminology is. Surely, those worthy of something rightfully deserve it, and those to whom something is justly due by a fair and sound judgment should be considered worthy of it. Thus, it's clear that this distinction was poorly conceived and cunningly crafted to sidestep our arguments.

26. However, some accuse us of neglecting or even outright denying what they call "works of preparation." This is certainly not the case; although we do not accept their version of preparations, we do recognize and endorse certain preparatory actions. God, the author of our salvation through Christ, employs various means, stages, and methods to lead us to salvation. Due to His providence, immense power, and incredible love towards us, these can be considered preparations. Yet, if we consider the nature of these actions and our mindset in performing them, they do not contribute to our salvation; in fact, they are often contrary to it. The commendable actions they label as moral often provide the wicked with opportunities to inflate

their self-worth and become complacent, neglecting the need for salvation through Christ or genuine piety. Conversely, it's often observed that those who fall into severe sins may more readily experience genuine repentance and turn to Christ more quickly. This is why Christ said to the Scribes and Pharisees, "Harlots and tax collectors shall enter the kingdom of God before you." It is also clear that no one can claim that vile acts inhibit justification or that civil virtues directly assist it. It all depends on whether these means lack or are accompanied by God's grace. Though, from our perspective, they are sins and naturally unhelpful, under God's governance, they invariably serve a beneficial purpose.

Sometimes, individuals who appear upright and moral in human eyes are actually consumed by pride and disdain internally and are thus forsaken by God, leading them to fall into egregious sins. Yet, these falls often prompt them to better recognize their flaws, reform, and return to Christ's flock.

This principle is vividly illustrated in the Gospel story of the prodigal son. After squandering his inheritance, he found himself in such a deplorable state that he longed to eat with the pigs he tended, a situation no doubt shameful for someone of his background. Yet, this low point prompted him to reflect on his situation and return to his father, leading to his ultimate redemption. Who can comprehend the depths of God's mysterious plans? He often uses seemingly harmful circumstances to prepare individuals for salvation, turning what would naturally be detrimental into something beneficial.

Consider a physician treating a patient with a gangrenous leg that must be cut to prevent the spread of infection. The cutting itself, while seemingly a harsh measure, is a necessary step towards healing. This act alone doesn't guarantee recovery; it requires the

physician's continued intervention with appropriate treatments to ensure the patient's healing. Likewise, if God were to leave a person to their own devices in the midst of such preparatory actions, they would undoubtedly perish. Therefore, while these actions might seem to prepare us for justification, they only do so through God's intervention and not by their inherent nature.

This analogy, however, isn't perfect since unlike the physician who may have no alternative but to cut, God has limitless ways to lead us to salvation. Consider Judas, who after betraying Christ confessed his sin and expressed remorse, actions that could have been preparatory for justification had God chosen to use them. However, since God did not intervene, Judas ended up taking his own life, resulting in damnation. Similarly, Cain acknowledged his sin but was ultimately consumed by despair. This demonstrates the true nature of such actions if they are not governed and ordered by God.

## **Does Arguing Human Inability Slander God's Law?**

27. Moreover, our adversaries accuse us of grievously slandering God's law and rendering it useless by asserting that it cannot be fully observed by natural human strength and ability. However, these critics clearly demonstrate that they have not thoroughly studied the scriptures to understand the functions of the law. If they had, they would never consider it useless, despite our inability to fully comply with it. The first role of the law, as taught by Paul, is to reveal sin, for "through the law comes the knowledge of sin." It also provokes God's wrath, for "the law brings about wrath." Furthermore, it increases the gravity of sin, for "the law entered so that sin might increase." It

also brings a curse, for "all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse."

But to what purpose? It serves as a schoolmaster leading us to Christ. Those who recognize their sins see God's wrath looming over them; they feel their sins multiplying and find themselves increasingly under a curse. Eventually, when the Spirit of God moves them, they begin to yearn for Christ to deliver them from such burdens. This is how the law serves as a tutor leading to Christ. With this understanding, how could anyone consider the law unprofitable?

Moreover, who would claim that Aristotle laboured in vain when he skillfully outlined the nature of a demonstrative syllogism in his "Posterior Analytics"? Even though it is rare to find reasoning so finely crafted in any scholarly discipline, Aristotle's diligent efforts were worthwhile. Through his exemplary rules, he demonstrated the standard to aim for if one wishes to prove something conclusively and robustly. Similarly, Cicero, when describing an orator that has never and will never exist, did not waste his effort. At the very least, he provided a model for those aspiring to excel in oratory.

In the same way, God has set forth His laws as examples for us to model our lives upon. Additionally, for those regenerated in Christ, God's laws are not entirely impossible to observe. Since their strength is somewhat renewed by the Spirit of God and the fury of the flesh is somewhat subdued, they can achieve many things that are pleasing and acceptable to God. Moreover, even those not yet regenerated can, in terms of external discipline, align themselves to some extent with God's laws. When this is practised, societies prosper, God's wrath is less provoked against humanity, and the punishments that God sometimes inflicts on blatant sinners can be temporarily avoided.

28. And these are not insignificant or common benefits of the law, which those who object to us seem unaware of. Yet, not satisfied with these benefits, they further assert that the law can be observed even by those not yet regenerated. If someone questions the excellence and difficulty of this, they respond that our righteousness, when compared with God's righteousness—which is absolutely and perfectly just—or when matched against the law considered in its entirety, is indeed no righteousness at all. However, they claim that if our righteousness is compared to the law as God graciously accommodates our weaknesses, then in that light, we may fulfill it and be justified by good works. This is a sophistical distinction introduced by Pighius, who presumed the authority to moderate God's law—an authority that surely cannot belong to any mortal. This can be demonstrated both by human law and God's law: it is stated in the Digests, concerning laws and senatorial decrees, that in matters fundamental to a commonwealth, legislation should be clear, either by interpretation or by the statute of a wise prince, so that no one, including judges, may at their pleasure mitigate or bypass the laws under the guise of equity. For then, laws would be as pliable as a lead rule, subject to manipulation at anyone's whim.

This rule exists so that if a law's extremity is specified in a decree and its moderation or mitigation is not detailed elsewhere, the judge must adhere to the strict law and should not apply his interpretation of equity—although he may follow such equity if it is specified elsewhere in the law. For example, it is agreed in all laws that if a debtor does not pay on time and the creditor incurs a loss, the debtor is liable for that loss. This is what they mean by paying interest or damages. However, if the Digests specify that in all cases, the fault lies with the party that causes the action to be undone, then if a debtor can prove that the failure to pay was not his fault—for he had the money and offered it, but the creditor refused—then even if the

creditor suffers by not having his money, the debtor is not, in equity, obligated to compensate for the loss because the written law regards it as if the action was completed. Therefore, it's clear that judges or any others do not have the discretion to arbitrarily adjust laws.

If this principle holds in Roman law, created and enacted by humans, what should we think about God's law? Surely, it must be infinitely more binding than human laws, and we are not permitted to imagine any leniency unless it is explicitly prescribed. For example, the law states, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed." This is the law's extremity, which we must always follow unless a specific exemption teaches that this severity should be mitigated. Elsewhere it is written, "If two men are in the woods and an axe head slips and kills a companion, there should be cities of refuge where the accidental killer can flee and live safely until the case is tried. If he can prove his innocence, he may be released upon the death of the high priest." Judges were to apply this equitable provision because it was written into God's laws; indeed, they were required to do so whenever the circumstances they faced demanded it. But to suggest that it was lawful for them to bend or soften God's laws by their authority is unsupported by any scriptural evidence; on the contrary, they were instructed, "Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left," and "Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it."

We need not elaborate extensively to demonstrate that the law is impossible to keep by our abilities, especially before regeneration, as the scripture explicitly states this. Paul writes in Romans chapter 8, "What the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh..." Also, "The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so." And in 1 Corinthians, "The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come

from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit." Christ also says, "A bad tree cannot bear good fruit," and, "How can you who are evil say anything good?" These passages clearly teach that it is impossible for God's law to be observed by mere human strength, which is so marred and corrupt. Regarding these evasions and subtle sophistries of the Papists, let these statements suffice.

29. Let us now address specific objections raised by our opponents, who attempt to unsettle us and bolster their misconceptions. They point out that Ahab, the wicked king, tore his garments at the prophet Elijah's warnings, donned sackcloth, lay on the ground, fasted, and went barefoot. Consequently, the Lord said to the prophet, "Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring the disaster in his day, but in his son's day." They argue that the actions of Ahab, an ungodly king and one not yet justified, pleased God to the extent that they appeased God's wrath. However, we argue that Ahab was not justified by these acts. If he had possessed the true faith that justifies, he would not have continued in idolatry and other abominable sins. Indeed, he was somewhat moved by the prophet's warnings, but his actions pertained only to some outward and civil discipline rather than true repentance.

When God states Ahab humbled himself, the phrase "before me" could refer either to God's words spoken through the prophet—meaning "at my words"—or "in the sight of the Israelite community." By his actions, Ahab demonstrated repentance for the evil he had done, setting a positive example for the people. Yet, God, who sees the heart's intentions, knew this repentance was insincere and

unproductive; thus, He promised only to delay the punishment to his son's days.

It is not unusual, nor should we be unaware, that external discipline can avert plagues and severe temporal punishments. We do not teach that all sins are equal; indeed, God waited for the Amorites' sins to reach their full measure. Often, His wrath manifests when overt sins are rampant, unchecked by any discipline. Yet, even where external discipline is maintained, God may grant many blessings—not as a merit of deeds but for maintaining order, a principle God has instilled in nature.

It is puzzling what our adversaries aim to achieve by citing Chronicles, where it is stated that Rehoboam, son of Solomon, did evil because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord. They could easily understand this contributes nothing to their argument unless they are, so to speak, mere "table-doctors" more familiar with lists than texts. Each time they encounter the word "prepare" in scriptural tables, they indiscriminately apply it to their concept of preparatory works, regardless of context. The historical account, noting the king's wicked conduct, explains he lacked a sincere and willing heart to seek the Lord.

Their citation from Proverbs 16:1, "To humans belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the proper answer of the tongue," is equally misconstrued. This merely reflects that while humans can plan, ultimate outcomes are determined by God. People may prepare what they will say in various forums, but the final result is always under God's control.

Another misinterpretation is evident in their use of Psalm 10, which in their erroneous reading suggests that God hears the "preparation" of the heart. However, this reflects a misunderstanding and a

mistranslation. The correct interpretation, consistent with Hebrew texts, is that God prepares the hearts of the faithful to ask for things that align with divine will, acknowledging that it is God who enables any righteous desires or petitions.

Thus, every instance where our adversaries find the word "prepare" in Scripture, they hastily and inappropriately claim it supports their notion of preparatory works. This approach lacks discernment and a true understanding of Scripture, where it is clear that God initiates and enables all that is good in us, including our readiness to pray and seek His will.

30. But (say they), Ezekiel states in his 18th chapter: "Walk in my ways, and make yourselves a new heart." And Jeremiah says: "Turn to me, says the Lord." Hence, they argue, a person can prepare themselves to obtain righteousness. However, these individuals should recall that it is not fair to quote certain parts of the Holy Scriptures while overlooking others. They should therefore examine what Ezekiel writes in the 36th chapter: "I (says the Lord) will cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will keep my judgments and do them." And, "I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." Jeremiah also in the 31st chapter says: "Turn me back to you, O Lord, and I will return." Thus, Augustine aptly stated: "Grant what you command, and command what you will."

They also misuse another passage from the prophet Jonah to support their error; it is written that God regarded the works of the Ninevites. "See," they argue, "the afflictions of the Ninevites, how they fasted and cried unto the Lord; the Lord prepared their hearts and made them ready to receive forgiveness." As though the Ninevites did not first need to believe God's word before they could pray effectively or

repent. Since they believed before they performed any works, they were justified by faith, not by the works that followed. And when it is said God regarded their works, it is because these were pleasing to Him.

We have never denied that the works of men, once justified, are acceptable to God. Whenever we find passages in Scripture that seem to attribute righteousness to our works, we must, following Augustine's teaching, consider their source. When we see that they stem from faith, we should attribute the righteousness associated with them to that root. The error in their reasoning becomes clear; they presume to apply conditions relevant to one group of people to another, something even human laws do not allow. For example, in legal statutes concerning wills and testaments: if rural and uneducated individuals, who live outside cities and lack access to wise and learned counsel, make their wills without the formalities usually required and with fewer witnesses than prescribed, their wills should still be valid. But if someone were to apply this exception to city dwellers, who live in places with ample access to knowledgeable people, that would be a grave mistake. If their wills are made in this way, they are not accepted; they are not considered binding. Similarly, we say that the works of men justified may please God, but this cannot and should not be extended to those without faith and without Christ.

## **Are Good Works the Cause of Righteousness or the Effects of it?**

31. Moreover, let us consider the usual sophistical and deceitful type of reasoning of our adversaries; which the logicians refer to as "from that which is not the cause, as though it were the cause." They constantly attribute good works as the causes of righteousness; when in reality, they are effects of righteousness, and not causes. It is as if someone claimed, "The fire is hot because it heats," but in truth, it is the opposite; the fire heats because it is hot. Similarly, we perform just actions because we are justified, not that we are justified because we perform just actions.

Sometimes they also argue that God will reward everyone according to their works; hence, they claim, works are the cause of our happiness. But here again, as is their usual error, they misinterpret; for, unless they invent a new grammar, the word "according" does not imply cause. However, they say, Christ in the Final Judgment appears to present these as the causes for which the kingdom of heaven is granted, saying, "I was hungry, and you fed me; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink."

Yet, Christ does not truly list these actions as causes but rather those things which preceded them: "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The true cause of our happiness is that we are chosen and predestined by God for eternal inheritance. Those who are predestined are adorned with faith in time, which justifies them and entitles them to eternal life. However, since faith is invisible and cannot be seen, and Christ wants everyone to understand that only

the just are admitted to heaven, he lists these outward works, thereby making evident that righteousness is imparted through faith. No one is so uninformed as not to know that there are two bases of things; one by which they exist and another by which they are recognized.

Furthermore, they quote from the first book of Samuel, "Those who honor me, I will honor; and those who despise me will be lightly esteemed." Here, they argue, the promise is attached to the action. But if they distinguished between the promise of the Gospel and the promises of the law, they would easily see that this passage does not contradict our assertion. If we could fulfill the law's commands ourselves, then perhaps that could be a cause for receiving the promise. However, since no one can fully meet these demands, all turn to Christ and are justified through faith in Him. Then, through a kind of begun obedience, we start to act. Although not perfectly aligned with the commandments' standards, these actions please God, who, out of sheer generosity, fulfills the promise associated with those actions. Thus, the conditions linked to the commands are not without merit; those justified achieve them.

These individuals are not embarrassed to cite from Psalm 25: "Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins." They argue as though our labors and sufferings cause the remission of sins. In this verse, David, in deep distress, asks God to forgive all his sins, suggesting if God were angry because of his sins, removing the cause might end the punishment. This is not about labors voluntarily undertaken but about punishments imposed by God. We also see that children, when punished by their guardians, seek forgiveness and pardon. If you give alms to someone with leprosy, the leprosy isn't the cause of your compassion; if it were, everyone

who passed the leper would do the same. The true cause is the compassion in your heart.

## **Repentance the Fruit of Faith**

32. Moreover, they claim that the Holy Scriptures attribute much to repentance, which we do not deny. However, we emphasize that repentance is the fruit of faith, and no one can truly repent of their sins unless they first believe. They also boast of many aspects of confession. But we distinguish between types of confession: one is separated from hope and faith, like Judas's confession that he had betrayed innocent blood. This type of confession is far from beneficial; it leads to despair and destruction. Alternatively, confession can be combined with faith and hope, as seen in David and Peter, where it is not the cause but the effect of justification, following faith, not preceding it.

The papists' practice of auricular confession is entirely superstitious, which we reject outright. They impose it as necessary for salvation and a cause for the forgiveness of sins, which they cannot substantiate with any scriptural evidence. They also misinterpret the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," and "Forgive, and you will be forgiven," to claim that forgiving others is the cause of our sins being forgiven. This logic is flawed because if forgiveness of others truly earned remission of sins, then it would no longer be forgiveness, as you would have already paid the price.

Furthermore, when we ask for our sins to be forgiven, it's because God's grace has enabled us to forgive others, encouraging us to hope for greater blessings. This clause in the prayer doesn't indicate a causative factor but rather a comparison, though not a perfect one.

No one would want their sins forgiven by God exactly as they forgive others, as human forgiveness is often incomplete due to our inherent weaknesses. This comparison should be seen not in terms of remission but in terms of God's generosity in giving us the capacity to forgive, which He may also extend to forgiving our sins.

The phrase "Forgive, and it will be forgiven to you" is a directive and pertains to the law. It's crucial to note that the division between the law and the Gospel is not demarcated by the Old or New Testament since both contain Gospel promises and the law is expounded in the Gospel by Christ. This directive teaches us to forgive others, fulfilling the law's command to love God wholly and our neighbors as ourselves. Since perfect fulfillment of this command is beyond human capacity, we must rely on Christ for justification through faith, which then enables us to partially fulfill this command in a manner pleasing to God.

The appeal to Daniel's advice to the king, "To break off your sins by practicing righteousness and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed," may suggest that acts of charity can mitigate divine punishment. This does not imply that good works can atone for sins but acknowledges that God may reduce temporal suffering in response to acts of faith. Such phrases commonly appear in Scripture and align with our understanding that God rewards works that proceed from faith, particularly in moderating trials and punishments.

33. Furthermore, our opponents cite the first chapter of John: "God gave them power to become children of God." They argue that those who have received Christ, i.e., believed in Him, are not yet justified or regenerated but have merely received the potential to become children of God through works. Pighius, a notable champion for the

papists, places great confidence in this argument, mistakenly believing that having the power to obtain something means one does not yet possess it. This is not universally true, even among philosophers. For instance, when defining the soul, they describe it as the act of a naturally organized body with potential for life, suggesting the body has life potentially, even when it actually possesses life. Similarly, in John, "power" implies that believers are regenerated and become children of God not by their own ability but through God's spirit and grace. This power signifies a right or prerogative granted by faith to become, in actuality, children of God. Cyril, interpreting this passage, says it denotes adoption and grace.

Pighius fails to see the contradiction in his argument. It's illogical to claim that someone can have life in themselves and not live. If believers receive Christ through faith, they must inherently possess righteousness, as Paul states in his first letter to the Corinthians that Christ is our wisdom, righteousness, and redemption.

Turning to servile fear, some argue it precedes charity and prepares us for justification. We respond that such fear, devoid of charity, is sinful. They claim Christ commanded this fear, referencing His words: "I will show you whom you should fear: fear Him who, after killing the body, has the power to throw the soul into hell." However, this fear, they argue, leads to justification, supported by Augustine's analogy in his exposition of 1 John: "Perfect love drives out fear," likening servile fear to a bristle pulling thread in shoemaking, drawing charity along with it.

This interpretation is flawed. First, the premise is incorrect; God does not command a fear devoid of charity and faith. Regarding Augustine's comment, it's important to note that the "perfect love" in 1 John refers to God's love for us, not our love for God. John

discusses the confidence derived from understanding God's perfect love, which assures us of safety on Judgment Day. This perfect love, once recognized, eliminates fear because it precludes the fear of condemnation.

Even if we accept the common interpretation that it's our love for God, Augustine's words do not universally apply. While God may use fear to lead some to justification, not all who experience this fear find faith and charity, as seen in Cain and Judas. Such fear, though sinful, can be considered beneficial not through its merit but because God chooses to use it for our salvation. As charity grows, it further dispels fear, not only servile but also the fear of damnation among the justified. This ongoing doubt about eternal punishment, a result of incomplete faith and charity, illustrates our continual struggle with fear throughout our earthly lives.

34. They also seize on this saying and object against us: "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." But they should remember that prayers arise from faith and adhere to it solely; for otherwise, they cannot be heard. However, I wonder why they neglected to mention: "Whatever you ask in faith, you will receive." For by these words, it is clear that whatever is granted to those who ask is given to faith.

