

DISSERTATION XI:
On the JUSTIFICATION OF THE SINNER
Before the Tribunal of God.
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Summary

The fall of Adam is the cause of all evils. The natural desire for blessedness. 1. The necessity and definition of justification. 2. This article is the chief one, the indicator of a standing or falling church. 3. The sum of evangelical doctrine. Its connection with sanctification. 4. Division of the argument. 5. The sophistries of the Walenburgians—that the article on justification is not fundamental and therefore not a just cause for separation from the Papacy—are refuted. 6. It is for the Papists to return to us, not for us to them. 7. The Papists, and especially the Tridentines, bear witness to a most serious disagreement. 8–9. It is shown that Pighius, Cassander, Cardinal Contarenus, Clingius, the Cologne theologians, Bonaventure, Hosius, Medina, Charles V, and others incline toward the orthodox opinion. 10–12. The discordant concord of the Papists. 13. There is no agreement between us and our adversaries concerning the meaning of the word הַצְדִּיק (hitsdiq), “to justify.” 14. Still less concerning the final, efficient, and meritorious cause of justification. 15. Regarding the material and formal cause: Is the imputation of Christ’s righteousness only a condition of the formal cause, or is it itself the formal cause of justification? 16. Bellarmine’s sophistry is exposed: Christ’s righteousness is not an external, exemplary, and efficient cause of justification. 17. Crocius is vindicated: Can inherent righteousness, because it is true and not putative, be said to justify? 18. There is no agreement with the Papists concerning the dispositions preceding justification. In what sense do our adversaries say that faith justifies? 19. It is proved by six arguments that it is not works of charity and inherent righteousness by which we are justified and absolved before God’s tribunal from all guilt and condemnation of sin, but the obedience and righteousness of Christ imputed to us. 20. First, because even our most perfect righteousness cannot justify the sinner and absolve him from punishment. 21. Exceptions are answered. 22. Second, because the righteousness of the sinner is imperfect and defective. 23. Exceptions are refuted. 25. Third, because justification is everywhere declared in Scripture to be gratuitous. 26. Justifying grace excludes works and denotes favor, benevolence, and the grace of God. 27. Fourth, because justification is expressly said to occur without works. 28. The exceptions of the sophists are refuted. 29. Fifth, because justification in Scripture is defined as the remission of sins. 30. Exceptions are examined. 31. Sixth, because Scripture teaches that we are justified by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness and obedience. 32. Exceptions are resolved. 33–34. It is explained that faith alone is the means by which the Holy Spirit makes Christ’s righteousness and obedience ours. 36. This is proved: First, because Scripture here names faith alone and expressly excludes works. 37. The argument is vindicated from exceptions. 38–39. Second, because we are justified by the remission of sins, which is apprehended by faith alone; third, because Christ’s satisfaction is apprehended by faith alone; fourth, because by faith alone we are children of God.

¹ <https://books.google.com.pe/books?id=IWsoAAAAQAAI&hl=es&pg=PA290#v=onepage&q&f=false>

I. By his voluntary fall, the first man brought a miserable ruin upon his fellow human beings. Yet God, in His ineffable goodness and mercy, had so far tempered His wrath and fury as not to pursue the guilty with present and inexorable vengeance. Moreover, man is so constituted by nature that he entirely seeks blessedness—which consists in this: that he may be restored to fellowship with God, to spiritual life, a good conscience, peace with God, participation in the divine nature, and finally to eternal and consummate blessedness in heaven.

II. Two things stood in the way of God freely and lavishly bestowing these great blessings upon sinful man, already stained with such shameful corruption: the justice of God and the condition of the sinner as incompatible with God.

The justice of God, by which He could neither grant impunity to the sinner without compensation for his offense nor will to do so while His most severe threat stood in force. God could not deny Himself—either by abdicating His natural justice or by failing to keep His word to the glory of His name.

The condition of the sinner: that he is impure, wicked, unfaithful, unjust—and therefore incompatible with a pure and just God. For what fellowship can righteousness have with unrighteousness? What communion has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? What portion has a believer with an unbeliever? (2 Cor 6:14–15). “Everyone who does evil hates the light” (John 3:19). “Nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false” (Rev 21:27).