Additionally, they cite a verse from Luke: "Give alms, and everything will be clean for you." Yet this phrase can be interpreted in three ways, none of which support their argument. The first interpretation suggests that the phrase was a rebuke, as if Christ were saying to the Pharisees, "You give alms and think that immediately makes everything clean for you," which is incorrect. We must first cleanse the internal aspects.

Another interpretation, followed by Augustine in his "Enchiridion to Laurentius," addresses some who believed that giving alms alone would save them, even if they continued to sin. They clung to these words of Christ for justification. Augustine responds that Christ's words refer to genuine and commendable alms, as described in Ecclesiasticus 30: "Have compassion on your soul and please God." Therefore, you should begin true alms with yourself, showing compassion to yourself by turning to God and abstaining from sin, and then extend your compassion to others.

The third interpretation, which I find most relevant, occurred when Christ dined with the Pharisees and began to eat with unwashed hands, causing offence. Christ rebuked their focus on external cleanliness while neglecting their internal state, their minds. He first urged them to purify their hearts, achievable through faith as stated in Acts: "Purifying their hearts by faith." Regarding external matters, he added, "Give alms, and so all things will be clean for you." As Theodorus Beza, a learned and discerning scholar, has astutely noted in his annotations, Christ did not speak of all forms of cleanliness but specifically related to food. He imparted a dual mandate: avoid eating anything acquired through theft or deceit and allocate a portion from within, that is, from what is contained in the dishes, for the poor. This act cleanses and sanctifies whatever remains. However, there is nothing in this that advances our adversaries' views.

35. There are those who believe they can establish their error through the ministry of the keys, thinking that through these keys men are absolved from their sins. However, they misunderstand what these keys are that Christ entrusted to His church. The preaching of the word of God, concerning the remission of sins obtained through Christ, is the sole key to opening the kingdom of

heaven. If the listener of the word also adds true faith and fully assents to these words, then the second key comes into play. With these two keys, the kingdom of heaven is opened, and forgiveness of sins is obtained. Thus, Christ, in sending out his apostles, said, "Go and preach the Gospel," then he added, "Whoever believes will be saved." By these few words, he defined the keys he delivered to the church, which involve no work as they claim. It's all about the faith of the hearers and the word of God that is preached.

But how can we finally refute this constantly repeated claim, "Many sins are forgiven her because she loved much"? If the passage is carefully considered, it is not difficult to do. We must recognize that some reasons are drawn from causes and some from effects. Christ later clarifies the cause of salvation when he says to the woman, "Your faith has saved you." However, since that faith was hidden within her and invisible to those present, Christ uses a parable to show that those who receive more, love more. He demonstrated that this woman received a great gift (justification) through her actions: she washed his feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them. The absence of such actions by the Pharisee strongly suggests he had not received a similar gift.

They also quote from Romans, "Not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified." Paul, reproving the Jews for boasting about the law yet living contrary to it, meant nothing else than that if righteousness were to be obtained through the law, merely having or hearing it is insufficient—it must be fully enacted. We never denied that a person could be justified by the law if they could completely fulfill it. However, as this is impossible, we assert that righteousness cannot be expected through the law alone.

The objection from Philipians, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling," also does not support their case. Those who recognize their dependence on God for all things are naturally humble and cautious, aware that nothing good resides in themselves and that they must look to God for help. Hence, Paul advises godly individuals to always fear and tremble. However, those who believe they can justify and save themselves (those contending against us) have no need to fear or tremble, for they claim their salvation lies within their own capabilities. Here, though Paul refers to 'salvation,' he does not mean justification, as he writes to those already justified. Instead, he speaks of a continuous renewal, urging believers to progress and improve.

Lastly, as a final stand, they cite Revelation 3: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." We agree that this symbolizes God initiating the call to salvation, which no one can achieve by their own strength without God's prompting. However, we firmly deny that without God's grace altering the mind, anyone can of their own volition open their heart to God. This claim remains unsupported by Scripture.

## **Human Teachings of Divine Revelation**

36. There are certain adversaries who care little, if at all, about the Holy Scriptures, basing all their beliefs on the writings of the Church Fathers and councils. Such individuals might be better described as followers of human teachings rather than divine revelations, more attuned to the words of the Fathers than the teachings of Scripture. What's more, they often pick appealing phrases from the Fathers' writings and present them to the people, sometimes adding mocking

remarks. Particularly, since some consider themselves skilled in rhetorical speech after devoting much of their lives to this area of study, I urge the impartial reader not to hastily judge against the truth. Instead, pay close attention to the arguments we also draw from the Fathers, as this will clearly demonstrate that the Fathers do not support our adversaries as much as they do our position.

To avoid citing the Fathers haphazardly, we will use a systematic approach. This system, for clarity, will start with a demonstration based on the scriptural testimonies previously cited. The argument proceeds as follows: Those who act according to the prescriptions of the law, as the law itself demands, are justified by works; however, no one, especially before regeneration, performs as the law demands; therefore, no one is justified by works. The major proposition is clear and requires no further explanation: anyone who acts contrary to the law's prescriptions undoubtedly commits sin, far from being justified thereby. Although the minor proposition is supported by scriptural evidence, we will further clarify it using the Fathers' writings. Since the conclusion is that justification does not come from works, it must necessarily arise from grace. We will also demonstrate from the Fathers that humans are justified freely, without any consideration of merits.

As we do not dismiss good works but argue that they should be valued appropriately—as binding obligations that follow already obtained justification—we will finally show, using the Fathers' statements, that good works follow justification but do not precede it. We will specifically select quotations from the Fathers that are based on Holy Scripture.

37. Basilus, in his first book **On Baptism**, quotes the Gospel saying, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in

your name, cast out demons in your name, and perform many miracles?' Yet, these individuals," he asserts, "God will not only exclude from His kingdom but will also label them as workers of iniquity. Those who perform miracles and seem to adhere to God's commandments and statutes but do so with motives other than those prescribed are sinning because they do not follow the directive God announced through the Apostle Paul: 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.' This cannot be achieved without faith and charity, which are absent in those not yet regenerated; thus, according to Basil, their works are sinful."

He expands on this in the second book of **On Baptism**, question seven, asking whether anyone entrenched in sin can perform actions pleasing to God. He firmly states this as impossible, supported by numerous scriptural references. He quotes the Holy Spirit: "He who commits sin is the servant of sin." Additionally, Christ asserts, "You cannot serve both God and money," and Paul notes, "Light has no fellowship with darkness, nor does God have any agreement with Belial." Basil also draws from Genesis, albeit using the Septuagint translation, interpreting God's words to Cain as: "If you offer correctly but do not divide the spoils justly, you have sinned. Be satisfied." This means if one's actions are outwardly correct but the intention is flawed, then the actions are sinful. He aligns this with Isaiah's harsh rebuke in chapter 66, "He who kills an ox is as if he slays a man."

Basil stresses that actions must not only appear right but must also be performed as God's law dictates. Therefore, Paul asserts, "No one is crowned unless they compete according to the rules." Christ in the Gospel states, "Blessed is the servant whom his master, on arrival, finds doing so." Additionally, Basil points out that sacrifices made outside the designated sacred places or those that are

blemished violate God's prescribed conditions and are therefore sinful. He cites the Gospel, reflecting the prophet's words: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me," and parallels this with Paul's critique in Romans of zeal not based on knowledge and his own reflections in Philippians on considering all his previous law-abiding deeds as loss.

Finally, Basilus invokes Paul's message to the Corinthians, emphasizing that even martyrdom or charitable acts without charity amount to nothing. Thus, unless we attribute faith and charity to the unregenerate, we must concede that they cannot perform deeds pleasing to God. This comprehensive interpretation from Basilus concludes with Gregory of Nazianzus's assertion in his oration after returning from the countryside post the Maximus affair. He states, "No work is accepted by God without faith, whether performed for vainglory or from a natural inclination towards what seems honorable." He clarifies that a work prompted by natural inclination, though appearing ethical, remains spiritually dead and cannot please God. This aligns with his other oration **On Holy Baptism**, where he equates faithless works to dead faith, reinforcing the argument that works without faith cannot justify, a sentiment shared deeply by both Fathers despite their emphasis on free will and deeds.

38. Augustine most clearly teaches the same idea in his fourth book against Julian, chapter three. Here, he discusses the Apostle Paul's words: "The Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things required by the law." Augustine explains that this can either refer to the Church converted to Christ, now fulfilling the law through the grace of the gospel, where "by nature" means excluding the law and refers to a nature corrected and renewed by the regenerating spirit. Alternatively, if these words are to be understood as referring to still unbelieving Gentiles, they fulfill the law "by

nature" not as completely as required, but only superficially. Such outward and civil righteousness might only serve to lessen their punishment compared to others who entirely reject discipline and live wickedly and brutishly. For instance, Fabricius might be less punished than Catiline. Augustine jokes that unless the Pelagians have reserved a middle place between heaven and hell for the likes of Fabricius, Regulus, Fabius, Camillus, and Scipio—similar to their concept of limbo for infants who die without baptism—these virtues cannot be considered true virtues without faith.

He then addresses the Pelagians who mockingly said, "If the chastity of infidels is not true chastity, then their bodies are not true bodies, and the corn in their fields is not true corn." Augustine refutes this by clarifying that while the bodies of infidels and their corn are indeed real, being creations of God, their supposed chastity, arising from corrupt and impure wills, cannot be deemed true chastity. He reinforces this with the universal declaration, "Whatever is not from faith is sin."

Further elaborating on Psalm 30, Augustine comments on the phrase "Deliver me in thy righteousness": "Who is saved freely? It is he in whom our Savior finds nothing worthy of reward, but much deserving condemnation; in whom he finds no merits of good deeds, but only deserving of punishment." This illustrates the nature of human works before justification.

In his discussions with Simplicianus, Augustine states, "We are commanded to live righteously, motivated by the promise of a reward so that we may achieve eternal blessedness. But who can live rightly and perform good works unless justified by faith?" He argues that while there could be merit in living a blessed and eternal life if

one could fully adhere to the commandments, it is impossible for us, and thus we forfeit any claim to merit.

Lastly, in his "Enchiridion" to Laurentius, chapter 121, Augustine asserts, "The goal of the commandments is charity from a pure heart, a good conscience, and unfeigned faith. Every command relates to charity, and whatever is done without such charity does not meet the required standard. If it is not performed as it should be, it must be acknowledged as sin."

39. Chrysostom, in his exposition of Paul's words, "The end of the law is Christ," states: "If the end of the law is Christ, it follows that he who does not have Christ, although he may seem to possess the righteousness of the law, does not truly possess it. Therefore, anyone who has faith also has the end of the law; conversely, those without faith are far from both Christ and the righteousness of the law, which consists in fulfilling what is commanded." Chrysostom further clarifies that the law aims to make a man righteous, but it cannot achieve this because no one has fully adhered to it. He addresses the potential objection that even if a person not yet regenerated cannot fulfill the law, perhaps striving and endeavoring might lead to righteousness. He dismisses this, emphasizing that righteousness from God comes through faith, not from our efforts but as a gift from God.

Ambrose supports this view when discussing David's words, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." He interprets them to mean that those deemed blessed are justified by faith alone, without labor or any actions on their part, purely by God's grace. Ambrose on Paul's statement "Being justified freely by his grace" reiterates that justification is freely given, through faith alone, without any contribution or repayment from us.

Moreover, Ambrose comments on Paul's observation about the reign of death even over those who did not sin in the same way as Adam, suggesting the inevitability of sin and its universality, even among the regenerate. How much more so, then, for those estranged from Christ?

Cyprian also adds, "We should boast in nothing because we possess nothing of our own." This aligns with our assertion that before justification, individuals cannot align their actions with the law's demands; therefore, such actions are sinful and cannot merit justification.

If our opponents argue that the so-called preparatory works do not merit justification but are merely preparations that make a person more suited to receiving justification, we can respond thus: If these works do not merit, why are they wrongly credited with a 'merit of congruity'? Why are they called good when, as we have established, they neither please God nor adhere to the law's prescriptions? Given that they lack the proper end and are rightly considered sins, how can it be taught that they prepare one for righteousness when they are more likely to lead to punishment?

We must urge our adversaries to refrain from embellishing these works with flattering titles. Even if God occasionally uses these works to lead individuals to salvation, it is out of His mercy, employing even sins and evil deeds for their benefit.

## **How is Justification Granted, if Not by Works?**

40. Now let us consider how justification is granted if it is not attributed to works. It is given freely and entirely depends on God's

grace; it is in no way due to merits. Origen understood this when he commented on the Epistle to the Romans, interpreting the passage, "To the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due." He expressed difficulty in believing that any work could obligate God to provide a reward, given that even our ability to act, think, or speak is derived from His generosity. What debt then could God owe us when His grace has already preceded our actions? Shortly after, he gives a rationale that Augustine frequently used. He references Paul's statement, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life," noting that Paul did not counter by saying, "The reward for righteousness is eternal life," which the structure of the argument might suggest. Instead, Paul emphasized that while sin unequivocally earns death, eternal life is purely a gift of grace, hence substituting 'reward' and 'righteousness' with 'grace.'

Origen continues, arguing that people are so freely justified that good works are not required beforehand. He explains this using the blessing, "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven," to illustrate that a soul thus forgiven must be in a favorable state, deemed blessed without having yet performed any righteous deeds but solely through faith in the one who justifies the ungodly. From this, we learn several things: first, that God is indebted to no one for their works; second, that both justification and eternal life are granted freely; and third, that righteousness is credited to those who believe, even if they have not yet done any good works.

Basil also speaks to this in his commentary on Psalm 116, "Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you." He interprets eternal rest as promised to those who have rightfully contended in this life, which is not awarded based on the merit of their works but granted according to the grace of the most generous God to those who have placed their hope in Him. Even though these

comments refer to the works of the justified concerning eternal bliss, they hold even truer for the works of those yet unfamiliar with Christ. Thus, just as the justified do not earn their eternal reward through works, neither can the unregenerate merit justification: both are bestowed freely.

41. Augustine in his book "On Church Doctrines," chapter 48, argues: "If righteousness came by the law, then Christ died in vain. Similarly, if righteousness comes through nature, Christ's death would also be in vain." He counters the Pelagians who claimed that human liberty alone could achieve righteousness acceptable to God. Augustine cleverly applies Paul's reasoning about the law to nature, showing the absurdity of both views that negate the necessity of Christ's sacrifice. Since the failure of the law to bring righteousness is due to corrupt and weak human nature, the same argument applies to nature itself.

In his commentary on the first chapter of John, when explaining "grace for grace," Augustine defines grace as something freely given, not rendered as due. If it were owed, it implies you were deserving before receiving it. This perspective is echoed in his work "On the Predestination of the Saints," where he warns against claiming that someone merited faith by being good prior to believing, which seems to apply to Cornelius since he performed good works before having faith.

Chrysostom, in his second homily on the first epistle to the Corinthians, states, "Where grace is, there are no works; and where works are, there is no grace." This clearly separates grace and works, indicating that grace is not earned through works. Jerome, commenting on Philemon and Ephesians, reinforces that salvation

through grace excludes any reliance on merits or works, emphasizing it is a gift from God, lest we believe faith itself is a work we perform.

These testimonies robustly declare that justification is freely given, independent of any preceding merits or works.

Turning to the role of good works, they are seen as fruits of justification, emerging from true faith. Origen suggests that righteousness does not spring from works; instead, works grow from the root of righteousness. Augustine confirms this in his correspondence with Honoratus, stating that good works arise because we are justified, not the other way around. He notes in "On the Spirit and the Letter" that even the good works of the regenerate are imperfect and require Christ's righteousness to be considered good. He also explains that good works follow, not precede, justification, using Romans to argue that it is not the hearers but the doers of the law who are justified, underscoring that these works are the result of grace.

Basil in his second book "On the Holy Spirit" utilizes the metaphor of a tree and its fruit to illustrate that inner purity leads to outward righteous actions, cautioning against the Pharisaical focus on external purity which he compares to whitewashed tombs that are outwardly beautiful but inwardly corrupt.

This synthesis of views from early church fathers clarifies that our good works are a response to the grace we receive through faith, emphasizing that true righteousness and the resulting works are rooted in divine grace rather than human effort.

## **Church Councils**

42. Now, let us turn to the Councils, which, however, must be heard with discernment. We should only accept and respect those councils that have based their teachings on the scriptures. Demosthenes, in an oration against Androtion, stated that decisions of the senate should not be made unless they conform to existing laws. Similarly, in ecclesiastical councils, no new doctrines should be decreed; they should only cover what is explicitly stated in the Word of God or can be clearly inferred from it. First, let us consider the African Council, where, in its 80th chapter, a curse is pronounced against the Pelagians. They claimed that the grace of justification is given so that, through grace, we might more easily fulfill what was commanded—as if, even without grace (though with more difficulty), we could fulfill God's commandments using our free will. Yet the Lord, speaking of the fruits of the commandments, did not say, "Without me, you can do little"; He said, "Without me, you can do nothing."

This rebukes contemporary Papists who are not ashamed to claim that a person, before justification, can perform works commanded in the law, works that please God, and that prepare for regeneration. What is this, if not to echo the Pelagian stance that a person can perform the law before justification, though not as fully or easily as after they are justified? It is insufficient to claim, as they do, that a certain 'preventing' grace allows unregenerate individuals to perform preparatory works. In making such claims, they differ only in name from the Pelagians, who also believed that a grace of the law, knowledge of God's will, and enlightenment precede, enabling a person to understand their duties. Beyond this, both attribute the rest to free will. This Pelagian view is evident in the Milevitane Council's fourth chapter, which denounces those who say that the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord merely helps us by revealing and explaining God's commandments so we may know

what to seek and avoid, but does not enable us to love and to do what we know should be done. Since the Apostle states, "Knowledge puffs up, but charity edifies," it is profoundly wrong to think that we receive Christ's grace only for what inflates us, not for what builds us up, especially given the scripture in the fourth chapter of the first epistle of John: "Love is of God."

43. Furthermore, in the second Council of Orange, chapter four states that those who claim "the Lord waits for our will," contradict the Holy Spirit, as Solomon says, "The will is prepared by the Lord." Similarly, Paul tells the Philippians, "It is God who works in us both to will and to act according to His good purpose." Chapter five criticizes those who acknowledge that grace through Christ increases faith but deny it initiates faith. The beginnings of faith, they argue, are inspired by the Holy Spirit, who transforms our disbelief into belief, shifting us from ungodliness to godliness. This is supported by various scriptural passages: Paul assures the Philippians that the good work begun in them will be completed by the day of Christ and reminds them that suffering for Him is also a gift of faith. To the Ephesians, he states unequivocally that salvation comes through faith by grace, not from ourselves; it is the gift of God.

Moreover, those who assert that God's mercy and grace are given only to those who are willing, believe, desire, strive, labor, are vigilant, study, ask, seek, or knock, but deny that our will to believe or our effort is also inspired by the Holy Spirit and is a gift from God, are rebuked. They ignore scriptural assertions like "What do you have that you did not receive?" and "By the grace of God, I am what I am," by Paul. The seventh chapter condemns the belief that by our own natural strength we can think or do anything toward salvation or believe the word of God preached without the Holy Spirit's enlightenment. This aligns with Paul's declaration that our adequacy

is from God and Christ's teaching that without Him we can do nothing and that divine revelation comes not from human sources but from God.

They are also in error who concede that free will is impaired but maintain it can still lead to salvation without divine intervention, contradicting Jesus' words that no one can come to Him unless drawn by the Father and Paul's assertion that no one can acknowledge Jesus as Lord except by the Holy Spirit. God loves us for what we will become through His gift, not for our merits. The thirteenth chapter of the council affirms that free will, lost through Adam's sin, cannot be restored without Christ, echoing His words that true freedom comes through the Son.

In chapter seventeen, it's determined that the moral strength of non-believers stems from worldly desires, underscoring that their virtues are not genuine, springing from an impure source. True Christian strength derives from God's love, infused into our hearts not by our own volition but by the Holy Spirit without any preceding merit.

Finally, chapter twenty-five emphasizes that due to original sin, human free will is so weakened that without God's preemptive grace, no one can love or serve God or perform good works. This is evidenced by the lives of biblical figures like Abel and Noah, who acted by faith given by God, not by their innate ability. Paul's own words, "I have obtained mercy to be faithful," underscore that his faithfulness was a result of God's mercy, not a precondition for it. This chapter conclusively states that in every good deed, it is not us initiating the action; rather, God first inspires in us faith and love, laying the groundwork for all righteous acts without any merit on our part. Thus, even those like Zacchaeus and Cornelius came to faith not through natural inclination but through divine generosity.

44. I have extensively quoted from the Second Council of Orange, perhaps more than might seem appropriate for this context. I did so because I observed that all the statements affirmed there are corroborated by the Holy Scriptures and significantly support our argument. We should heed such councils that adhere strictly to the Word of God, as the well-being or detriment of the church is directly attributable to the respect or disregard of God's Word. In the early and ancient councils, how were Arius, Eunomius, Nestorius, Eutyches, and other harmful heretics defeated if not by the Word of God? Indeed, they could not have been effectively countered by any other means. Conversely, when did the church start to succumb to abuses and superstitions if not when the Word was scorned? And in our own times, had the Word of God not been sought out and effectively recalled from exile, how could we have escaped the tyranny of the Pope? Let these examples caution us against blindly accepting every council; we should only embrace those that substantiate their doctrinal decrees with Scripture. To illustrate what I assert more clearly, consider the Council of Trent: by contrasting it, we might better comprehend the truth.

In the Council of Trent, specifically from chapters five to eleven of the fifth session, the topic of justification is addressed. There, the so-called holy fathers, who are merely minions of the Pope, decreed that the initiation of justification comes from grace. However, they immediately clarify their meaning: grace calls and stirs up those who are to be justified so that, being summoned and motivated, they assent to this grace, collaborate with it, and become fit for regeneration. This assent and cooperation, they attribute to free will, as indicated by their language. What else would Pelagius argue if he were alive today? He certainly did not deny grace if considered as an admonition, a call, or an incentive. He also credited free will with the capacity to consent and comply with God's commands. However, the

grace described in the Holy Scriptures transforms our understanding and will, replacing a heart of stone with one of flesh; it does not merely advise our reason but persuades, bends, and changes the will. The theologians of Trent concede that God influences the human heart through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, but to ensure human participation, they add that a person can accept or reject this inspiration. Thus, they ultimately assert that it is within human capability to accept or reject, even though they acknowledge that such acceptance is impossible without being called and motivated by grace.

Yet, how can the human heart, unless renewed by the Spirit and grace of God, accept what it naturally opposes due to its corrupt and tainted nature? Indeed, no matter how much it is educated, encouraged, or moved, unless it is thoroughly transformed, it will continue to reject and resist. Augustine, in his writings to Simplician, astutely notes that it is not within our power to make appealing or agreeable what is presented to us. Just as a sick person, despite being surrounded by people advocating for healthy, appealing food, will refuse it because it does not appeal to him, so too will an unregenerate mind reject the grace of God. It cannot be coerced into accepting divine grace, unlike a sick person who might be forced to eat unappealing food. Until our will and understanding are transformed by God's Spirit, we will not accept any beneficial counsel. Just as a sick person cannot tolerate or willingly accept food until healed, so too a human mind, unless it is converted from unbelief to faith and from impiety to godliness, as stated by the Council of Orange, will neither obey nor yield to the grace that calls and prompts it. Yet, the revered fathers of Trent contend otherwise.

45. But lest they appear to argue without scriptural support, they present two passages: one from the first chapter of Zechariah,

"Return to me, and I will return to you." They argue that this implies a role for the individual in justification, suggesting that the person must take some action. Jeremiah also states, "Convert us, O Lord, and we shall be converted," indicating that God's help is essential for conversion. Thus, they divide the process between God and man. However, Augustine and many other fathers attribute the entire act of our justification solely to God.

Regarding the Zechariah passage, it can be interpreted in two ways. First, as the command of the law, which alone does not prove that a man can convert without God's intervention. Augustine writes on this, "Lord, give what you command, and command what you will." Another interpretation concerns the two internal movements in justification. One relates to reason, which needs not only to be instructed but also persuaded and compelled to submit to the Holy Spirit's intent. The other movement involves the will, bending it to accept all that the Holy Spirit promises and offers. This faith is what justifies us and through which our sins are forgiven.

As these processes occur internally and invisibly within the mind, the prophet does not discuss them but rather the subsequent behaviors: once a person is justified, they begin to turn towards good works. Thus, someone who previously lived a dissolute and wicked life now acts rightly and orderly, rejuvenated by grace and the Spirit, cooperating with God's power. This external transformation is what Zechariah refers to when he says, "Return to me." God promises to bestow significant benefits in response, which is implied by "I will return to you." Previously, when He withheld benefits and allowed afflictions like captivities and other miseries, He seemed to turn away from them. Therefore, the prophet does not speak of internal justification but of the outward conversion to good deeds. But Jeremiah, in saying, "Convert us, Lord, and we shall be converted,"

addresses the internal movements of the mind we've described. Yet, our contemporaries at Trent, despite claiming a difference from the Pelagians, effectively align with them. They assert that they do not deny grace, but in truth, they advocate for a type of grace that even the Pelagians would not have rejected.

## **Stages of Preparation for Justification**

46. But let us examine the stages and preparations for justification as proposed by certain individuals. They suggest that a person, once called and stirred by God's grace, begins by believing in the Holy Scriptures. This individual, feeling the weight of past sins, looks to God's mercy and begins to hope. This hope fosters a love for God, which in turn instills a detestation for sin and a resolve to lead a righteous life. Finally, the individual receives baptism or the sacrament of penance, which they assert completes justification, with everything prior merely preparatory. However, this perspective overlooks the true nature of baptism. Scripture teaches that Abraham was first justified by faith while uncircumcised and then received circumcision as a seal of righteousness already obtained. This analogy should also apply to baptism, paralleling Old Testament circumcision. These proponents claim that faith, fear of God, hope, charity, detestation of sin, and a new resolve are just preparatory steps, implying a person might be considered perfect before actual justification.

They also define the causes of justification, starting with the ultimate goal: the glory of God and our salvation. They attribute the efficient cause to God's mercy alone. Christ's sacrifice on the cross is acknowledged as the meritorious cause, which is correct. They define the formal cause as the justice of God, not in terms of His inherent

justice but as that which He imparts to us, making us truly righteous. While we acknowledge that renewal through the Holy Spirit occurs in those already justified, we disagree that this process constitutes justification itself. Paul emphasizes that justification involves the forgiveness of sins and their non-imputation, citing David and Genesis to support this claim, specifically that faith was 'counted' as righteousness to Abraham. Thus, we maintain that justification cannot be the restoration process alone, which remains imperfect due to our human flaws and insufficient for standing justified before Christ.

Moreover, they suggest that righteousness is dispensed by the Holy Spirit according to each person's preparedness. This concept is not entirely acceptable because, as previously discussed using the fathers and scriptures, all actions prior to justification are flawed and cannot merit or prepare one for justification. They also propose that once justified, individuals cannot be certain of their status but must constantly doubt, arguing this does not undermine God's promises but reflects personal shortcomings. This contradicts scriptural teachings which highlight Abraham's unwavering faith in God's promises, irrespective of personal or external limitations.

Thus, scriptures encourage us to trust wholly in God's words and promises without fixating on our deficiencies. While we should acknowledge and address our imperfections, they should not cause us to doubt our justification or the grace of God. This differs markedly from the stance that promotes perpetual uncertainty about one's justified state based on personal inadequacies. We should, like Abraham, place full confidence in God's ability to fulfill His promises, maintaining a firm belief in our justified status through His grace.

47. Now we must prove the second proposition: that a man is justified by faith. We first intend to prove this through the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures. Paul, in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, defines the Gospel as "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." In these words, the efficient cause of our justification, which is the power of God, and the end, which is our salvation, are identified, along with the instrument by which it is received, namely, faith. He adds, "To everyone that believes." This he confirms using a testimony from the prophet Habakkuk. This verse was so significant to Paul that he used it both in his letters to the Galatians and to the Hebrews, in the same sense. He continues, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." In contrast, in the Gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness by which men are justified from faith to faith. Paul further explains this in the third chapter: "Now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."

Here, not only is the grace by which God justifies us freely shown, but also Christ and his death are set forth clearly, showing that He is the reconciler and the mediator. Faith is added, through which we receive the fruit of His redemption. This is to demonstrate God's righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. If men could obtain righteousness through their works, then the righteousness of God would not be declared in such a way. But since we see it is imparted to us by faith, without any preparatory works, it must appear to us as exceedingly significant. Among other requirements God has for people, the chief is that they should not boast about themselves.

However, if justification were through works, people could boast about their efforts and endeavors. But since we are justified freely by faith, there is no room for boasting. Hence Paul states, "Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith." Therefore, he concludes, "We maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law." To clarify that this is a universal principle, he explains, "Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith." Thus, as there is only one God over all people, so does He justify all people in one and the same way.

48. In the fourth chapter, Paul states, "However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness." This sentence not only excludes works but also highlights faith, through which righteousness is imputed to people. He immediately discusses Abraham, declaring him the father of all who believe while uncircumcised so that righteousness might also be credited to them, and that he is the father of the circumcised not only to those who are circumcised but also to those who follow in the steps of the faith that Abraham had before he was circumcised. Later, by the nature of the promise, he shows that justification is by faith: "For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless."

In these words, two excellent points are noted. First, the promise is freely given, not linked with the condition of works; therefore, since faith corresponds to the promise, it follows that it, too, must be as the promise is: relating to the promise itself, not to our shortcomings

or readiness, as the Council of Trent teaches. Second, if inheritance and righteousness depended on the condition of works, then there would have been no need for the promise; for people could claim, "Why is that freely promised to us which we can earn through our own effort and labor? Or why is it necessary to believe, seeing we can attain righteousness through our works?"

Paul then adds the final reason why justification comes by faith: "Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring." If justification came through our works, the promise would always be unstable, and we could not be certain of it. He also refers to Abraham, who against hope believed in hope and showed no regard for his own age or Sarah's barrenness, demonstrating the type of faith through which righteousness was credited to him. This helps us understand the power and nature of justifying faith. Paul also states that such faith greatly glorifies God because when nothing is attributed to our works or merits, all glory must go to God. Thus, Paul writes about Abraham, "He did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God," fully convinced that God had the power to do what he had promised. To emphasize the certainty of faith, Paul uses the term "fully convinced," indicating Abraham's complete assurance in God's promise. He adds that this was not written solely for Abraham but for us also, to whom righteousness will be credited if we believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Moreover, from the fifth chapter, we find another testimony: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand." Here, it's noted that we are justified by faith and by grace, and that access

to this grace is not through preparatory works but solely through faith. In the eighth chapter, Paul outlines the steps to eternal salvation: foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification, stressing that between calling and justification comes faith, as calling is realized through the promise of justification and salvation, which is accepted through faith.

## **Why the Gentiles Achieved Righteousness and not the Jews**

49. Towards the end of the ninth chapter, the difference between the Jews and the Gentiles is clarified, with an explanation of why the Gentiles achieved righteousness and not the Jews. Paul asks, "What then shall we say? That the Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it? Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works." These words are clear: those who seek to be justified by faith attain righteousness; those who strive for it through works labor in vain. This he proves at the beginning of the tenth chapter, where he describes two types of righteousness; one, he calls 'our own', which consists of works; the other, he terms 'the righteousness of God', which is attained through faith. He writes, "They being ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness."

Paul continues, more explicitly explaining the nature of these two types of righteousness. He quotes Moses on the righteousness that comes from the law: "The person who does these things will live by them." This shows that the righteousness of the law is based on works. Regarding the righteousness that comes from faith, he argues,

"Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) or 'Who will descend into the deep?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.'" This is the word of faith we proclaim: if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. This illustrates that not the righteousness of the law, which relies on works, but the righteousness of faith brings salvation. This is further affirmed by the addition: "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved."

Paul also cites a prophecy: "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." Those often feel shame when their expectations are unmet. Thus, the meaning is: anyone who believes in Christ and expects salvation through this faith will not be disappointed. He also references another prophecy from Joel: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." While this seems to attribute salvation to invocation, Paul skillfully directs us from the act of calling to its foundation, faith, asserting: "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?" And so, he shifts the focus from invocation to faith. He clarifies that faith itself does not possess justifying power; it points back to its object, explaining: "And how can they believe without hearing? And how can they hear without someone preaching?" Thus, the ultimate basis is the word of God and the promise concerning Christ, from which our salvation and justification flow.

In the eleventh chapter, Paul contrasts disbelief and faith, supporting what we currently assert. He responds to the Gentile claim about the Jews: "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in," by agreeing but emphasizing: "They were broken off because of

unbelief, and you stand by faith." He presents disbelief and faith as the reasons for downfall and stability, respectively. Regarding the Jews who may one day be restored, he adds, "And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God is able to graft them in again." This shows that by abandoning disbelief (through faith), those who have fallen can be restored, countering the error of those who, while admitting that initial justification is freely given without preceding works, do not allow those who have fallen to be restored to justification without satisfaction and numerous preparatory works.

50. These points are derived from the epistle to the Romans. In the first epistle to the Corinthians, it is written in the first chapter: "Since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe." The apostle explains that the wise of this world could not comprehend the wisdom of God, which could lead to salvation; therefore, God established a contrary method: the preaching of the Gospel. This method might seem foolish to human understanding but is designed to grant salvation not to everyone, but specifically to those who believe.

Furthermore, in the second letter to the Corinthians, in the first chapter, it is stated, "By faith you stand," indicating that faith is the foundation that confirms and stabilizes us on the path to salvation. Paul, addressing the Galatians in the second chapter during his reprimand of Peter for his hypocrisy, which suggested that Gentiles should follow Jewish ceremonies, declared: "We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no

one will be justified." Here, it's evident that the apostles chose to follow Christ to achieve justification through faith, which could not be attained through works. Paul further comments, "The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God." This is akin to saying that although sin remains in his flesh, his life is sustained not by his own merit but through faith in the Son of God.

In the third chapter of Galatians, Paul poses the question, "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard?" He further inquires if the miracles worked among them were done through the law or by faith. These queries highlight that it is faith, not works, that enables us to grasp God's gifts. He adds, "Understand then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham," emphasizing that those who believe are akin to Abraham not because of lineage but due to their shared faith. Paul explains, "Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.'" This blessing is not due to a biological descent from Abraham but because they emulate his faith.

Paul concludes, "So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith." In Hebrew, to be 'blessed' means to receive God's gifts, among which justification is paramount. Thus, it follows that the Gentiles might receive the promise made to Abraham through Christ and that we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith. This demonstrates that the promise of the Holy Spirit is not secured through works, as some claim. Reason also supports this; given that the Lord promised this blessing to Abraham, we must consider what corresponds to the promise, which can only be faith, for faith presents God's promises as its object.

51. Paul further asserts that Scripture has concluded all under sin so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. This illustrates why the Scriptures diligently reveal to humans their sinful nature, motivating them to embrace God's promises through faith, especially when they lack good deeds as a basis for their salvation. This is understood from the statement that the law serves as a tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we might be justified by faith. The law exposes sins and highlights human weaknesses, increasing transgressions and reminding individuals of their need to turn to Christ to receive righteousness through faith. This is evident in those described as 'all the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.' Being a child of God signifies having received adoption, achievable solely through regeneration or justification.

In the fourth chapter, Paul writes, "Brothers and sisters, like Isaac, we are children of promise." This means to believe in what God promises, thereby becoming His children, as promised. Isaac's birth to Abraham was not through natural strength but through God's promise.

In the fifth chapter, he states, "We through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness." Here, two elements are highlighted: the Spirit of God, which renews us for salvation, and faith, by which we grasp righteousness. In matters of justification, while there are many workings of the Holy Spirit in our minds, only faith aids in justification. Paul concludes, "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but faith working through love is everything." Justification depends solely on such faith—not a barren faith, but one that is active and demonstrated through love. The mention of love here does not imply that faith is dependent on love, but that faith expresses itself through love, much like knowledge is demonstrated through teaching.

52. In Ephesians chapter two, it is written, "By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is the gift of God." And later, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Anyone who has Christ within them undoubtedly possesses righteousness, as Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Christ has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption." Thus, Christ dwells in our hearts by faith.

In Philippians chapter three, Paul desires "to be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith." Here, he distinguishes between a self-derived righteousness from the law and the desired righteousness through faith in Christ.

In Hebrews chapter eleven, it is noted, "By faith the elders obtained a good report." Through faith, they not only subdued kingdoms but were righteous and obtained God's promises.

Peter, in his first epistle, chapter one, states, "Through faith you are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation." This highlights two main pillars of our salvation: God's might and faith, which is the instrument through which salvation is applied to us.

John, in his first epistle, chapter five, writes, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," equating being born of God with justification or regeneration through faith. He continues, "This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith," indicating that faith alone repels the tyranny of the devil, sin, death, and hell.

These scriptural examples vividly illustrate that our justification and salvation hinge profoundly on faith, not on our works or merits.

53. Now let us gather from the evangelists what is needed for this present question. Matthew, in his eighth chapter, says that Christ was greatly amazed by the faith of the Centurion and declared that he had not found such faith in Israel; and turning to him, said: "Even as you have believed, so be it unto you." Here some reply that this story, and similar ones, do not discuss justification; but only the external benefits to the body, given by God. However, these men ought to consider that sins, which reside in us, are the causes of bodily griefs and afflictions. For, only Christ excepted, who truly died innocent; all others, as they are subject to sin, do not suffer adversity without just desert. And although God, in inflicting these calamities on us, does not always regard them (for often he sends adversities to show his glory, and to test all those who are his), yet none, while so afflicted, can claim they are unjustly treated; for there is none so holy that he does not have sins in himself, deserving of such, or even greater punishments. And where the cause is not removed, the effect can neither be removed nor avoided. Therefore, Christ, in delivering man from diseases of the body, clearly shows that he was the one who would justify men from sins.

And that this is true, the same evangelist teaches us in the ninth chapter: for when the man sick with palsy was brought to Christ to be healed, he said, "Be of good cheer, my son, your sins are forgiven you." At this statement, when the Scribes and Pharisees were offended, to help them understand that by removing the cause of evils, the evils themselves are taken away, he commanded the man sick of palsy to arise, take up his bed, and walk. Therefore, it clearly appears that Christ, by healing bodies, declared himself to be the one who would forgive sins; and that just as those healings were received by faith, so also by the same faith are men justified and receive forgiveness of sins. In the same ninth chapter, it is recorded that Christ responded to two blind men, who were very persistent and

earnestly desired to be healed, "Do you believe that I can do this for you?" And when they affirmed their belief, he said, "Even as you have believed, so be it unto you." And when our savior was going to the house of the ruler of the synagogue to raise up his daughter from death, a woman who had an issue of blood followed him, believing firmly that if she could but touch the hem of his garment, she would immediately be healed. Therefore, Christ responded to her, "Be of good confidence daughter, your faith has made you whole." But why Christ joined confidence with faith, we have already explained at the beginning of this question, when we discussed the nature of faith: for we taught that the assent, by which we embrace the promises of God, is so strong and so vehement; that the rest of the mental emotions, which are agreeable to it, inevitably follow. In Luke, the story of the sinful woman is also described, to whom the Lord responded, "Your faith has made you safe," signifying that he, for her faith's sake, had forgiven her sins. And that the faith of this woman was very fervent, she showed by her actions; in that she loved much, kissed his feet, washed them with her tears, and wiped them with her hair.

54. In the Gospel of John, the third chapter, Christ said to Nicodemus: "So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that he who believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life." In the same chapter, John the Baptist speaks of Christ: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not believe does not have life, but the wrath of God remains on him." From this, we gather not only what we currently discuss, but also that those who are strangers to Christ and do not believe cannot do anything that may please God: therefore, they cannot merit by congruity (as it is called, and as our adversaries affirm the grace of God). In the sixth chapter, Christ says: "This is the will of him who sent me, that he who sees the Son and believes in him has eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day." He also said: "No one comes to me unless

my Father draws him;" and "He who has heard from my Father and has learned comes to me;" he then adds: "And he who believes in me has eternal life."