Therefore it clearly follows that for the restoration of that blessed communion in which man might often draw near to the Lord, there was necessary a compensation for sin—a universal righteousness—by whose intervention he could be absolved before God’s tribunal from all harmful guilt and in this way be restored to God’s favor in a fitting manner.

This for us is justification: that act of God by which He releases man from the bonds of sin and condemnation in a manner consistent with His own justice and holiness.

III. For indeed, it will be permitted for us to preach concerning the saving doctrine of justification, what that most learned Bishop of Hippo said in his golden handbook to Laurence, the *Enchiridion*, Chapter LXIV: “Through this stands the Church which is on earth. Through this, what was lost and found does not perish.” This is truly the royal fortress and bulwark of heavenly truth; when this is threatened with ruin, all other things must necessarily collapse and give way—idolatry, superstition, and impiety gain strength; but when it stands firm and prevails against all force, religion flourishes and all things remain secure. For whoever has been soundly taught in this doctrine cannot deny Christ or the words of the foundation, cannot bring the glory of God into jeopardy, cannot

mortally wound his own conscience, nor finally commit any error capable of plunging a humble soul into destruction and eternal damnation.

IV. The sum of the Gospel doctrine is this: That man in Adam is spiritually dead, convicted before the tribunal of God of impiety, and on account of this guilt owes eternal death. But God alone justifies us on account of Christ, imputing to us His righteousness, by which He satisfied the law and obeyed God even unto the death of the cross. And since the Savior by His obedience established a sufficient δικαίωμα (righteous decree), there can be no other righteousness either in man or pleasing to God in this matter. Moreover, since God the Judge has appointed the obedience of Christ—the communion of righteousness—not without the means of union for us, we teach that God communicates to us the Spirit for this purpose. When those who are called and in the hour of salvation, the Spirit so unites the hearts of the children of God to Christ that, laying aside all ὑποστολῇ (shrinking back) or retraction and refuge in any other protection, they rely upon God and the merit of Christ. And in us, God requires not any virtue or good work or merit or disposition, but only faith—by which, renouncing the righteousness of works and our own worthiness, and thereby glorifying God as holy, we believe with the heart in God as the author of our salvation and cling to Christ as our Savior with true love and trust. This is the matter of justification, from which we so distinguish sanctification—the effect from its cause—that nevertheless without it we teach it is impossible to see God. For where there is love of sin and true repentance is absent, there is no true love of the Savior; because whoever is deprived of salvation does not love the Savior. There the Savior is not glorified, since He is accused as the author and confirmer of the kingdom of sin. There is no union with the Savior because there is no likeness. Nor is such a persuasion faith, but a lie (1 John 1:6–7). It is dead faith (James 2:26). Those who have it are children in whom there is no faithfulness (Deuteronomy 32:20).

V. We will at present demonstrate and defend this Evangelical position against the contrary arguments, deceptions, and calumnies of the Romanists—with whom alone we have joined issue. With God's blessing, we undertake three points:

1. We will prove that there is a fundamental disagreement between us and the Papists in this article. From this demonstration will emerge the genuine state of the controversy.
2. That the formal cause of justification is ἀναμάρτητον (sinlessness), the imputation of Christ's righteousness and obedience—not any inherent quality in us or created righteousness.
3. That the means of union by which the Holy Spirit makes Christ's righteousness ours—on the part of sinful man—is justifying faith alone.

VI. The Walenburg brothers strenuously deny that there is a fundamental disagreement between us and the Papists in this article, and they absolutely desire to be regarded as equal in this matter. Hence, in Chapter XXX "On Unity and Schism," they deny that the Papist doctrine concerning the formal cause of justification was a just cause for the Protestants' separation. In their latest writing on the unity and schism of the Church, Book II, Chapter VII, they strive to prove—citing Marlorat's Suffrage for this purpose—that the article on justification is not fundamental. They roll the same stone in Book XIV, Chapter 29, where—struck by I know not what blindness—they accuse our most celebrated Crocius of contradiction; which those who are not of impaired judgment, or who are not captious hunters after fraudulent and insidious words, see to be no contradiction at all. In this latter artifice those brothers are exceedingly practiced.