In the eleventh chapter, when Christ was to raise Lazarus, he said to Martha: "He who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he who lives and believes in me shall never die." In the seventeenth chapter, he defines eternal life: "This is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." It is important to note that he is not talking about a mere acknowledgment, but about a powerful and strong faith: hence, if it is eternal life, it must also be justification. For justification and life are so intertwined, that one is often taken for the other. Indeed, justification is nothing less than eternal life already begun in us. In the twentieth chapter, he declares: "These things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ; and that by believing you might have eternal life." In the Acts of the Apostles, the fifteenth chapter, it is written: "By faith purifying their hearts." Here Peter speaks of the Gentiles, that they should not be compelled to the works of the law of Moses, since Christ had given them the Holy Spirit without these works and had by faith cleansed their hearts from sin. Paul also in his speech to King Agrippa said that he was called by Christ to be sent to the Gentiles who would through his ministry be enlightened, and by faith receive forgiveness of sins, and a place among the saints. We have gathered these testimonies from the New Testament.

But if I were to recount everything from the Old Testament relevant to this matter, I would be overly tedious. And if there are any so obstinate in heart that the things we have already discussed do not compel them to acknowledge the truth, it would not benefit such people if we were to bring many more testimonies; therefore, a few

shall suffice. In addition to those testimonies which Paul cited from the fifteenth chapter of Genesis: "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness;" from Habakkuk: "The just shall live by his faith;" from David: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven;" from Isaiah: "Everyone that believes in him shall not be confounded;" and a few other similar passages. Besides these testimonies, I will cite the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, where Christ is most explicitly portrayed. For there He is described as having taken upon himself our sorrows and borne our infirmities, given his soul as a sacrifice for sins, and many such other things: which are so clear that they can be applied to none other but Christ Jesus our Saviour. It is also said: "And by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, and he shall bear their iniquities." These words teach that Christ justifies many, namely the elect, by the knowledge and perfect understanding of him: which knowledge is undoubtedly nothing else but true faith; and that he justifies them in such a way that he takes upon himself and bears their iniquities. Jeremiah in the fifth chapter writes: "O God, do not your eyes regard faith?" As if to say: Although you see all things, and nothing concerning man is hidden from you, yet you primarily regard faith as the root and foundation of all good deeds. As for the oracles of scripture, this shall suffice.

## **Pighius Argues that Justification Cannot be Separated from Charity or Good Works**

55. Now I will answer such objections that are commonly brought against this second proposition. We will begin first with Pighius, because our adversaries count him as their Achilles, or chief champion; and think that he alone, by his subtle and sharp wit, has

pierced even into the deepest mysteries of the truth. Pighius uses this sophism: You are not justified by that which can be separated from justification; for it is not possible that causes should be separated from their effects. But faith is separated from justification; for many who believe still live most shamefully; so far from it, that they seem to be justified. However, since he thinks this can be denied, he brings a reason to prove that it is not against the nature and definition of faith for justification to be separated from it. He makes an objection, from the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians: "If I have all faith, so that I can remove mountains, but do not have charity, I am nothing." By these words he concludes that faith can be separated from charity; and therefore, from all good works. He also cites this from Matthew: "Many will come on that day and say, 'Lord, in your name we have prophesied, cast out devils, and performed signs.' But the reply will be: 'I do not know you.'" These signs, Pighius says, cannot be done without faith. Therefore, seeing that they are excluded from the kingdom of heaven, yet do these things; it is clear that they were not justified: therefore, in them, faith was separated from righteousness.

But he thinks this is even more clearly confirmed by John: for he says that many rulers of the priests believed in Christ, yet dared not openly profess him. But those who shun the confession of the name of Christ are far from salvation: for Christ himself says, "He who is ashamed of me before men, of him will I be ashamed before my Father." These arguments, although at first sight, they may seem to have some merit; yet if one examines them more closely, he will see that they agree with what Epictetus pronounces of his books: "These are but sights, or ghosts of the dreams of hell." Therefore, we must carefully ponder these reasons and not judge them by first appearances. And just as in coins, we pay less attention to the inscriptions or images, and more to the quality and weight of the

metal; so also in arguments, we should weigh and regard not so much the appearance and color of them, but the thing itself and the strength of them. We first deny that faith can be separated from justification. And whereas Pighius says that it is not repugnant to the nature and definition of faith; we absolutely do not accept it: for against that opinion are all the Holy Scriptures, and the true sense of the definition of faith, and also the Fathers.

Concerning the scriptures, John says, "He who believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is born of God: and he who is born of God does not sin." For as long as faith holds sway in our hearts, we do not commit those sins that destroy the conscience and alienate us from God. How then does Pighius say that it is not against the nature of faith to be separated from justification, and from good works; especially seeing John says, "He who sins does not know God"? The Fathers also saw this: for Cyprian, in 'De Simplicitate Praeparatorum' (where he complains of the ingratitude of his time, for charity, fear, good works, and such like had become very cold) writes, "No one thinks upon the fear of things to come, no one considers the day of the Lord, and the wrath of God, and that punishments will come upon the unbelievers, and that everlasting torments are appointed for the unfaithful: of which things our conscience would be afraid if it believed; but because it does not believe, therefore it is utterly without fear; and if it believed, then it would also be cautious; and if it were cautious, then it would also escape." These words declare that with true faith is joined the fear of God, and the avoiding of eternal punishments, and the avoidance of sins. Let Pighius now go and say that true faith can be separated from the holy motions of the mind, and from good works. Jerome, along with Cyprian, affirms against the Luciferians: "And if I truly believed, I would cleanse that heart, with which God is seen; I would with my hands beat my breast, I would with tears water my cheeks, I

would have in my body a horror, I would be pale in the mouth, I would lie at the feet of my Lord, and wash them with weeping, and wipe them with my hair: I would undoubtedly cling fast to the wood of the cross; nor would I let go my hold thereof, before I had obtained mercy." Hereby also it is manifest that with true faith are joined good works and repentance.

Regarding the definition and nature of faith, it can easily be proven that it cannot be separated from justification and good works; that is, from its effects. Faith is not a common, but a firm and vehement assent, and that proceeding from the Holy Ghost. If a poor wretch condemned to die should receive a promise from a man that he would be delivered, and should believe those words, straight away his mood would wholly change to joy, and he would begin inwardly to love the man who promised him such things, and would try to please him in whatever way he could. How much more should be attributed to true faith, which is given to the word of God, and is inspired by the Spirit of God? Therefore, if that human faith brings with it wonderful emotions of the mind, how can we say that true and Christian faith exists without good works, and is destitute and alone? Thus, we now plainly see, both by the Holy Scriptures, by the Fathers, and by the definition and nature of faith, that it cannot be separated from righteousness and godly works.

Now let us consider Paul: he says, "If I have all faith, etc." But how does Pighius know that Paul there speaks of that general faith, which clings to the promise of God and justifies, and not rather of a particular faith, whereby miracles are performed, which is a free or gracious gift of the Holy Ghost? This faith is not applied to all things found in the Holy Scriptures; it is instead a certain vehement confidence, by which we certainly believe that God will perform this or that miracle. Chrysostom interprets Paul in this context.

To distinguish these types of faith, one is called 'The faith of doctrine'; the other, 'The faith of signs and miracles'. To this latter faith, Chrysostom applies these words: "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." It cannot be denied that there is such a kind of faith: for Paul, in the twelfth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, when he lists the free gifts which the Holy Ghost distributes to every man as He pleases, writes: "To one is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit." Here we see that among the free gifts of the Holy Ghost is reckoned faith, which Paul would not have spoken of the general faith, whereby we are justified.

If we carefully weigh these things, we will see that Paul maintains the same order in the thirteenth chapter of the first to the Corinthians. For just as here he places the word of wisdom first, so there he places prophecy; and as here he places knowledge second, so there he does the same; and as here, so there he places faith third; and as here the gifts of healing and miracles follow faith, so does it there with moving mountains. Therefore, those things which Paul has spoken of a particular faith should not be twisted to apply to the universal and justifying faith; for that is to make a false argument, which they call 'from the specific to the general'. As if a man should say, "This faith may be separated from justification, which is called faith in some respect; therefore, the true faith, and the justifying faith, which is called faith absolutely, may be separated from justification." If a man should so compare two different kinds, ascribing one and the same property to both of them, he will soon be deceived.

57. But Pighius saw that by this easy and plain exposition, all his reasoning might be overthrown; therefore, he attempted to wrest it out of our hands, forgetting in the meantime that the author and patron thereof is Chrysostom. To challenge it, he uses this argument: Paul clearly says, "All faith"; therefore, we may not understand it of any specific faith. For the Apostle makes a universal proposition. But this man ought to know that universal propositions are to be narrowed and confined to the matter of which the words are meant and spoken. Although this might be demonstrated by many examples, at this present only one shall suffice. Paul in that same epistle to the Corinthians, the first chapter, says that he gives thanks to God for them, that they were enriched in all kinds of speech and in all knowledge. It is not very likely that they were endowed by the Spirit of Christ with natural philosophy, metaphysical and mathematical knowledge, knowledge of the law, and other liberal sciences, but only with all knowledge which should pertain to piety and to the gospel. Neither is it likely that they were adorned by the power of the Holy Ghost with all kinds of rhetorical, logical, poetical, and historical speeches, but only with those which should pertain to the edification of the church, with sound doctrine and godly admonitions. Therefore, propositions, although they are universal, are not always to be understood simply but ought sometimes to be narrowed to the matter which is being discussed at that time.

Likewise, what Paul says, "If I have all faith," we understand of all that faith which serves the working of miracles. And that this must necessarily be the interpretation, the words following declare: for Paul immediately adds, "so that I can remove mountains." Chrysostom also says that he, in that universality, saw that this particular sentence is necessarily to be understood: for he questions how Christ says that to remove mountains, a little faith is sufficient, which is in the smallness of quantity resembled to a grain of mustard

seed, whereas Paul says, "If I have all faith, so that I can remove mountains," as though to bring that to pass a wonderful great faith is required. He explains the question and says that Christ spoke of the truth and nature of the thing: for the gift of faith, although it be never so small, suffices to work miracles, be they never so great. But Paul had regard to the common opinion and judgment of men: for they, when they look upon the greatness and hugeness of a mountain, think that it cannot be removed without a certain incredible efficacy and greatness of faith.

Neither does it help Pighius's cause that Erasmus, in making an answer to the Sorbonne doctors, rejects this our interpretation. For first, his reason is very weak, and secondly false: for he says that the purpose of the apostle was to praise charity by comparison. But what praise should that be, he asks, if it should be compared with faith, which is one of the free gifts of the Holy Ghost and may light as well upon the wicked as upon the godly? For he would but coldly praise a man, which would say that he is better than a dog or a bear. First, this is false, that Paul compares not charity with free gifts of God: for he mentions prophesying, knowledge, and the gift of tongues, and prefers charity before them. Secondly, it is weak that he says, if our interpretations are accepted, the apostle would compare charity only with free gifts: for we confess that toward the end, he compares it with true faith. For Paul says, "There are three things; faith, hope, and charity: but the greatest is charity." And he brings a reason why: for it abides, and the others shall cease. Further, it is a full comparison, if (as we have said) we begin at the free gifts, and so afterward come in order to the theological virtues; yea rather, by that, that Paul, toward the end of the chapter, compares charity with true faith, it is most likely that he did not so before.

But if we should fully grant this to Pighius, that the faith of which Paul speaks is the general faith whereby men are justified; yet neither so undoubtedly should he obtain his purpose. For the apostle, attempting by all means to extol charity, thought to amplify that by a fiction or feigning; which is a figure of rhetoric, known even to children. And yet does not Paul therefore bring a false proposition: for he uses a conditional proposition, which may not resolve into a categorical proposition; and yet, in the meantime, the truth is kept. As if I should say to any man, "If you had the life or use of the reasonable soul without the life or use of the sensible soul, you would not be troubled with perturbations of the mind." No man could reprove this kind of speech as false; and yet it is not possible that in a man the life and use of the reasonable soul should be severed from the sensible. Such kinds of speeches are also found in the Holy Scriptures: for example, "If I ascend into heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me." These sentences are true; and yet it is not possible for a man to take unto him the wings of the morning. In the same manner, we say, "If a man should separate faith from charity, he should make it unprofitable," though in very deed it cannot be separated from charity.

And that Paul in that place used such an excess of speech or fiction, that is evidently declared by what he spoke a little before, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." But we know that angels have neither bodies nor tongues; and yet notwithstanding Paul speaks truth, that "If they had tongues, and I should speak with them, yet that would profit me nothing without charity." And this exposition Basil confirms in an epistle to the Neocaesarians: for he says that the apostle intended in this place to commend charity; and

he says that he uses those reasons not that all those things which he here makes mention of can be separated from charity. Wherefore, of the former interpretation, we have Chrysostom for an author: and the latter interpretation Basil confirms. Let Pighius go now, and from this saying of the apostle conclude, if he can, that which he contends so much about.

58. Regarding those words of Matthew, "Lord, have we not in your name prophesied, and in your name cast out devils, etc.," which Pighius denies can be done without faith, yet those who have performed these acts are not justified, as they are excluded from the kingdom of heaven. We may answer with the same solution that we have already provided; namely, that those whom Matthew mentions had the faith of signs, or a dead faith, but not a true and justifying faith. Moreover, I see no truth in the claim that miracles cannot be done without faith: for God sometimes works miracles not for the faith of those by whom they are performed, but either to advance His glory or to testify to true doctrine. Undoubtedly, Moses and Aaron, when they drew water from the rock of strife, wavered in faith; yet God, to uphold His promise, performed a great miracle by providing water to the people and reprov'd Moses and Aaron for their lack of faith. And Naaman the Syrian doubted he would recover his health in the waters of Jordan; indeed, he would have departed, complaining that the rivers of his own country were much better than Jordan: yet, notwithstanding, God did not leave His miracle undone. When a dead body was cast into the tomb of Elisha, by a great miracle it came to pass that upon touching the bones of the prophet, life was restored to it. But there was no faith there, neither in the dead body nor in the bones of the prophet, nor in those who brought the dead man there.

Yet, it is not always granted to those who desire to perform miracles to do so when faith is absent: for in the Acts, we read that when the exorcists, who were the sons of Sceva the high priest, attempted to cast out devils in the name of Christ, whom Paul preached, the demon answered, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" And immediately it attacked them. Here we see that God would not grant a miracle when it was requested, as it is most likely, by wicked and unbelieving men. However, conversely in Mark 9, a certain man did cast out devils in the name of Christ, who yet did not follow Christ; and when John would have reproved him, Christ did not allow John to do so. By this, Pighius might have seen that the performance of miracles does not always require faith. And yet, if I were to grant him that faith is necessarily required, it would suffice to have either the faith of signs or a dead faith. Therefore, Pighius, in his second confirmation, proves nothing; for it contains nothing that is substantiated.

59. Now let us examine his third proof. John says; Many of the rulers believed in him, but they did not confess him, for fear they would be cast out of the synagogue: and therefore, they were not justified by faith. This argument is but a weak one, and not as strong as he thinks it to be: for we deny that they truly believed. Their assent was nothing but a human assent: for when they saw that wonderful works were performed by Christ, and that his doctrine was confirmed by most evident signs, they began to give credit to him through a certain human persuasion. The devil also, because he certainly knows many things done by God, assents to the truth and believes it: yet it is not to be thought that he is induced to believe by a true faith. And that these rulers did not have true and lively faith is evident from Christ's words to them: "How can you believe, when you seek glory from one another?" From these words, we understand that those who value human glory more than godliness cannot truly believe in God. And

these rulers were to be counted among them: for they so valued their reputations and the judgments of men that rather than being cast out of the synagogue or being noted for any infamy among the people, they would forsake the confession of the name of Christ. Therefore, when the Lord says, "Such cannot believe," and John asserts, "They did believe," it is evident that they spoke of a different and varied faith; unless we are to say that two contradictories can both be true at the same time. Therefore, John spoke of a human faith, but Christ of the sincere and true faith: which true faith ought to be joined with confession, as Paul declares, saying, "With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation." Anyone who sees the connection between righteousness and salvation must also see the link that ought to exist between faith and profession. Therefore, we say that their faith was a dead faith; but a dead faith is not a faith, no more than a dead man is a man.

60. Although Smith, in a small book on justification he wrote against me, contends that a dead faith is still a faith, he primarily supports this argument by comparing it to the body of a dead man, which, although dead, is still a body. This wise man takes great delight in this analogy, which reveals a sophistical argument, typical of his study and skill. Let us examine this analogy more closely. I would have him answer whether a corpse is the body of a dead man, or simply the body of a man? I think he would not answer that it is the body of a man, for the body of a man and a dead corpse differ significantly; indeed, more than two particular kinds which belong to the same general category, as they are contained under diverse general kinds from which they directly and linearly descend. I grant that the carcass of a dead man is a body in the general nature of substance, as are stones and logs, but I utterly deny that it is in very deed the body of a man. Death removes from the body of a man the

proper form and nature which it had before, but it leaves only the general nature, so that it may be called a body.

Similarly, true and justifying faith, when it is lost or ceases to be true and proper, may indeed, as touching the general term which denotes all kinds and natures of faith, be called a certain cold assent, born of human persuasion, and not such as comes from the Holy Ghost, with the same strength and efficacy it had before. Therefore, if the same proportion of the analogy is maintained on either side, this clever sophism makes no argument against us: for as we confess that a dead body is a body, so we grant that a dead faith is a faith, as long as by 'faith' we understand the general kind, which encompasses all sorts of faith, and not the lively and true faith by which we are justified.

This reasoning is, as they call it, a paralogism of equivocation, that is, a false argument stemming from a word with diverse significations. He also adds that faith cannot justify because by its own nature it is a dead thing and receives life from another source, namely, charity and good works. These objections are vain and trivial: for no one in their right mind will assert that true faith is a dead thing, for "The just man lives by his faith." And if we draw life from faith, how can it then seem dead to anyone? But that it takes life from another source, we do not deny: for it receives it partly from the things it believes, namely, from Christ and the promises of God, and partly from the Holy Ghost, by whose inspiration it is enlivened. In this way, we will agree that it derives life from another thing, but not in the way this man suggests, namely, that it receives it from charity or good works. For what sane person would ever say that either the trunk of a tree, or the branches, or the fruits, or the flowers give life to the roots? And faith exists before either hope or charity; therefore, it does not receive life from them, for indeed, faith cannot be the substance of these virtues. Just as the faculty or power of the soul by which we live

and are animated, which they call vegetative, gives life to the body and does not receive life from the sensitive faculty by which we feel, or the rational faculty by which we understand, which follow it, so faith gives life to the soul but does not take that life from charity or good works. However, I concede that the life of faith is made much greater and more ample as it produces more and better works and more fervent charity emanating from it, not because it is enhanced by performing many actions, as they say of virtues which they call moral, but because God, by His grace and mercy, multiplies the talent since it was not idle, and because God by His power ensures that faith, when it works through love, is stronger than itself when it does not.

61. But setting aside these considerations, let us return to Pighius. He strives mightily to prove that a man cannot be justified by faith in Christ and in the remission of sins: for, he asserts, the faith by which Abraham was justified did not concern these matters. For God promised Abraham only numerous descendants and possession of a land: and it is immediately added that Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. In this argument, Pighius scorns and triumphs in words against the truth, and utterly ridicules our opinion and judgment: but this is essentially to ridicule Paul himself. For Paul explicitly affirms that we are justified by faith in Christ and by the remission of sins. There is nothing in Pighius but sheer folly and a wicked desire to contend. But let Paul come forward and answer for himself what he thought was meant by the seed promised to Abraham. Undoubtedly, in his epistle to the Galatians, the third chapter, he identifies that seed as Christ; "To Abraham," he says, "were the promises made, and to his seed." He does not say, 'and to seeds,' as referring to many, but as if of one, 'and to your seed,' which is Christ. And this covenant, I assert, was confirmed by God in Christ. Let Pighius now yet believe Paul, that in that seed

which was promised to Abraham, Christ was included and meant; nor let him henceforth with such impertinence and desire for victory, claim that the faith by which Abraham was justified was not faith in Christ.

As for the remission of sins, since the blessing is promised to us, we ought to remember that the chief and principal aspect of it consists in this: that we should be received into God's favor, and that our sins should be forgiven us. But Pighius openly opposes the apostle's teaching on the justification of Abraham: for he argues that before Abraham was circumcised and had the testimony of scripture that his faith was credited to him as righteousness, he believed God, as is evident in the 12th chapter of Genesis: wherefore, according to your opinion, he was then justified, and his righteousness was not deferred until the account written in the 15th chapter. It is astonishing how much he attributes to these arguments; as though by them all possibility of response were taken from us.