VII. Indeed, we would wish that the things which they strive to persuade us of were true, or at least akin to truth. Thus, with the firmest hope they would promise that soon the Papists will come to us and follow with us, and with common lips worship Christ; they do not call us back to themselves, that we should follow a human name and receive a mass of errors into our bosom. Let us meditate on that which was said to Jeremiah: "Therefore thus says the Lord: If you return, I will restore you, and you shall stand before me. And if you extract the precious from the worthless, you shall be as my mouth. They shall turn to you, but you shall not turn to them." (Jeremiah 15:19). They will also send a message concerning monstrous errors, which are incompatible and cannot be combined with the Evangelicals' doctrine of justification. Such as those concerning the merits of works, confidence in one's own worthiness or congruity, human satisfactions, purgatory, the sacrifice of the mass, invocation of saints, their idol Maozim, images, suffrages for the dead, and if any such many more could be named in this reckoning. Would that, oh would that, the Church of God could someday produce such a prosperous harvest!

VIII. But these are trifles and mockeries, mere deceptions and incantations by which they attempt, if possible, to lead astray the elect and bring them into the region of errors. The Popes in every age have abundantly borne witness to the capital disagreement, and those who, at their instigation, have rushed forth with burning lust to horrible slaughters of the confessors of this truth. Why then have those swollen names—Hosius, Delphinus, Soto, Bayus, Westonus, Lancellottus, Costerus, Valentia, Bellarminus, Salmero, Becanus—labored with such great contention in this arena? Did all these not possess such great judgment as to penetrate the innermost shrines of this diversity? Did they think it necessary to come into such serious, grave, and long-hardened disputation over a trivial matter, in which mutual agreement could be reached by straightforward interpretation? Surely it was permitted only to those so sagacious brothers, that after the conflicts of the blind gladiators they should teach us that the matter is trivial—indeed, that the parties agree—and that they have been disputing thus far without any real cause.

IX. And indeed they cannot approve themselves to us unless in their own name and that of their church they recant those dreadful anathemas with which the Council of Trent, unless I am mistaken, knowingly and deliberately thundered against our doctrine of justification. In the sixth session it strikes with anathema the propositions: "Faith alone justifies." "Men are formally just through the righteousness of Christ." "Men are not justified by inherent righteousness." "Men are justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness." "Justifying faith is trust in the Divine mercy remitting sins." These propositions we defend with open heart and set forth as the hinge on which our religion turns. Therefore, these thunderbolts of the Council are aimed at us. Extinguish them, Brothers, and if you can, first repeal these Draconian laws!

X. For the rest, we do not deny that there have been men in the Roman communion of far-renowned name to whom the Council of Trent and the common Papist opinion were only weakly pleasing, and who more strongly approved our own. Indeed, Pighius himself, considering justification in itself, expressly declares that it consists wholly not in our righteousness but in the imputed righteousness of Christ. He says: "God the Father justifies us by his gratuitous goodness, whereby he embraces us in Christ, while he clothes us with the innocence and righteousness of Christ when we are engrafted into him." (Controversy 2). Lombard candidly confesses: "Our charity cannot sustain the form of righteousness before God, but charity in us is the Holy Spirit." (Sentences, Book 1, Distinction 17, Section 2). Bellarmine so interprets him as though he had entirely determined: "The cause or proximate principle of the love of God is the Holy Spirit immediately acting in us, not any created habit." (On Grace, Book 1; On Free Will, Chapter 8). George Cassander, a man most discerning in these matters if anyone was, in his Consultation, Article 4 on Justification, page 10, says: "Concerning the righteousness, merit, and satisfaction of Christ imputed to us—that is, attributed to us as if it were our own—the Scriptures speak clearly enough; for through that righteousness, that is, the merit and intercession of the blood of Christ, sins are remitted to us—that is, not imputed." And on pages 21–22: "This indeed is beyond controversy: that righteousness by which we are justified consists in the remission of sins—that is, when on account of the merit of the passion which he underwent for our sake, sins are not imputed to us; which is nothing else than that the very merit of Christ is imputed to us for the remission of sins."

XI. I will say nothing about Cardinal Contarini, who in his book on Justification posits a twofold justice by which we attain salvation through faith: one inherent, which is charity and grace, making us partakers of the Divine nature; the other imputed, which is the righteousness of Christ given to us. Then, when asked which we should rely upon, or by which we should consider ourselves justified before God—that is, held as holy and just—he replies: "I absolutely believe it is pious and Christian to say that we must rely, I say rely as on a firm foundation which surely supports us, on the righteousness of Christ

given to us, and not on the holiness and grace inherent in us." He then proceeds at length to explain his view.