What, I ask you, prevented Abraham from being justified the first time God spoke to him, telling him to leave his country and his kindred? For even at the very beginning of the 12th chapter, we read the same promises that are in the 15th chapter. For thus God promised him: "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Undoubtedly, these words contain the promise of Christ and the remission of sins. Therefore, there is no absurdity in saying that Abraham, by believing these words, was also justified. But because the scripture in that chapter does not plainly set this out, Paul, with great wisdom, cited the words spoken in the 15th chapter, where it is expressly written that faith was credited to him for righteousness: which statement was most

necessary to confirm the apostle's doctrine, that a man is justified by faith. But why God would renew the same promises, it is not hard to see; so weak is our mind that unless God's words are repeated and driven into us again and again, it easily strays from faith. Nor, indeed, is justification only seized upon once, but is grasped as often as we truly and powerfully assent to the promises of God; for seeing we continually slip and fall into sin, we ever need our justification to be renewed.

62. Afterward, Pighius quibbles that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, many wonderful acts obtained by faith are discussed, but not a single word suggests that justification is to be ascribed to faith. However, this man weighs the words of the Holy Scripture with an unjust balance and does not fully consider what those words mean; "The just have by faith conquered kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained the promises." These should be understood such that from the last effect, we must return to the first. The last is to conquer kingdoms; next is to work righteousness; the first is to obtain the promises, among which are counted blessing, life, remission of sins, and similar benefits, which serve justification. Therefore, what is first mentioned, faith apprehends, and by it we are justified; good works follow, hence it is said, "They worked righteousness;" lastly, by the same faith, we obtain temporal benefits, and for that reason, it is stated, "They have overcome kingdoms." Thus, Pighius falsely asserts that in the Epistle to the Hebrews, among the effects of faith, there is no mention of justification; for, although that word is not explicitly read there, it is necessarily and clearly derived from what is written. We are certainly not Arians, as some maliciously believe us, that we would accept only what is plainly and expressly stated in the Holy Scriptures; we also accept those things that are clearly and logically inferred from them.

But Pighius then questions why we deny the power of works to justify. To this, we could simply reply that we do so because the Holy Ghost in the scriptures teaches us that men are justified by faith without works.

However, to address this more thoroughly, he has laid a trap: he responds to himself that the reason is that our works are imperfect; they do not satisfy God's law, nor can they withstand the judgment seat of God. By this logic, he argues, justification is not by faith either: for faith, too, is imperfect; no one believes as much as they should. To this, we repeatedly respond that faith, as a work, does not justify; it has that effect and bears fruit not by any power of its own, but by its object, that is, by what it regards and lays hold upon: for righteousness is derived to us from the death of Christ and the promises of God. A beggar receives alms with a leprous, weak, and sore hand; yet not because his hand is in such a condition. But one might ask, why do not other good works also by their object (namely, God, for whose sake they are done) apprehend righteousness as well as faith? I answer that faith was designated for this purpose by God: for just as in the body of a man, though it has many and varied members, only the hand grasps and receives. And thus, the common, misguided, and false reasoning is easily resolved: "We are justified by faith; Faith is a work; Ergo, we are justified for works' sake." Here, the conclusion incorrectly introduces the word "for," which was not present in the initial propositions, hence the argument is flawed. Further, the form of the argument is, as they say, from accident, thus it is faulty: for it is accidental, or happens to faith, to be a work, in that it justifies us. Therefore, it is a fallacy of the accident, as logicians term it.

Additionally, Pighius objects that charity justifies rather than faith, for it is a nobler and more excellent virtue. But we have already

refuted this ridiculous reasoning: "Charity is nobler than faith, therefore it justifies rather than faith." Nobility or dignity contributes nothing to justification. It's as if one argued, "The eyes are more excellent than the mouth and hands; therefore, food should be taken in through the eyes, not the mouth or hands." This is also seen in natural phenomena, where more perfected forms follow earlier ones, though they do not confer life. In a conceived child, nature progresses gradually from the capability to quicken to the capabilities to feel and to reason; yet, it does not follow that because the powers of reason and sensation are nobler than the power to quicken, they therefore give life to the child. That justification pertains more to faith than to charity (besides what the Holy Scriptures teach) can also be demonstrated by sound reasoning: for the power of knowledge, which pertains to understanding, lies in perception. Therefore, those who are taught something and come to understand it customarily say, "I get it," or "I grasp it"; indeed, by knowledge, a thing is in a way received into the mind. Therefore, it should not seem strange that by faith we are said to grasp the promises of God and the merits of Christ. But charity involves pouring out, bestowing, and communicating our goods to others; this should follow justification and not precede it: for before we are regenerated, we are inherently flawed; we cannot properly or in a manner acceptable to God, share any good with others.

63. Hereunto Pighius adds that if faith, which justifies, does not allow heinous sins that may spoil the conscience and alienate a man from God, it must follow that if a man who believes falls into any grievous and wicked crime, he is immediately devoid of faith and ceases to believe that there is a God; yet we see that wicked men not only believe that there is a God but also confess all the articles of the faith. This argument at first seems formidable; however, gentle reader, do not be deceived by its superficial appearance. Examine it

thoroughly and test it diligently, and you will find it to be a weak and ridiculous argument. We acknowledge that a person alienated from God by sins and wicked deeds may assent to the articles of the faith and believe that there is a God. But this man should have explained further that this is done by the motion and impulsion of true faith. Indeed, a wicked man may retain a certain human persuasion, either through upbringing or opinion, because he thinks it most likely.

But lest anyone should think that what I say is of my own invention—that a man who grievously sins is devoid of true and justifying faith—let us consider what Paul says. To Timothy, he states, "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." Clearly, he who denies the faith does not have faith. And to Titus, he says, "They profess to know God, but they deny him by their actions." To confess and to deny are contradictory; therefore, as both are spoken of the same men, they must be understood in different senses. Thus, they may have a form of faith—a certain human opinion, as it is—but not that firm and forceful assent, inspired by the Holy Ghost, about which we now speak.

John states in his first epistle, second chapter, "Whoever says, 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him." So then, the true faith by which we genuinely believe in God is not without good works. It should not seem absurd to anyone that one and the same thing can be known in different ways; for the devil also, as well as we, knows and confesses many things about Christ, whom yet Pighius (as I suppose) would not concede to be endowed with the true faith by which we are persuaded to believe those things we confess about Christ.

It is also possible that someone skilled in mathematics may assent to a conclusion confirmed and proved by demonstration, which if he later forgets due to age or illness, he will still affirm the proposition he once knew, but he will do so based on opinion or some probable argument, not by the demonstration as before. Hence, the knowledge of one and the same thing does not necessarily imply the same basis and principle of knowledge.

Let us suppose, as though conceding the opinion that after committing any great, heinous, and wicked act, true faith is lost, which in the elect is later recovered by God's grace; otherwise, it can be said that in those justified and destined for salvation by God, faith cannot be utterly extinguished by any heinous crime but is rather cast into a slumber, lying dormant and not manifesting its vitality through good actions unless it is again stirred by the Holy Ghost. For in such fallen individuals, the seed of God remains, although it may temporarily fail to bear fruit.

But Pighius continues, asserting, "Faith is the foundation; therefore, it is far from the perfection of the building; so then it does not justify, for many other preparations are required for justification." If by this perfection of the building he means the blessed resurrection and ultimate felicity where we shall see God face to face, we agree that faith is far from it; for we must reach the kingdom of heaven through many tribulations, adversities, and arduous labors. Similarly, we can say that justification is merely the foundation of eternal salvation and is far from the blessedness we anticipate. For the first step towards salvation is to be received into God's favor and be regenerated through Christ, followed by other stages leading to that ultimate and supreme bliss we await.

Where this man finds that faith is only the foundation, he cannot demonstrate from the Holy Scriptures, unless perhaps he refers to the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for." But those words mean only that what we hope for is upheld and confirmed in our minds by faith, which would otherwise waver and not stand firm. This does not support his argument. And if he should cite, "Whoever would draw near to God must believe," we have previously answered this and may discuss it further in its proper place.

64. Well, now that Pighius has attempted by many means to overthrow our doctrine, let us hear at length what he himself asserts and to what things he attributes the power of justifying. He states that many preparations and dispositions are required in us to be justified. First, he says, we believe the words of God; afterward, we fear His wrath; then we hope for mercy; and finally, we detest sins. To be brief, he enumerates all those things which we previously described under the name of the Council of Trent. But lastly, he claims that there succeeds a sincere and pure love of God, which dominates our hearts, and to this, he says, justification is ascribed. I cannot marvel enough at this man's notion: for he asserts that a man is nearly perfect before he can be justified, for one who believes, fears, hopes, repents, and sincerely loves God—what lacks he in perfection? But this man asserts that a man, being without Christ, a stranger from God, and not yet justified, is capable of accomplishing these things, which undoubtedly does not align with the Holy Scriptures. The Scriptures teach that before a man is justified, he is engaged in evil works and wanders in hatred of God, as is evident in the Epistle to the Colossians, the first chapter, and to the Ephesians, the second chapter. But how can those who perform such excellent works, as this man mentions, be children of wrath? How can they be

sinners? How can they, as written to the Romans, be enemies of God?

But setting aside these concerns, let's examine the foundations of this opinion. First, he cites from John: "Whoever does not love remains in death," and thereby he concludes that from love comes justification and life. This is as if someone said, "He who cannot laugh is not a man; therefore, by the power of laughing, a man attains to be a man." But how absurd this is, every man can perceive: for we are men by virtue of a soul endowed with reason, to which the capacity to laugh is necessarily joined, thus the proposition "He who cannot laugh is not a man" is always true. Similarly, what John says is most certain: "He who does not love remains in death," although he does not have life from love, but from faith, with which love is necessarily joined. He also cites Christ's words: "If you had God as your father, you would surely love me." Therefore, he says, from love we receive adoption, whereby we are made children of God. But here too he uses the same form of reasoning: for those who do not love Christ are not children of God, yet we are not God's children by virtue of that love, but by faith, from which love springs. In the same way, one might say, "If you were generous, you would also be prudent," and this is indeed a true proposition, yet it does not follow that a man is made prudent by generosity; rather, generosity springs from prudence. Briefly, these arguments and similar others conclude nothing else than that justification cannot exist without love and other Christian virtues, yet it cannot rightly be inferred that a man is justified on account of these virtues.

Pighius also adds this statement of Christ: "If anyone loves me, he will keep my commandments, and my Father and I will come to him and make our abode with him." By these words, he asserts, it appears that justification follows from love and the observance of God's

commandments, for Christ promises that upon their observance, He will come with His Father and abide with us. He means that to receive and retain Christ is nothing else but to be justified. And we agree that when Christians, already regenerate and justified, live uprightly and show their faith through good works, God comes to them and abundantly pours greater gifts and more ample grace. For God, though He is everywhere, is expressly said to come to those in whom He begins to work anew. And since He daily enhances and adorns those who conduct themselves uprightly and godly and faithfully exercise the talents entrusted to them, it is very well said that He daily comes to them by reason of new gifts. This is the kind of visitation about which Christ speaks in the Gospel of John. But if we seek to understand the initial approach of God and the coming of Christ into our hearts to dwell in them, Paul instructs us in his letter to the Ephesians: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Therefore, this statement of Christ does not teach that justification comes from love, for justification precedes it, although not in time, yet in order.

65. Pighius goes on and makes such a distinction of testaments; he says some are absolute and free, whereby the heir may immediately enter upon the inheritance, while others are conditional, which do not make an heir except under certain conditions. To this latter category, he assigns the testament of God. Therefore, he emphatically asserts that unless these conditions are fulfilled, no one can be justified. Here we refute what he claims; namely, that the testament concerning the remission of sins in Christ includes any conditions. This is affirmed by Paul in his letter to the Galatians, third chapter, where he writes: "Brothers, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does

not say 'and to seeds,' meaning many, but 'and to your seed,' meaning one, who is Christ. What I mean is this: the law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise." These words clearly indicate that the testament God made with Abraham was pure, absolute, and devoid of any conditions imposed by the law.

Furthermore, the very words of Genesis declare: God once promised Abraham the blessing. Later, the law was given, which might seem to add conditions of precepts; suggesting that if individuals wished to be justified and obtain these promises, they needed to perform and fulfill all of God's commandments. Yet, this latter method of justification, though it cannot be fully achieved, does not nullify the original promise. This first way was nothing other than the Gospel through Christ; and to encourage people toward it, the path of justification through works was also presented, so that upon realizing their inability to fulfill these works, they might turn to Christ. From Christ, upon being justified and striving to live uprightly, they might freely receive the promises outlined in the law.

Now let us consider the conditions this man adds to the testament of God. In Psalm 103 it is written: "The mercy of the Lord is from generation to generation on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments." From these words, Pighius concludes that the fear of God, the remembrance of God's covenant, and the endeavor to perform his commandments are the conditions for God's promises. Yet I am surprised that Pighius would claim justification is by love, while he admits that the scriptures attribute it to fear. However, we will not let Pighius contradict himself. Yet if we listen to the scriptures in Psalm 32, mercy is promised to those who hope: as it states, "Love surrounds those who

trust in the Lord." Elsewhere it is written: "Whoever believes shall not be put to shame," and "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Clearly, all these virtues exist in a person already justified, and God shows mercy to such an individual.

But the main controversy lies in determining which of these virtues is primarily responsible for justification. Undoubtedly, by the testimony of the scriptures, this must be attributed to faith. Pighius further argues that in the condition David mentioned, it is stated they should remember the commandments of God to perform them. He says it does not add "to do all the commandments": God accepts a person who strives to do them, and in his mercy, he forgives many things. However, the phrase "to do them" must necessarily be understood to mean all commandments; for in the law, which this man calls the testament, all are indeed written. And if God forgives or remits anything, he does so to individuals who are already regenerate, not to those who are still estranged from him and children of wrath—such individuals are not yet justified but are still preparing themselves and striving to meet the conditions; to these, nothing is remitted. Therefore, they are obligated to all. Hence Moses said, as Paul testifies: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

## **Faith Begins with the Holy Spirit**

66. Pighius continues, raising a question about the origins of faith, asking from whence it begins in us. We simply answer that faith begins with the Holy Spirit. But he feigns wonder at how we grant the Holy Spirit to a man before he believes, thinking this absurd. Initially, I cannot fathom why this man would find such a concept surprising, but then I realize that he aligns with the Pelagians in

teaching that faith is of ourselves and is attained through human effort. Otherwise, if he believed that faith is from God and the Holy Spirit, he would not separate the cause from its effects.

However, to ensure he does not think we attribute the beginning of faith to the Holy Spirit without good reason, he should consider the clear testimonies of the Scriptures. Paul states in his first epistle to the Corinthians, "Not in words taught by human wisdom but in those taught by the Spirit, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom but on God's power." Further, he writes, "The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit." How can they be spiritually discerned unless the Spirit of God is present?

Children also understand that from conjugate words, coupled as in one yoke, firm arguments are derived. To the Galatians, Paul writes, "God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, 'Abba, Father.'" By the Spirit, we believe, and in believing, we call upon God; indeed, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children," as stated in Romans. And to the Ephesians, "Be strengthened by the Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Here we see that the faith by which we embrace Christ comes from the Spirit of God, which strengthens our inner being. The apostles, when they requested, "Lord, increase our faith," clearly declared that it did not originate from their own capabilities but by the inspiration of Almighty God.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 states, "To one is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing

by that one Spirit." He adds that it is the same Spirit who works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. If you argue that this passage and the aforementioned request of the apostles pertain to the particular faith by which miracles are performed, I might not dispute it heavily. Yet, if you insist, I would argue from the lesser to the greater: if these gifts cannot be obtained but by the Spirit of God, much less can the universal and effectual faith by which we are justified be obtained from elsewhere.

Furthermore, Paul writes to the Romans, "God has allotted to each a measure of faith." And in his second letter to the Corinthians, "We have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, 'I believed, therefore I have spoken.' We also believe and therefore speak." In Galatians, the fruits of the Spirit are listed as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Faith here is numbered among the fruits of the Spirit, hence it proceeds from the Spirit. But to the Ephesians, he states more explicitly, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."

In Acts, it is written, "The Lord opened Lydia's heart to pay attention to what Paul was saying." And in chapter 13, "All who were appointed for eternal life believed." Thus, it is beyond doubt that faith is engendered in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who may indeed be present in those who do not believe, but only as persuading, not sanctifying them. And although into the elect he might suddenly instill faith, since he is the cause of faith, he is therefore prior to it both in dignity and in order.

67. Now let us consider the absurdities Pighius derives from our statement and judgment. He questions, "If the Spirit is the author of our faith, uses the instrument of the Word of God, and may also be

present in those who do not believe, how does it happen that at a single sermon, where both the Spirit is present and the Word is preached, some believe and others do not?" We answer succinctly that this occurs because the Spirit is not equally effective in all individuals; nor does it teach everyone internally and mentally in the same manner. We cannot explain why this is so, though we have no doubt that it is most just.

Pighius then suggests, "If this is the case, the listeners will easily be content and will not exert themselves or make an effort, for they know it is in vain when everything depends on the Spirit of God." This objection is not only very common but also spiteful. We counter by asserting that everyone is obligated to believe the Word of God; thus, it is their duty to listen attentively and with all their might to assent to it. If they do not, they will then incur the penalties prescribed by the law. They should not be excused if they claim they could not obey it or if they attempt to test their capabilities; their efforts, since they are not yet justified, would be futile and sinful.

Imagine a master commanding his servant, who is lame, to walk; and the servant excuses himself, saying he is lame and cannot walk without difficulty. It is unreasonable to think he is thus excused. We do not believe that all sins are equal; on the contrary, we teach that those who omit or neglect outward actions they could perform, and do not strive to do well, sin far more grievously than those who, within their capabilities, adhere to some external discipline. As Augustine says, "Cato and Scipio will be dealt with more tolerably than Catiline or Caligula."

But let Pighius, who so dislikes our opinion, state when he thinks the Holy Spirit is given to men. He will say it is after these preparations have occurred—when a man has believed, feared, hoped, repented,

and sincerely loved. What else would Pelagius say, as if to believe and to love are products of human strength? He also cites and believes it supports his argument, "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He thinks that labors, burdens, contrition, confession, and what they call satisfaction, along with fasting, tears, and the like, contribute to obtaining justification. However, this passage should be understood differently: Christ calls those who are laboring and laden, who are burdened by the law, aware of their weaknesses and the weight of their sins, and who have long struggled under human traditions. These weary individuals, nearly hopeless, are the ones Christ calls to Him, as they are more suited for the kingdom of heaven than the fortunate and tranquil individuals who consider themselves just through their own works and deeds.

Pighius asserts, "God requires preparatory works, and then He promises not to withhold His grace." This was entirely the view of the Pelagians, which the Holy Scriptures utterly contradict. The Scriptures teach that it is God who gives both the will and the ability to act according to His good purpose; it is God who begins the good work in us and carries it on to completion; it is from God alone that we have sufficiency, as otherwise, we are incapable of conceiving anything by ourselves. Therefore, it is clear that Pighius confuses God's laws and misrepresents what is well delineated in the Holy Scriptures.

68. Pighius continues his argument, raising questions about what we mean when we say that mere historical faith is insufficient for justification. He wonders if we dismiss all scriptural narratives as merely historical and if we suggest another type of faith for believing things not recorded in the Holy Scriptures. We do not reject historical faith as though we seek new objects of faith beyond what

the Scriptures present or conclusively derive from them. Instead, we distinguish between a mere general or indifferent acceptance, such as that by individuals who acknowledge the scriptural accounts out of human persuasion and probable credibility, similar to how the Jews and Turks today accept many scriptural truths, and a firm, assured, strong assent that comes from the movement and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This Spirit transforms the heart and mind, inducing good and holy actions.