I will say nothing about Clingius, who quite clearly came closer to our position by distinguishing between the first or imputative justification and the second or active justification. Both are held by us through Christ. But the former is entirely in Christ, as He offers Himself to the Father so that His righteousness may be imputed to us and our sins forgiven for His sake. The second is held when He fills us with all the graces and gifts, fruits and virtues of the Holy Spirit, through which gifts He also makes us truly and intrinsically more righteous. And he roundly concludes: "Faith alone apprehends and retains imputative righteousness." Here, if you change "imputative and active justification" to "justification and sanctification," we could desire nothing more for the truth.

Finally, I will say nothing about Vega and Stapleton. The former, in Book VII on Justification, chapter 15, and the latter in Book VII on Justification, chapter 9 (as reported by Morton), testify that certain Catholics outstanding in doctrine and piety—including the Canons of Cologne and the authors of a pamphlet presented by Emperor Charles to the Protestant spokesmen at the Diet of Regensburg—affirm that we are justified before God through the imputation of Christ's righteousness, insofar as our faith apprehends the mercy and righteousness of Christ on account of Christ's merit.

XII. Concerning justification by faith alone, we have Bonaventure as a witness. His words are in Book IV, Distinction 1, Question 1: "Although Divine mercy forgives offense to man by giving grace, it does not so completely forgive as to dispense with satisfaction for the offense in the interest of justice. For all guilt is forgiven solely by faith in the Passion of Christ, and without faith in Him no one is justified."

Cardinal Hosius, in Letter 17 to Ruardus Tapperus, says: "Not only Augustine and Ambrose, but also Bernard and many others used this manner of speaking: that faith alone justifies." Medina acknowledges the same and teaches us that, according to the opinion of the Fathers, the proposition "Faith alone justifies" can have a true sense.

The aforementioned Cassander, in his Consultation, Article 4, admits that examples exist where even the justification that follows regeneration is said to be by faith alone.

Even Emperor Charles V, of most praiseworthy memory—as recorded by the Secretary of Pope Paul IV in Acts II, "Whether the Decrees of the Council of Trent Should Be Enforced by Arms"—eventually embraced this opinion, which he had previously detested when besieged by sophists. The cited author says, "Lest I add oil to the fire, since the Bishop of Toledo wrote to Your Holiness that Charles himself said on his deathbed that the Lutheran view on justification seemed to him to be true."

XIII. What then? Since there is such clear and well-attested agreement among eminent Papists, may we confidently join hands? Is there no dispute left on this article? Not so. But this only follows: among them everything hangs in uncertainty and doubt; from the same mouth they blow hot and cold; they mix truth and falsehood, light and darkness; they quarrel among themselves about righteousness and tolerate impious and false opinions in their midst. So that by this one example it may be most clearly evident how false and fraudulent is their boasting about the union of the members among themselves and with their head.

XIV. But now let us consider the Walenburgians, who claim that their doctrine differs only slightly from ours. They say:

1. That we and the Roman Catholics agree concerning the term “justification,” in that in the Scriptures it is sometimes taken in a forensic sense, meaning then to pronounce someone just and innocent; sometimes for the granting or bestowal of inherent righteousness, as in Romans 8:30 and Titus 3:7; and sometimes for the increase of inherent righteousness, as in Revelation 22:11 and in Book XIII, Chapter 3 of *De Unitate et Schismate*.

Response: It has long been observed by Costerus and Salmeron that the term “justifying” is nowhere in use except among Christian authors. These authors therefore wrongly follow the Hebrew *šaddîq* and the Greek *dikaion*, which hardly ever are taken in any sense other than the forensic. Thus, the Roman Catholics differ from us by a whole heaven, since they interpret justification—and especially the term itself in our present subject—according to grammatical rules as “to make just,” that is, to change a person really, so that one who was a sinner in himself becomes just in himself, passing from one extreme to the other through the introduction of a new inherent quality, as in heating. Although therefore Bellarmine, and with him almost all Papists in certain places, stress the forensic meaning, yet they deny that especially in the present matter of spiritual justification the forensic meaning has place, and that alone; and on the contrary they invent here a real and physical change.