This efficacious faith differs significantly from a mere historical assent. We assert that we are justified by this faith, backed by three types of testimony: the first from the Holy Spirit, who bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God; the second from the Scriptures; and the third from works. In contrast, those who argue that man is justified by works lack sufficient evidence: the Holy Spirit does not testify to it, the Scriptures deny it, and only works are cited—works devoid of godliness and faith, resembling the actions of ancient pagans and many today who do not believe in Christ and are estranged from God.

Pighius also references Isaiah 66, an odd choice as this passage undermines his argument more than any other. God asks, "To whom will I look, but to the one who is poor and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word?" Pighius interprets these words as indicating the works that compel God to justify us. However, this interpretation misses the prophet's intention to condemn the Jews' reliance on external rituals while neglecting true inner godliness. God expresses disdain for their superficial religiosity, emphasizing that He does not value their temple as they do, for He dwells in the vastness of heaven and the earth. He questions the significance of a man-made temple, stating that He has created everything, thereby indicating His preference for faith and inward godliness over external displays.

God defines those who are truly faithful and godly by specific characteristics: the poor who recognize their lack of righteousness, the contrite of heart who feel afflicted in this world, those of a mild and humble spirit rather than the arrogant, and those who receive God's words with reverence and fear. These traits are clear indicators of genuine faith and godliness. Moreover, the prophet illustrates how God views the actions of the unregenerate, no matter how impressive they may appear. He equates religious offerings made with impure hearts to committing acts of violence and iniquity—actions commanded by God's law but performed without true devotion, thus considered grave sins.

Thus, Pighius fails to find support in this scriptural passage for his argument. Instead, the very scripture he cites validates our position. He inadvertently presents evidence that clearly and starkly contradicts his claims, proving himself to be an adept but misguided debater.

69. Pighius also refers to a passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Anyone who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." From these words, he seems to conclude that justification is granted to those who seek God through good works. However, he should distinguish between those who seek God, as Paul does, noting that some seek Him through works and others through faith. Paul explains this distinction, stating in his letter to the Romans: "Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works." Therefore, those who seek God, intending to be justified by faith as the apostle teaches, achieve what they desire. In contrast, those who seek justification through works fail to attain it.

We do not deny that God rewards the works performed by regenerate individuals, which propel them toward the crown of eternal salvation. However, this does not pertain to the current debate, which concerns the works performed before regeneration. Pighius attempts to argue that these pre-regeneration works have their reward and can be considered merits of justification to some degree. However, his assertion that this type of merit does not obligate God to us or equate to the reward given fundamentally negates the very nature of merit. Even after justification, any good deed performed by individuals is not inherently theirs, as it is God who works within them. Moreover, all that we do is already owed to God, and we cannot offer Him anything that isn't already His. Thus, we must dismiss all notions of merit, both for those who are not yet justified and for those who are.

To simplify his argument, Pighius uses the analogy of a master who promises a reward to servants to encourage them to complete a task efficiently and diligently. He asks who would deny that the servants who have promptly and diligently completed their work deserve the promised reward? Let's analyze this analogy. If by "servants" we mean individuals regenerated in Christ, we acknowledge that God offers incentives and rewards to encourage a holy life. We concede that such individuals may receive a reward, but we reject the idea that they truly and properly earn the crown of eternal felicity. Some of our theologians prefer to use the analogy of a father and his children, rather than a master and his servants, to illustrate this relationship. Fathers might conditionally promise gifts to their children—gifts they intended to give freely—to motivate their efforts, such as promising a reward after a child completes a book. Properly speaking, no one would claim that the children have "earned" these gifts; rather, they are given freely and generously by the father.

But Pighius speaks of servants, implying those not yet regenerated. It is puzzling where he finds support for the idea that God offers rewards for the good deeds of such individuals, especially since these deeds, as we have explained, are still sinful and cannot please God. In reality, such individuals are not promised rewards but face punishment. To clarify further, compare children and servants: children inherit from their father simply by accepting the inheritance, whereas servants, no matter how hard they work, do not share in the children's inheritance. This distinction is so evident it requires no further explanation.

70. Pighius attempts to counter our assertion that requiring works for justification diminishes the honor of Christ, as if Christ's merit alone were insufficient to reconcile us to God. He claims he does not detract from Christ's honor but maintains it fully intact. However, how can he claim to take nothing away when he insists that works are necessary for our justification, and even more, that God regards them more highly than faith? He explains his stance by suggesting that while Christ alone is sufficient as the reconciliator and the sacrifice for our reconciliation with God, we cannot be prepared to receive this benefit without performing many works. I am indeed astonished at the reasoning of such a sophisticated debater. It seems he misunderstands that those whom the Apostle Paul argued against never claimed works were needed as external bases for justification. They, like Pighius, viewed works as purifications and preparations of the mind.

Moreover, it is evident that if a general proposition is true, it applies to all its specific instances. Thus, when Paul states that a man is not justified by works, he excludes all types of works, regardless of the order in which they are presented. Yet, Pighius contends that God requires these works so that He may freely impute justification to us.

Anyone even minimally versed in the Scriptures can see that this directly contradicts Paul, who writes in his Epistle to the Romans: "To the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness." In contrast, Pighius asserts that God freely imputes righteousness to those who perform works. The contradiction between imputing freely and not imputing freely is clear, even to a child.

Consider this logical dilemma involving two contradictory outcomes. The works Pighius discusses either contribute to justification or they do not. If they do not contribute, why are they termed preparations? Preparation implies a causative role. But if he admits they are indeed preparatory and therefore causative, how can he claim to preserve the full honor of Christ as the sole cause of our justification? This argument might similarly be turned against us regarding works that follow justification. One might argue that if such works do not aid in achieving salvation, why are they necessary, and why are promises attached to them? If they are indeed helpful, why do we deny that they possess merit?

We respond that works are beneficial for those who are regenerated; living rightly and orderly, they are renewed and made more perfect, which is an initiation into and a partaking of eternal life. It has pleased God to lead people to eternal bliss through these stages. However, these works cannot be deemed meritorious because Paul explicitly teaches: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." What is given as a gift excludes the notion of merit. Moreover, we must recognize, as we have often stated, a significant distinction between the works of those still alien to Christ and God and the works of those who, through grace, are grafted into Christ and made His members.

71. Pighius continues to challenge our statement that faith, specifically faith that acknowledges the promises of Christ and the remission of sins, is essential for justification. He questions whether we imply that faith should exclusively correlate with these promises. He argues that faith should equally regard all elements described in the Holy Scriptures. He believes that believing in God as the creator of the world, in the Trinity, or in the resurrection is equally meritorious as believing in Christ as our mediator and in the forgiveness of sins through Him. Pighius asserts that if we are justified by faith, then faith in other scriptural truths should be equally valid for justification.

He references Paul's writing in Romans chapter four to support his argument, stating, "And not for him alone was it written that righteousness would be credited, but for us also, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead." From this, Pighius concludes that the faith credited for righteousness is the belief in God raising Jesus from the dead, not necessarily faith in the forgiveness of sins through Christ.

We acknowledge that our faith indeed assents to all that is contained within the Holy Scriptures. However, among these truths, there is a primary and supreme truth—that Christ, the Son of God, suffered for us so that we might receive forgiveness of sins. Is it surprising, then, that our faith primarily focuses on this truth? This is supported by Paul's statement that "Christ is the end of the law," indicating that He is the ultimate purpose of all Scriptures and thus the central object of our faith. While we embrace all biblical truths, the significance of faith in Christ and His redemptive work surpasses all others.

Regarding the acceptability of faith in various articles, the merit of faith, like that of other qualities, is determined by its objects. As the objects vary in importance, so do the merits of the faith accorded to them. Since God ordained His Son's sacrifice as the means for our reconciliation, this act inherently holds greater value than others and is directed toward this ultimate end. This logical principle suggests that the action or quality that facilitates another's condition or quality is superior. Thus, faith in the supreme truth of Christ's sacrifice and our redemption through Him is inherently more valuable than faith in other doctrines.

Pighius's argument about the varying dignities of faith misses the point; we are not justified by the merit of our faith, as faith itself is weak and imperfect in every person. Rather, we are justified by faith because it serves as the instrument through which we receive Christ and His righteousness. The discussion of faith's worthiness is irrelevant to its efficacy in justification.

Furthermore, Pighius's citation from Romans chapter four is selective and incomplete. A full reading of the passage clarifies that it speaks directly of Christ's death and resurrection for our sins and our justification. Paul explicitly states, "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." This clearly emphasizes that our faith should be in the redemptive act of Christ—His death and resurrection—as the basis for our forgiveness and justification.

It is troubling that a scholar, especially one who professes theological expertise, would overlook such clear scriptural evidence. This oversight is not just a minor error but a significant misrepresentation of the foundational Christian doctrine of justification by faith.

72. Pighius raises objections about the specific type of faith by which we assert that every true believer in Christ should be fully assured that their sins are forgiven. He denies that such faith exists in the Holy Scriptures, claiming it is merely our invention. Here, I must emphatically state that Pighius is blatantly mistaken. I challenge him to consider what Abraham believed when he was justified if not that the promises of God would one day be fulfilled for him personally. Who else could Abraham have believed these promises were for, if not himself? The same can be said of Moses, David, and many others who clearly trusted that God's promises made to them would be fulfilled for them personally.

And what about Christ's words to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven," or to the woman, "Your faith has saved you"? And does not Paul speak directly of Christ in relation to himself in Galatians, saying, "Who loved me and gave Himself for me"? These examples explicitly show the personal aspect of faith and forgiveness.

Let Pighius then continue to claim that we have concocted this distinct and unique faith, and let him argue that every Christian should believe that the promises are made only indefinitely and that it is inappropriate for anyone to apply them individually to themselves. We hold that while we may be uncertain about others' faith and whether they believe, as to our own, we can be certain and assured. Let each person believe the promises of God indefinitely regarding others, as we cannot know who is predestined and who is reprobate. However, no one who is faithful should doubt their own standing but should believe that the promise is specific concerning themselves when they perceive true faith within themselves.

Moreover, when promises are presented in general terms, we can assuredly infer their specific application to ourselves. As Christ states

in John, "This is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life." From this, we derive, "But I believe in the Son of God; therefore, I now have, and shall have, what He has promised."

This personal assurance is foundational to our faith and is clearly supported by scriptural testimony, contrary to Pighius's assertions.

73. Pighius continues his argument, using Noah as an example to argue that faith in matters other than Christ and the remission of sins can justify. He claims that Noah was justified by his belief solely in the preservation of his family and the impending destruction of the world, without any reference to Christ or the forgiveness of sins. However, it appears that Pighius has not considered what Peter writes in his first epistle, third chapter: "In it [the ark] only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God." If Peter saw this significance in the ark and Noah's actions, can we assume Noah was unaware? Such a presumption would unfairly diminish his understanding. If Noah grasped what Peter later articulated, then he believed not only in the immediate events but also in the future works of Christ. This aligns with Hebrews, where it is stated that Noah's faith made him an heir of righteousness.

Yet, Pighius dismisses this interpretation. Eager to contradict us, he does not hesitate to challenge even the apostles. He boldly claims that Adam was justified without the faith we describe, which involves the remission of sins through Christ, asserting that no such promise was evident in the Scriptures regarding Adam. However, this view significantly misrepresents biblical teachings and the interpretations of the church fathers. Was it not promised to Eve, and thereby to

Adam, that her seed would crush the serpent's head? This seed is Christ, who has indeed crushed the devil's power, ensuring that sin, death, nor hell can harm his followers. This interpretation is commonly upheld by the church fathers.

More egregiously, Pighius dares to assert that justification does not come through the promise—a stance starkly opposed to Paul's teachings. Paul explicitly states to the Galatians, "The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.'" Just as the promise was given to Abraham, so it is given to us. However, the term 'promise' can be understood in two ways: it can refer to the thing promised, in which case there is no doubt we are justified by the promise, meaning Christ and the forgiveness of sins promised to believers; or it can refer to the actual words of God, through which He promises us remission of sins through Christ.

Even in this latter sense, we can still say we are justified by the promise because, although the fundamental cause of our justification is God's mercy and will, this is conveyed and confirmed to us through His words and sacraments. These serve as steadfast testimonies of God's will toward us. Therefore, unless faith is lacking, by which we grasp what is offered, we are indeed justified by the promises.

## **Does Genesis Demonstrate that God Values Works over Faith?**

74. Pighius continues his argument by citing Genesis 22 to claim that God values works over faith. He refers to Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac as evidence, noting that God blessed Abraham

for this act, promising to multiply his descendants and bless all nations through him. Pighius emphasizes that these blessings were promised in response to Abraham's works, with a divine oath attached, and without mention of faith.

However, this interpretation is misleading. First, the text does not discuss justification, which is our main focus. When examining scriptural arguments, especially those pertaining to justification, we must rely on clear and direct references, such as Paul's statement in Romans that "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." This clarifies that it is faith, not works, that underpins justification.

Regarding the Genesis account, I acknowledge that Abraham's actions brought him a deeper assurance rather than new promises. His willingness to sacrifice Isaac didn't introduce new blessings but reinforced his understanding and trust in God's existing promises. Abraham's faith was indeed affirmed through his actions, which deepened his conviction in God's faithfulness and the righteousness imputed to him.

Pighius's claim lacks substance because it does not introduce any new promises or covenants. The covenant referenced during Abraham's trial was already established during earlier interactions with God, including the covenant of circumcision and the covenant confirmed through animal sacrifice. The method of passing between divided animals, as mentioned, was a common ancient ritual to signify covenant agreements, noted even in cultures outside the biblical narrative, such as in Athens as described by Demosthenes.

Moreover, Abraham was already justified by faith before this event, as explicitly stated in Scripture. Thus, any subsequent promise or blessing does not negate the primacy of faith or suggest that works

hold more weight than faith in God's covenant with humanity. We recognize that good works following justification are pleasing to God and are rewarded, but these works do not contribute to the justification already received through faith.

Finally, to understand the phrase "Because you have done this," we must consider its intent. Augustine offers insight into similar expressions in Scripture, explaining that when God says, "Now I know," it does not imply God gained new knowledge. Instead, it indicates that God confirmed what He already knew, making Abraham's faith evident not only to God but to Abraham himself and to all observers. This is similar to the declaration that a sinful woman's many sins were forgiven because she loved much, which we have extensively discussed previously. Here, the emphasis is on manifesting the depth of the individual's faith and devotion, which God acknowledges publicly, but it does not alter the underlying principle that faith, not works, is the foundation of justification.

75. Pighius continues his argument by citing Ezekiel 18, which discusses the redemption of a wicked man through repentance and obedience to God's commandments. He asserts that this scripture indicates justification comes through works rather than faith alone, celebrating this as if it decisively supports his viewpoint. However, this interpretation misses the core of the theological discussion about justification.

We readily acknowledge that if a person could perfectly repent and follow all of God's commandments, they would indeed be justified by their works. The real challenge lies in finding someone who has achieved this without prior justification. Here, Pighius contradicts himself by previously suggesting that God does not require flawless

adherence to commandments but rather shows mercy for many failings.

Turning back to the scripture, since humans are incapable of achieving perfect compliance with God's laws unaided, it is essential to approach Christ humbly. Through faith, individuals receive justification freely and are then empowered by grace and the Holy Spirit to repent genuinely and begin obeying God's law as much as humanly possible.

This situation reminds me of the old philosopher Antisthenes and his student, who boasted about the future riches from his merchandise ship. Just as Antisthenes used the promise of future payment to reveal the student's impracticality, so too can we see the impracticality in Pighius's argument. Expecting someone to achieve perfect obedience without regeneration is like waiting indefinitely for a ship that will never arrive. Hence, Pighius's reliance on the law's words is unfounded, whether these words pertain to promises or commandments.

Furthermore, Pighius argues that Jesus did not associate entering the kingdom of heaven with faith but with doing the will of the Father. However, Jesus himself clarified that believing in Him is doing God's work: "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." Therefore, faith is intrinsically linked to following God's will, and these concepts are not contradictory but complementary.

Despite recognizing that the Scriptures frequently state "Man is justified by faith," Pighius insists this refers to a 'lively and strong faith' accompanied by other virtues. This is precisely our point—we never argue for a faith devoid of transformative power or subsequent good works. If Pighius truly accepts this definition of faith from the

heart, then there is no real dispute between us, and we should harmonize our views.

Yet, Pighius cannot accept this conciliation. He attempts to redefine justification freely by claiming it means God credits the works of faith, hope, and charity as righteousness. This interpretation is problematic, as it directly contradicts Paul's teachings that where works are present, there can be no talk of grace or free imputation—these concepts are mutually exclusive. By trying to merge them, Pighius clearly misreads or manipulates Scripture to fit his biases, standing in opposition to the apostolic doctrine laid out by Paul.

76. Pighius and our own Smith, who sees himself as a great intellectual of England, join forces much like Theseus with Hercules. However, in truth, Smith brings nothing new to the table, merely reiterating arguments drawn from the less commendable sources, like Pighius. Smith claims that faith does not pertain to the remission of sins and thus argues against the concept that justification comes through faith. He emphasizes that the faith distinguishing Christians from non-Christians is centered on Jesus Christ, an argument he tries to bolster with scripture and a reference to Jerome. Yet, he overlooks the fundamental meaning of the name 'Jesus' itself, which in Hebrew, 'Yeshua' or 'Iascha', translates as 'To save' or 'Savior.' The angel's declaration at the naming of Jesus makes this explicit: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." How, then, can faith in Jesus Christ exclude belief in the remission of sins through Christ?

Smith also misinterprets a passage from Peter's epistle, claiming that "Charity covers a multitude of sins" implies that forgiveness of sins is attributed to charity, not faith. This understanding fails to recognize the context from which Peter draws, which is Proverbs 10. In

Proverbs, it is explained that while hatred exposes and accentuates faults, charity, conversely, conceals them. Those who love genuinely protect and hide each other's faults. Peter uses this proverb to encourage Christians towards charity, not to suggest that charity is a means to achieve forgiveness of sins.

Beyond these individuals, it's important to recall that when the Church Fathers appear to ascribe righteousness to works, they are not referring to the righteousness that God imparts freely through Christ but to an internal righteousness cultivated through a virtuous life. Or, if they do discuss the righteousness that pertains to the remission of sins, we must always return to the fundamental principle: it is a lively faith in Christ that underpins all good works. If our opponents grasped these nuances, they would not so vehemently uphold their erroneous views.

Regarding Pighius, given his evident intelligence and learning, it seems unlikely he genuinely believes his own arguments about this matter. It appears more probable that once he engaged with the subject, he treated it as an intellectual exercise rather than a matter of sincere belief.

## **Insights of the Church Fathers and how their viewpoints align with ours on the matter of faith and justification**

77. To continue the discussion initiated earlier, let's consider the insights of the Church Fathers and how their viewpoints align with ours on the matter of faith and justification. Importantly, we don't need an exhaustive review of all their writings to understand their

position; similar to tasting sea water to know its saltiness, a few key references are sufficient.

Irenaeus, a significant early Church Father, briefly touches upon this topic in his fourth book against Valentine. He might have covered it succinctly because, during the early Christian era, the truth of justification by faith was widely accepted and uncontroversial. From what Irenaeus does mention, it is clear that he believed the ancient patriarchs, including those before the Mosaic Law like Abraham, Lot, Noah, and Enoch, were justified by faith. He notes that these individuals, being righteous, did not require the law because they had the law written in their hearts.

You might hesitate to accept this reference from Irenaeus, particularly because he mentions that Enoch was sent as a delegate to the angels—an account that appears apocryphal or derived from oral tradition rather than scripture. However, dismissing Irenaeus's statement on this basis would also call into question the Epistle of Jude in the New Testament, which cites a prophecy from Enoch. The explanation that Enoch acted as a messenger to angelic beings could be metaphorically describing his role in admonishing the ruling class or the descendants of Seth, who are allegorically referred to as 'sons of God' in Genesis.

Turning to Tertullian, in his writings on baptism, he asserts that faith ensures the certainty of salvation. This indicates that the notion of specific faith in the remission of sins isn't a novel concept introduced solely by contemporary theologians. Tertullian's endorsement of postponing baptism until adulthood or until after marriage, though not widely accepted today, coexists with valid theological insights that were recognized by the Church at his time.

Similarly, Cyprian's discussions on the rebaptism of heretics contain valuable affirmations of faith, despite our disagreement with him on the principal issue. It's essential to recognize that no Church Father is infallible; each may support some ideas that later theology does not uphold. Yet, this doesn't necessitate the wholesale rejection of their works. Just as every beautiful pomegranate may contain some spoiled seeds, so too can every revered Church Father espouse some views that are not entirely sound.

In sum, the writings of the Church Fathers, even with their occasional errors, provide valuable insights into the early Church's understanding of faith, justification, and salvation. They reinforce the enduring Christian doctrine that faith, particularly faith in Christ's redemptive work, is central to our relationship with God.

78. Let's revisit Origen's insights, particularly his thoughts from his commentary on the Book of Job, where he delves into the essence of faith and its necessity for spiritual actions to be considered meaningful. Origen asserts that all human endeavors, whether they involve virtues like chastity or acts such as charity, are futile without faith. He succinctly states, "All things, which men do, whether it be in virginity, or in abstinence, or in chastity of the body, or in mortification of the flesh, or in the distribution of their goods; all these things, I say, they do in vain if they do them not of faith." Here, where he uses "in vain," he emphasizes that without faith, these deeds lack spiritual value.

Origen goes further, explicitly aligning with Paul's teaching by asserting, "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." This stark declaration underscores his stance that the merit of deeds relies entirely on the faith underpinning them, rather than the actions themselves.

He continues by arguing that without faith, individuals cannot please God or receive divine rewards—instead, such faithless actions merit judgment, wrath, and condemnation. Origen uses the metaphor of building without a foundation to illustrate his point, likening faithless deeds to labor lost. This reinforces the idea that without faith as the foundational bedrock, no spiritual or moral structure can stand.

In his exegesis, Origen also highlights the transformative power of genuine faith, suggesting that just as the earth cannot bear fruit without sunlight, so too can good works not arise without the illuminating truth of God through faith. He uses the biblical account of Noah, noting that during the year of the flood when the sun did not shine, the earth could not produce—paralleling this to the fruitlessness of works devoid of faith.

This interpretation by Origen profoundly underscores the foundational Christian principle of "sola fide" (faith alone), emphasizing that it is faith that animates and sanctifies human actions, making them worthy in the eyes of God. His commentary not only offers a deep theological insight but also aligns with key Reformation doctrines that prioritize faith as central to Christian life and salvation.

Origen, in his exposition of the fourth chapter of Romans, employs a logical method known as a Sorites, commonly used by Stoic philosophers. He argues: If those who believe that Jesus is the Christ are born of God, and those born of God do not sin, then it follows logically that believers in Christ do not sin. This argumentation is firmly grounded in scriptural teachings. Origen further concludes that if someone sins, it necessarily implies they do not truly believe, because if every believer is sinless, then anyone who sins must not

truly believe. This supports the notion that grievous sins can cause true faith to become inactive or dormant, unable to manifest in actions.

Origen also discusses the apparent contradiction between being justified by faith and being justified freely, as taught by the Apostle Paul. He clarifies that the faith through which we are justified is itself a gift from God, which he supports with various scriptural references. Thus, he argues that justification by faith does not contradict the concept of being justified without cost, as faith itself is not something we produce but is bestowed upon us by divine grace.

These insights from Origen demonstrate that he held a profound understanding of faith's transformative power and its divine origin, aligning closely with foundational Christian doctrines regarding sin, faith, and justification.

But this is something our Pighius cannot tolerate: for he mocks us whenever we assert that faith is obtained through the grace and inward working of the Holy Spirit. He argues that it is astonishing for the Holy Spirit to dwell and act within those who do not yet believe. The same Origen, in his third book and third chapter on Leviticus, explains: "The holy shekel represents our faith: for if you offer faith to Christ as a price for the unblemished ram sacrificed, you will receive forgiveness of sins." Here, it is explicitly stated that forgiveness of sins is attained through faith; through that faith, I mean, which is directed towards Christ, who was delivered to death and sacrificed for us. There can be nothing clearer than these testimonies that Origen has presented for us. But these men are so stubborn that they refuse to be swayed from the opinion they have committed themselves to defend; even if you bring great

enlightenment, they resist, fearing it might appear to others that they have defended an unjust cause.

79. Cyprian, in addition to what we previously mentioned regarding the connection between faith and a virtuous life, also writes in his third book to Quirinus that faith alone is beneficial, and that we can accomplish as much as we believe. The first part of this statement pertains to the third article of this question, while the latter is very relevant to our current discussion. It is undoubtedly a remarkable saying that the power of faith is so great that by it we can do whatever we will. However, Cyprian did not consider it sufficient to simply assert this; he also supported it with numerous testimonies from scripture. As for Basilus and Gregory Nazianzen, what I have previously cited shall suffice. Chrysostom, in his sermon titled "On Faith, Law, Nature, and Spirit," says that even faith alone is capable of saving a person. He cites the example of the thief who, he says, only confessed and believed. Works alone, he says, cannot save the workers without faith. He then compares works without faith to the relics of dead men, explaining that just as dead bodies, though adorned with splendid garments, do not obtain warmth from them, similarly those lacking faith, though adorned with glorious works, are not helped by them.

The same father, commenting on Paul's letter to the Romans, on the passage "But the righteousness which is of faith," says, "You see that this chiefly pertains to faith, that we, trampling underfoot the objections of reason, should seek after that which is above nature; and that our limited understanding, being cast away by the virtue and power of God, we should embrace all the promises of God." Here we see that by faith we obtain the promises of God, and although by it we assent to all that is contained in the holy scriptures, it particularly regards the promises of God. It is also noteworthy that

he says, "the weakness of our understanding in believing is cast away by the virtue and power of God," for this refutes those who argue that this is done by human power and strength, as though we had faith of ourselves, and that it should precede justification. The same Chrysostom, commenting on the 29th chapter of Genesis in his 54th homily, says, "This is true faith: not to pay attention to those things which are seen, even if they seem to contradict the promise, but only to consider the power of the one who promises." Those who insist that we should focus not only on the power and promises of God, but mainly on our own preparations, should take note of this. And explaining the passage in Genesis, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness," he says, "Let us also learn, I implore you, from the patriarch of God, to believe his words, and to trust in his promises, and not to search them out by our own understanding, but to show great gratitude, for this can both make us righteous and enable us to obtain the promises." Here, two things are to be noted: firstly, that we are made righteous by faith, and secondly, that by the same faith we obtain the promises, which our adversaries vehemently deny.

The same father, commenting on Paul's words to Timothy regarding Hymenaeus and Alexander, who have made shipwreck concerning the faith, says, "So, he who falls away from the faith once has no place to stay or return to; for when the head is corrupted and lost, what use can there be of the rest of the body? For if faith without works is dead, then works without faith are even more dead." It should be noted that this is an argument from the lesser to the greater: for he says that works are more dead without faith than faith is without works. The same author, in his sermon on the words of the apostle, "Having the same spirit of faith," says, "It is impossible, indeed it is undoubtedly impossible, if you live impurely, not to waver in faith." This demonstrates how closely Chrysostom regarded

the connection between faith and good works. The same father, explaining the apostle's words, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law," says, "As soon as a man believes, he is immediately justified; therefore, faith has affirmed the will of the law, as it has brought to fulfillment even that for which the law did everything." So why does Pighius say that faith is only the foundation and therefore far from the perfection of justification? Or why does he add so many degrees and means after faith, by which we come to justification? For Chrysostom speaks quite differently, saying that a man is justified immediately as soon as he believes.

Moreover, he attributes to faith even this: that it makes men righteous, when the law was not able to achieve that, despite its many efforts. Furthermore, when he explains the passage "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness," he calls this righteousness of God the righteousness of faith, which is entirely given by grace from above, and not due to our efforts. And concerning the words "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone," he says, "You see then that faith comes with confidence and security." Here he clearly designates a specific faith and certainty regarding the remission of sins, which our adversaries oppose so vehemently. Also, when he expounds the saying in the 11th chapter, "And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in," he says, "If faith could graft you, when you were a wild olive tree, into a good olive tree, it can also restore those who have been cut off into their own good olive tree." Here, the power to be grafted into Christ through justification and the power to restore those who are cut off is attributed to faith.

I could now turn to Jerome, but something compels me to return to Chrysostom: for this same man writes that faith alone is not

sufficient for salvation. And such statements are often found in the Fathers, which our adversaries continually use against us, although, truth be told, such an objection is not like the throw of Entellus, nor should it be greatly feared, for it can easily be answered in one word. For he does not say that faith is not sufficient for justification, but only for salvation; for faith alone is sufficient for justification. But after we are justified, it is not enough for the attainment of salvation to simply say, "I believe"; we must also live a holy life and perform good works, for by them, as if by certain steps, God leads us to happiness. And thus we can interpret all the statements of the Fathers that seem to lean in this direction. And if their words (as sometimes happens) cannot bear such an interpretation, then, as is most appropriate, we will appeal from them writing carelessly to the very same Fathers writing more soundly and in a more universally accepted manner in another place, just as that woman in ancient times appealed from Philip when he was drunk to the very same Philip when he was sober.

80. Jerome, in his commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, on the passage "And we know that man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ," says that all the forefathers were justified by the same faith in Christ by which we are now justified. He confirms this statement by citing many examples. First, he mentions Abraham, for Christ said of him, "He saw my day, he saw it, and rejoiced." Then he speaks of Moses, referring to the Epistle to the Hebrews, which states that he considered the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, and that he chose to embrace the cross of Christ rather than remain in Pharaoh's court. He adds that John the Evangelist, in his 12th chapter, clearly teaches that the things Isaiah wrote about the glory of God, when he saw the Lord sitting on a high throne, refer to the Son of God. He also cites the Epistle of Jude, which says that the

Lord Jesus Christ delivered the people of Israel out of Egypt and later struck down the unbelievers. In this passage, I am surprised that Jerome, a man otherwise excellent in the Greek tongue, translated it as "the Lord Jesus Christ," whereas in our text, only the word "Lord" appears. Unless we suppose that his copy differed from the one we now use. I mention this not because I doubt whether those events were carried out by Christ the Son of God or not, for John says, "No man hath seen God at any time, but the Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

Therefore, whatever is spoken to men concerning divine matters is spoken by the Son of God, who has truly given himself to mankind as a faithful interpreter of God his Father. And Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter ten, says, "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." He also warns, "Let us not tempt Christ, as some of them tempted him." Jerome, in his commentary on Galatians where he lists the fruits of the spirit, when he comes to faith, writes, "If charity is absent, faith also departs with it." These words clearly indicate that he believed true faith cannot be separated from charity, a point we also teach and defend. But Pighius and his cohorts hiss at this and cry out against it; however, let him grumble as much as he likes, it is enough for us that this doctrine agrees with both the scriptures and the fathers.

Ambrose, interpreting the words from the Epistle to the Romans, "For it is one God who justifieth circumcision by faith," says, "Because there is only one God, he has justified all men in one and the same way, since nothing causes merit and dignity except faith." And later, on the words, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed," he explains, "The promise cannot be sure to all the seed, that is, to all kinds of men, of whatever nation they may be, except by faith. For

the beginning of the promise is of faith, not of the law; for those under the law are guilty, but the promise cannot be given to the guilty, so they must first be purified by faith to become worthy to be called the sons of God, and for the promise to be sure." And at the beginning of chapter 5, on the words "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God," he says, "Faith, not the law, brings us peace with God; for it reconciles us to God when our sins are forgiven, which previously made us enemies of God." And later, on the words "The law of the Spirit of life," he explains, "It is faith that justifies those who turn to it, to forgive them whom the law holds guilty, so that, living by faith, they may be free from sin." In his second book on the Gospel of Luke, he says that Peter did not weep until the Lord looked back at him, and he adds that the Lord brought forth in him both repentance and the power to weep.

81. But Augustine, when he discusses this matter, appears to be in his element, so that searching in him for testimonies regarding this controversy is, as the common saying goes, akin to seeking water in the sea. Nonetheless, it is not irrelevant to extract something from him as well. In the sermon on the Mount, concerning the words of the Gospel in Matthew, in his seventh sermon towards the end, he says, "If you presume of your own work, a reward is rendered unto you, and not grace given you." I ask now, "Do you believe, O sinner?" "I believe." "What? Do you believe that your sins may be freely forgiven you by him?" "Then you have that which you believe." In his preface on the 31st Psalm, he writes, "You have done no good, yet remission of sins is given to you. Your works are considered, and they are all found worthless. If God were to render unto those works what is due, undoubtedly he would condemn you." In his book "De spiritu et litera," chapter 12, he asserts, "We gather that a man is not justified by the rules of good life, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." And in his book against the two epistles of the Pelagians, in the third

book, chapter five, he states, "Our faith, that is, the catholic faith, discerns the just from the unjust, not by the law of works, but even by the law of faith."

In Augustine's 106th epistle, he and Alipius affirm, "Righteousness is of faith, whereby we believe that we are justified, that is, that we are made just by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." In the same work, against Pelagius and Coelestinus, in his first book, chapter ten, he asserts, "It is not enough to confess what grace you will, but that grace by which we are persuaded, by which we are drawn, and by which that which is good itself is given us." This clearly contradicts those who posit some general grace and assert that it lies within every man's power to accept or refuse it. But the grace by which we are so persuaded is nothing else but faith, which indeed is necessary for justification. But those works done before we are justified are of no avail. As Augustine writes in his work against the second epistle of the Pelagians, in the third book, chapter five, "Even as works which seem good are turned into sins for the ungodly." In his book "De spiritu et litera," chapter 28, he writes, "Just as there are certain venial sins without which the very just man cannot live, yet they do not hinder us from salvation, so there are certain good works without which even the most wicked men can very hardly live, yet these works do not profit them towards salvation."

And lest we think that the faith by which we are justified is a common thing, Augustine adds later in chapter 3, "Why is one man so instructed that he is utterly persuaded, and another not so? There are only two things, which I think good to answer; O the depth of the riches, etc.! Also; What? Is there iniquity with God?" He then warns, "He who is displeased with this answer, let him seek better learned men, but let him beware of presumptuous persons." If we were to

believe our adversaries, this doubt would be very crude and blind. They would immediately respond that one is persuaded because he wills it, and the other is not persuaded because he does not will it. But Augustine, considering the matter more deeply, decides to refer the whole issue to God, who distributes to each person as he sees fit, justly, though we may not understand the reasons for his justice, nor is it proper for us to seek them out. Otherwise, we may end up like certain flies, attracted by the candlelight, flying too close and getting burnt by the flame.

Augustine also rebukes Pelagius in his fifth chapter for positing a common grace for all the saints, which he would have been nothing else but nature. This is what our adversaries do today when they claim that grace is openly offered to all men, and it lies within every man's power to receive it if he so wills. In Augustine's letter to Vitalis, he says, "To those whose case is similar to those to whom grace is given, yet it is not given to them, so that those to whom it is given may understand how freely it was given to them." He makes it clear that it is God who, against our will, makes us willing, who takes away our stony heart and gives us a fleshy heart. This clearly shows that it is faith by which we are justified, and God distributes it according to his good will. Augustine, in "De dogmatibus ecclesiasticis," chapter four, asserts, "To be purged from sins, God does not wait for our will." And in chapter 44, he writes, "The Holy Ghost makes us choose, think, and consent to every good thing pertaining to salvation." In his "De trinitate," book 13, chapter 17, Augustine writes, "The Word of the Son of God took upon him the nature of man without any merit; and in the same way, the grace of God is given to us."

In a letter to Simplicianus, Augustine asks, "Who can live uprightly and work justly unless he be justified by faith? Who can believe

unless he be touched by some calling, that is, by some testification of things? Who has the power to have his mind touched with such a sight whereby the will may be moved unto faith?" In his sermon upon John, he declares, "All sins are comprehended under the name of infidelity," and adds that faith cannot exist without hope and charity, as he clearly teaches in his commentary on the 31st Psalm. In his work against the two epistles of the Pelagians, Augustine discusses at length how we are drawn by God. He affirms that the Pelagians would triumph excessively over Christians if they did not find the concept of drawing in the Holy Scriptures. But since this concept is expressed in the Gospel itself, they have no grounds to stand on. There are countless other passages in Augustine that support this opinion, but for brevity's sake, I choose to omit them.

82. Cyrillus, in his first book against Julianus, asserts, "The faith of Abraham and our faith is utterly one and the same." In his exposition on John, in the third book, chapter 31, he elucidates the statement, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." For faith brings salvation, and grace justifies; whereas the commandments of the law tend to condemn. Therefore, faith in Christ is the work of God. We should note that faith brings salvation, and we are justified by grace. Cyrillus elaborates on this in his ninth book on John, chapter 32, where he interprets the phrase, "And whither I go, ye know, and ye know the way." He contends that we are justified by faith and become partakers of the divine nature through the participation of the Holy Ghost.

In his 13th sermon on the passion of the Lord, Leo declares, "The fathers believed together with us that the blood of the Son of God should be shed." Thus, there is nothing strange in Christian religion compared to what was signified in old times. Salvation was always hoped for through the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the righteous men

before us awaited. Such testimonies refute those who claim that Abraham was justified not through faith in Christ but by faith in earthly promises. Although this author may appear to contradict us by stating that true faith is not found without charity, his words, upon deeper consideration, do not oppose us. We speak of a true, sound, and lively faith, whereas Leo refers merely to an outward profession of faith. Gregory, Bishop of Rome, in his 19th homily on Ezekiel, clarifies that we do not come to faith by works, but through faith, we attain to virtues. He illustrates this with the example of Cornelius the Centurion, who did not come to faith by works but by faith, he came to works. Therefore, our adversaries should understand that faith precedes all good works. Gregory further emphasizes in his second book, chapter 25, that unless faith is first in our hearts, no other things, no matter how good they seem, can be truly good. Beda, commenting on the second chapter of James, asserts, "He only believes truly who, by working, exercises what he believes, for faith and charity cannot be separated." This suffices regarding the fathers.

As for what the African, Mileuitan, and Arausican councils teach about justification, faith, grace, and works, we have already explained this in detail in the previous article. I will only add that when our adversaries claim that God offers his grace to all men, and forgives sins to those who do what they ought to do, they omit the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the power of God that draws us, the inward persuasion of the mind, and other crucial aspects required in this matter. Therefore, they contradict the councils we have cited. However, it is worth mentioning that in the council of Mainz, held under Carolus Magnus, Gregory is quoted as saying, "He believes truly who, by working, exercises what he believes."

## **We Affirm that Justification is by Faith Alone**

83. Therefore, considering what has been discussed regarding this article—namely, that men are justified by faith in Christ—and having substantiated it with scriptures, refuted the objections of our adversaries, and cited the testimonies of the Fathers to support our position, let us now turn to the third article. We affirm that justification is by faith alone. This assertion finds support in numerous scriptures that teach we are justified freely, without works, and that contrast grace with works. Although the term "only" may not be explicitly stated in scripture, its meaning is necessarily inferred from these passages. It should also be noted, as we have previously explained, that we do not claim the faith by which we are justified exists in our minds without good works. Rather, we assert that this faith alone is what secures justification and the remission of sins. Just as the eye cannot function without other parts of the body, such as the head, brain, heart, and liver, yet it alone apprehends colour and light, similarly, our faith apprehends justification and remission of sins.

Therefore, those who argue against us in this manner—saying, "Faith justifies, but faith is not alone; therefore, faith alone does not justify"—commit a logical fallacy. It's akin to arguing, "Only the will wills, but the will is not alone in the mind; therefore, the will alone does not will." Even children can see the error in this reasoning, which is known as the fallacy of composition and division. Isn't it shameful that such great Divines fail to recognise it?

Yet, Smith, the supposed beacon of divinity, opposes us. He vehemently insisted recently that we falsely claim those passages of

scripture which testify that we are justified freely equate to being justified by faith alone. He argues that the word "freely" does not mean the same as "alone." Oh, what poor grammarians we are! Apparently, we couldn't understand this commonly used adverb without his guidance. However, this grammatical expert, to avoid appearing entirely foolish, points to instances in Genesis and the Psalms where "freely" is used, arguing that inserting "alone" there would result in absurdity. But he fails to grasp that "freely" means without cause or recompense. Thus, we rightly affirm that justification is by faith alone because it is said to be given freely. If works were required, there would be a cause or reward, but since "freely" excludes these, it logically follows that justification is by faith alone.

As for the passages he cites, they are easily refuted. Laban's question to Jacob about serving him freely implies without obligation to receive something in return. The Israelites saying they ate fish freely meant they did so without paying. Similarly, the statement "They have hated me freely" means without cause or merit. Therefore, since Paul says we are justified freely, it must be understood that it is without our own merit or works. Moreover, Smith takes issue with our interpretation of the word "except" in passages like Genesis and John, arguing that it does not equate to "only." However, in these contexts, "except" does imply exclusivity. For example, Joseph meant that his brothers could only see his face if they brought their youngest brother. Likewise, Christ meant that life could only be attained by believing in him, not just by partaking in sacraments.

84. But Smith argues that hope, charity, and other good works should not be excluded from justification. I acknowledge that these should not be absent from a justified person, but I do not attribute to them the power of justifying. Paul's statement that "A man is not

justified by works" would not be true if any kind of works could justify us. It would be like saying a craftsman does not work with his fingers and then admitting he uses his fingers for his work but excluding only one finger, like the little finger, and not the thumb, forefinger, or middle finger. It is evident that using three fingers implies using fingers altogether. So why does Smith say that hope and charity are not excluded? Because, he says, you yourselves argue for justification by a living faith, which certainly includes these virtues. We agree that these virtues are always present with true faith, but we do not consider them part of our justification before God. This argument commits the fallacy of accident, attributing to associated things what properly belongs only to the main subject. It's like saying, "The sun is round and high; therefore, the roundness and height of the sun make us warm."

What works, then, does Smith exclude from justification when he includes hope and charity? I suppose he surely excludes outward works such as fasting and almsgiving. But how can he say or teach this while also appointing and defending preparatory works?

This sharp-witted man thinks he has cleverly escaped by saying that these things are not necessarily required for justification and that they are only beneficial if present. But this is laughable, for we have already plainly taught that all works done before justification are sins and cannot contribute to justification. If they did contribute, we could boast that we had done these things by our own efforts, leading to the exclusion of boasting. However, they argue that we cannot boast because these works were done through the grace of God before justification.

But it's essential to note that these men attribute a significant part of such works to free will, giving us cause for boasting. Some argue that

we cannot boast of this liberty of will because we did not obtain it ourselves; it is God who endowed us with this faculty when He created us.

However, this argument is insufficient to eliminate boasting. First, it would be akin to appealing to the common grace of creation, as the Pelagians did, leaving us with at least a good use of free will to boast about. Although we have free will from God by creation, its proper use is ours—to assent to God's call and engage in good works He has set before us. Augustine reminds us in his book "On the Spirit and the Letter" that the will and choice to do good are from God, not only because He gave us choice and free will in creation but also because He persuades us to will and believe, both through the outward preaching of the gospel and inward persuasion. While the will acts independently, it is God who ultimately causes us to will and pursue good things.

85. Further, our adversaries believe that although works contribute to justification, it remains true, as the Holy Scriptures teach, that we are justified freely. They argue that these works are given by God and done by grace. If this argument were valid, then Paul would not have acted wisely when he negated the power of ceremonial works to justify. A Jew might argue that their forefathers, who were circumcised and observed other laws, did not do so by their own strength but by the grace of God, which helped and motivated them. If other works commanded by the law could contribute to justification or merit it, why couldn't ceremonial works do the same? It is also not sufficient to argue that Paul only removes the power of ceremonial works after the coming of Christ. He clearly speaks of Abraham, justified by faith and not by circumcision, and cites David, who lived under the law.

As for the assertion that charity and hope cannot be excluded, I would like to know if the works of these virtues are considered just. I assume he will agree that they are. But how will he respond to Paul, who tells Titus, "Not by the works of righteousness, which we have done"? I know their counterargument—they claim such works are excluded if done by the law and by free will without grace. But why exclude what cannot be? Who would love or hope in God without grace? Regardless of how they are done, they cannot contribute to justification, for we are justified by grace, as plainly stated in the Scriptures. The contrast between grace and works is so significant that Paul says, "If of grace, then it is not now of works; and if of works, then it is not of grace."

They shouldn't be so displeased that we use the word "only," for we necessarily infer it from what Paul says: "We are justified by faith" and then adds, "Without works." Let me illustrate this apt inference with a simile. In Deuteronomy chapter six (according to the Hebrew), it is written, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and him thou shalt serve." Although the word "only" is missing here, the Septuagint translates it as, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and him only thou shalt serve." From the affirmative proposition that God is to be worshipped and the negative one that strange gods are not to be worshipped, they concluded that only God is to be served. Christ Himself cited this passage in rebuking the devil: "Depart from me, Satan, for it is written: 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'" We see here that the word "only" is necessary to refute worshipping creatures, and though it may not be in the Hebrew, it is necessarily inferred. So when we reason in a similar manner, why should they be so offended?

86. Let them also consider that the best and most ancient fathers did not dislike that word. It is ridiculous to see how Smith attempts to

prevent and answer them with such cold arguments and poor excuses. First, he says they meant nothing else but to restrain men from becoming insolent. But let Smith, in one word, according to his wisdom, answer me: Did the fathers speak truly or falsely? If they spoke truly, then they are on our side. So why does he oppose it so vehemently? But if falsely, this good end does not help them in restraining the insolence of men. Just as evil must not be committed for good to follow, false doctrine must not be affirmed to supplant other false doctrine. But this man undoubtedly is so far beside himself, as he says that this was lawful for the fathers to do. In his book "De Votis," which he published not many years ago, he says that Augustine, in "De Bono Viduitatis," where he wrote that marriages of those who had vowed to remain celibate or live singly are true marriages and not adulteries, wrote the same only to persuade Juliana the widow (to whom he wrote the book) that marriages in general are not evil. So, in God's name, he confesses that Augustine presents one false doctrine to overthrow another false doctrine.

And with similar wisdom, in the same book, he fabricates that Clement of Alexandria wrote that Paul had a wife (which he thinks is most false) only to prove that marriage is good and honorable. If it is lawful to mix true things with false and confuse everything, when can we then believe the fathers? What can ever be certain to us if we can be deceived thereby? Furthermore, he fabricates that Paul excluded only the works of the law from justification. But we have already refuted this abundantly and have taught that Paul's reasons are general. Yes, the fathers saw even this: for Augustine, in many places, affirms that Paul deals not only with ceremonial works but also with moral works. But because the authority of Augustine is, somehow, suspected by our adversaries, let us see what Jerome says. He, against the Pelagians, writes to Ctesiphon on the words "By the works of the law, no flesh shall be justified": "Because you think this

is spoken of the law of Moses only and not of all the commandments contained under this one name of the law, the same apostle says, 'I consent unto the law of God.'" There are other fathers who teach the same, but I will pass over them for now. It is enough to show that this other fabricated invention of Smith is vain and trifling.

87. Thirdly, he says that they meant to exclude works (as he calls them) penal; those works (I suppose) which repentant men do. But to show how ridiculous this is also, shall need no long declaration. For first, such works were required of men; not that by them they should be justified before God, but only to approve themselves unto the church; that is, lest they by a feigned and dissembled repentance should seek to be reconciled. Further, it is not likely that Paul spoke of any such works: for they were not at that time in use. Indeed, Ambrose, when he excludes works from justification, has herein once or twice a respect. But we ought not so much to consider what one or two of the fathers do say, but what agrees with the holy scriptures. Smith adds moreover, that it is certain that God requires much more of us than faith: for in Mark, it is thus written; "Repent, and believe." Here, saith he, unto faith is adjoined repentance. And in another place; "He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved." He adds also that in the Epistle to the Ephesians; "The church is said to be sanctified by the washing of water in the word." And that Peter in his third chapter of his first epistle says; that "Baptism has made us safe." And that Jerome also thus writes upon the first chapter of Isaiah; "The washing of regeneration does only remit sins." Behold, saith he, justification, and remission of sins are ascribed not only unto faith but also unto the sacraments.

As touching the first, we grant that Christ requires more of us than faith: for who doubts but that he will have men that are justified to live uprightly and to exercise themselves in all kinds of virtues;

otherwise, they shall not come unto eternal salvation? However, these are fruits of faith and effects of justification, and not causes. But as touching the sacraments, we have many times taught how justification is to be attributed unto them: for they are in the same respect unto justification as is the preaching of the Gospel and the promise concerning Christ, which is offered unto us to salvation. And very often in the scriptures, that which belongs unto the thing is ascribed to the sacrament or sign. And because baptism promises remission of sins by Christ, and signifies it, and seals it in them which are washed; therefore Jerome, of all other sacraments, attributes this unto it only. Wherefore the words of the Fathers ought nothing to move us, when they write thus; that "Faith alone is not sufficient to salvation": for they understand this of that eternal salvation, unto which we come not, except some fruit follows our faith. But of their sayings we ought not to gather that a man is not justified by faith only. And though at any time, the very same fathers seem to refer their words unto justification; yet are they to be understood, that their meaning was to express the nature of the true and justifying faith: for it in very deed is never alone, but has ever hope and charity, and other good works, as companions. Sometimes also by justification, they understand that righteousness, which sticks in us; which without all doubt does not consist or depend on faith only.

88. They think also that this goes against us: for Paul writes to the Romans; "By hope, we are made safe." Neither do they see that hope is there taken for the last regeneration, which we hope we shall one day obtain in the heavenly country: for the apostle a little before spoke of it. And undoubtedly, we possess that salvation only in hope, not as yet in very deed. If there be any, perhaps, whom this most just and most true answer will not suffice; let him follow the interpretation of Origen: for he upon that place says; that hope is

there put for faith: which is no rare thing in the holy scriptures. But they have found yet another foolish device, whereby (as much as lies in them) they do go about to qualify this word Only, which is so often used of the Fathers; namely, that faith only has the beginning, and as it were, the first degree of justification: which afterward is made perfect and full when other good works come unto it. But how vain this is, Paul himself sufficiently teaches: for he does not only say that we are justified by faith only, but also he adds, without works. Further, this also goes against these men, which is written in the book of Wisdom; "To know God is full righteousness." In which place, it is a sport to see how Smith wrings himself. First, he dares not deny the sentence, for he counts that book for canonical: but as he is of a sharp wit, at last, this he devises; that God is not known by faith only, but also by love. But whoever would say so, but only this man? Undoubtedly, by love, we do not know, but we do love.

But that which is spoken in the book of Wisdom (which yet with me is not of so great authority) Christ himself has most manifestly testified in the Gospel, saying; "This is eternal life, that they know thee, the only true God." Although of this saying also of our savior; Gardener the Bishop of Winchester, devised of late, I know not what; namely, that to know God, is not properly eternal life, although it somewhat helps forward thereto. But forasmuch as neither the Fathers, nor Paul, nor Christ himself can satisfy these men; there is no hope that we shall anything prevail with our reasons. They add moreover, that the Fathers say that only faith justifies; that is, it is the principalest thing whereby we are justified. I confess indeed that Only sometimes signifies Principal. But this sense cannot agree with Paul's purpose: for if charity be compared with faith, charity (as Paul says) is more excellent and better. Wherefore, if both of them justify (as these men will have it) then should charity have the chiefest part, and not faith. And this also is a great let unto these men, which I

have oftentimes spoken of, that Paul so ascribes justification unto faith, that he says; "Without works." But Augustine (say they) unto Simplicianus writes; that "By faith we begin to be justified." Unto this we may answer two manner of ways; first, that that beginning is such, that in very deed it hath the very full and whole justification. So that Augustine's meaning is, that we are justified so soon as we have faith. Or if this pleases them not, we will say (as the truth is indeed) that Augustine meant of the righteousness which sticks in us.

They cite also Ambrose, upon the fifth chapter unto the Galatians; "In Christ, &c." For (says he) we have need of faith only, in charity to justification. Behold (say they) unto justification we have no less need of charity than of faith. But they are far deceived: for by those words Ambrose meant nothing else, but to make a distinction between true faith and vain opinion: therefore he says; that we have need of faith only, namely, that which is joined with charity. But Jerome upon the fifth chapter unto the Galatians, says; that "It is charity only, which makes clean the heart." What other thing else shall we here answer, but that this his saying (if it be sharply and sincerely urged) is false? For it is faith also which purifies the hearts, as it is written in the Acts of the apostles. And Paul unto Timothy says; "Charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, &c." By which words it is plain, that the heart must of necessity first be pure, before charity can come. Wherefore we will interpret that sentence by the effect, and as touching our knowledge: for then it is most certain that we are regenerate and have a clean heart when we be endued with charity. After this manner also have we before expounded this; "Many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much."

89. And by the self-same means also, may that saying of Augustine, in his book *De natura & gratia*, the 38th chapter, be answered unto;

"It is the charity of God," says he, "by which only, he is just, whosoever is just." But this seems also best unto me, to understand such sayings of the fathers to concern that righteousness, which abides and sticks in us: for that consists not only of faith, but also of all virtues and good works. Now, because amongst all virtues, charity is the principal; therefore the fathers sometimes attribute righteousness unto it only. And that which our adversaries have most unjustly usurped, to expound this word Only, for Principal or chief, may in this place most justly serve us: for here we treat not of that justification, which is had by imputation; but of that which we attain to after regeneration. Wherefore, in this our proposition, we exclude not from a man that is justified, hope, charity, and other good works: but this only we say, that they have not the power, or cause, or merit of justifying. And when we say, that a man is justified by faith only; we say nothing else undoubtedly, but that a man is justified only by the mercy of God, and by the merit of Christ only: which cannot be apprehended by any other instrument, than by faith only.

Neither must we give place unto our adversaries, not to use this word Only, though they cry out never so much, that of it springs great offense; and men's minds are by this persuasion somewhat weakened in the exercise of virtues. For by sound doctrine we do easily remedy these inconveniences: for we always teach, that it is not justification, or true faith, which lacks the fruits of good life. But we see the subtle and crafty device of these men: for if we should say, that a man is simply justified by faith, leaving out this word Only; straightway they would add of their own, that a man indeed is justified by faith: but yet he is no less justified by hope, and charity, and other good works. For this very cause the Catholics, in times past, would not permit unto the Arians this word ὁμοούσιος, that is, Consubstantial, or Of like substance: because they would straightway have said, that The son indeed, by appellation or name, is God, like unto the father, and

in a manner equal unto him; but yet not of one and the self-same nature and substance. Wherefore they did with tooth and nail defend and keep still this word ὁμοούσιος, that is, Consubstantial, or Of one and the self-same substance, as a word most apt to express the truth of that controversy. Which they might also by good right do; and chiefly, for that they saw, that that word was of necessity concluded out of the holy scriptures: out of which also is most evidently concluded this our word Only; and is thought of us a word most meet to confute the errors of those, which would have justification to come of works.

Moreover, Gardener, bishop of Winchester, counted this our proposition to be absurd; and against it, amongst other arguments, he used this, the which to me doubtless is very strange, that it is so greatly esteemed of some of his parasites; "The righteousness," says he, "that is given us of God, whereby we are justified, pertains to all the faculties and powers of the mind, or rather to the whole man; Therefore we are not justified by faith only: for that pertains only unto the higher part of the soul." Here (gentle reader) that thou be not deceived, lies hidden a double fallacy or deceit. For first, grant, that that righteousness, which is given unto us, pertains unto the whole man, and unto all the powers and faculties of the mind: shall it therefore follow, that that righteousness, which is offered of God, is not apprehended by faith only? Undoubtedly, the meat which we eat, is distributed into all the members, and into the whole body; and yet it is received with the mouth only, and not with the whole body. Further, the disputation is not about any righteousness, which is fastened and sticks in us; which in very deed is dispersed in the whole man: but about justification, which is the forgiveness of sins. But this righteousness hath no place nor seat in our minds, but in GOD alone, by whose will only our sins are forgiven us.

90. But now, since this article has been sufficiently defended against the cavillations of importunate men, we will omit this, and briefly declare that the ancient fathers did not dislike this word Only, which our adversaries so greatly shun. Origen, upon the epistle to the Romans, upon these words; "Thy glory is excluded. By what law? By the law of deeds? No, but by the law of faith. For we suppose that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law." The justification (says he) of faith only is sufficient, that a man only believing should be justified, although he have done no good work at all. And for example, he brings forth that thief, which was crucified together with Christ; and that woman, unto whom Christ answered; "Thy faith hath made thee say." Afterward, he objects unto himself that a man hearing these same things might be made secure, and contemn good works. But he answers that he who, after justification, lives not uprightly, casts away the grace of justification: for no man (says he) receives forgiveness of sins to use license to sin; for pardon is given, not of faults to come, but of sins past. Than which sentence nothing can be said more conformable to our doctrine. Cyprian to Quirinus, in his 42nd chapter; "Faith (says he) only profiteth, and look how much we believe, so much are we able to do."

Basil, in his sermon De humilitate, writes; that "A man is justified by faith only." Hilary also upon Matthew, the 8th chapter; "Faith (says he) only justifieth." Ambrose, upon the 5th chapter unto the Romans, upon these words; "Being justified freely: Because (says he) they working nothing, nor rendering turn for turn, are by faith only justified by the gift of GOD." The same author upon these words; "According to the purpose of the grace of God; So Paul (says he) saith; It was decreed of God, that the law ceasing, only faith should be required unto salvation." And straightway after; "God hath ordained, that men should by faith only, without labor, and any observation, be justified before God." The same father, upon the first

chapter of the second epistle unto the Corinthians; "It is appointed (says he) by God, that he which believeth in Christ, shall be saved without works, by faith only." And he hath the like sentences, in his book De vocatione gentium.

Out of Chrysostom I could bring a great many places to confirm this sentence: but of them I will pick out only a few. Upon the third chapter unto the Romans, upon these words; "Thy glory is excluded: In this (says he) is set forth the might and power of God, in that he hath saved, justified, and wrought our rejoicing by faith only, without works." And at the beginning of the fourth chapter; "That a man being destitute of works should be justified by faith, peradventure it may appear to be well: but that a man, being adorned with virtues and good works, is not for all that justified by them, but by faith only; this assuredly is wonderful." Hereby our adversaries may understand that although faith have (as companions) hope, charity, and other good works, (which cannot be doubted of, but that they were in Abraham;) yet they do serve nothing to the comprehending of righteousness. And on the 10th chapter, upon these words; "They being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own righteousness, were not subject to the righteousness of God: He calleth (says he) the righteousness of God, that righteousness, which is of faith; because we without labor, are by faith only justified through the gift of GOD." Of Augustine, I will speak nothing: for he is full of this matter against the Pelagians: and every man may easily by his writings confirm it.

Hesychius upon Leviticus, in his first book and second chapter; "Grace (says he) is apprehended by faith only, not by works." The very thing he in a manner has in his 4th book, and 14th chapter. Theophilactus, upon the third chapter unto the Galatians, expounding these words; "Because by the law, no man is justified

before God: Now (says he) Paul plainly declareth, that faith even alone hath in it the power to justify." Phocius upon the fifth chapter unto the Romans; "Justification (says he) consisteth of faith only." Acacius in Oecumenius, upon the first chapter unto the Romans; "He hath only (says he) by faith raised up, and quickened us, being mortified by sins." Bernard, in his 22nd sermon upon the Canticles; "By faith only (says he) he that is justified, shall have peace." And in the self-same sermon; "That wanteth (says he) of grace, whatsoever thou ascribest unto merits. Grace maketh me justified freely."

Whome these things suffice not, let them read Gennadius, upon the fifth chapter unto the Romans; Cyril, in his ninth book, and third chapter upon John; Theodoretus, upon the fifth chapter to the Romans; Didymus, upon the second chapter of James; Eusebius, in his ecclesiastical history, the third book, and 27th chapter; Cyprian, or whatsoever he were in his exposition of the articles of our faith; Lyranus, upon the third to the Galatians; The ordinary Gloss, upon the epistle unto James; Haimo, upon the Gospel of circumcision; Sedulius, upon the first and second chapters unto the Romans; Thomas, upon the third to the Galatians; Bruno, upon the fourth unto the Romans; Arnobius, upon the 106th Psalm. Now I think I have spoken enough, as touching this question.

Osiander's feigned devise, as touching essential righteousness, is confuted in the epistle to the Lords of Polonia.

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## **MONERGISM BOOKS**

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