2. If there are any of our theologians who acknowledge in the term “justification” the granting of inherent righteousness, their interpretation ought not to harm the common opinion, nor can it support our adversaries. For they acknowledge that this sense is foreign to this controversy, and that more suitable passages occur where the forensic meaning is most manifest.

3. The very learned Beza indeed thinks separately from us in the explanation of the passages Romans 8:30 and Titus 3:7. Yet he does not there take the word “justification” as referring only to the granting of inherent righteousness, but broadly to that which we

obtain through Christ, both through imputation and through the efficacy of the sanctifying Spirit, so that we may be worthy, perfect and complete in Him.

4. The passage Revelation 22:11, “He that is righteous, let him be righteous still,” Bellarmine (in *De Justificatione*, Book 1, Chapter 22) and Contarenus (in *De Justificatione*, page 595) interpret as referring to the increase of righteousness. Nor are there lacking among our own who refer that passage either simply to the exercise and pursuit of righteous actions (as Piscator), or to the greater declaration of our free justification (as the Dutch interpreters), or to some second and continued justification (as Gomarus). It cannot in any way be taken as referring to an increase of inherent righteousness without a notorious fault of tautology. For this would be the same continuation of sanctification, about which follows: “He that is holy, let him be holy still.” Therefore I think nothing prevents that from the analogy of Scripture the forensic sense also has place, either in this way: “He who is just by external and civil justice, by which he lives honestly, renders to each his own, and harms no one; let him be justified still—let him aspire to the free absolution and justification before God, which is obtained through faith in Christ, since it is not given through that righteousness by which one is blameless in the law—that righteousness from God upon faith” (Philippians 3:6, 9); or in the sense of declaration, in this way: “He who has been justified by faith, let him strive through the exercise of faith and charity to preserve and declare to others the sense and comfort of justification.” In vain therefore do the Walenburgians imagine an agreement where there is none.

§ Moreover, many things confirm that the term “justification” either sustains no other, or no more frequent and genuine sense than the forensic and judicial. For even outside the doctrine of free justification before God it denotes a judicial act; and the opposite term “condemnation,” and terms related to justification, such as judgment, judge, accuser, accused, witness, debt, advocate, absolution; and equivalent phrases, such as to call into judgment, not to be judged, faith counted for righteousness, to cover sins—are manifestly forensic. Finally, the Fathers acknowledge this, specifically Justin in *Dialogue with Trypho* (page 207), Ambrose on Romans Chapter 3, Jerome in Book I against the Pelagians, Augustine in *The City of God* Chapter 27.

XV. The Brethren agree on two points concerning the causes of justification. The end is the glory of God. The primary efficient cause is God. The meritorious efficient cause is the passion of Christ. The material cause is the soul of man, or his will itself, in which righteousness dwells as in its proper subject and seat. The intrinsic formal cause is the grace of God inherent in us, or the infused habit of charity. The formal cause, or rather the condition of the formal cause, so that it may be communicated by God to the subject, is the application on the part of God toward us. The instrumental cause, by which the righteousness of Christ is given to us, is faith, which apprehends the righteousness of Christ. (Book XIV, chapter 3.)

A sea of errors, falsehoods, and countless empty words. And yet these public impostors do not hesitate to drag our consents and votes here by force and falsify them.

1. We profess that the end of justification is the glory of God. They cannot profess this because they contend that justification is accomplished by the merit of inherent righteousness and works. But to one who works, the reward is imputed not according to grace but according to debt (Romans 4:4 and 11:6). If it is not according to grace, then God cannot be glorified on account of His grace.

2. The efficient cause is God, who justifies us by His grace (Romans 3:24). Moreover, the grace of God bestows upon us His favor, mercy, love, and loving-kindness. In contrast, the Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon II, strikes with an anathema that proposition: "The grace by which we are justified is only the favor of God." The Roman Catechism, chapter on Baptism, page 310, says: "Grace is a divine quality inherent in the soul and like a certain splendor and light, which erases the stains of our souls and renders the souls themselves more beautiful and splendid." I ask: Can the Council and the Papist Catechism more correctly express the opinion of the Pontifical Church, or can two Brethren explain it?

3. We make Christ the meritorious efficient cause, obedient to God even unto death on the cross, and redeeming for us righteousness by the price of His blood. I admit that even the Tridentine Fathers wish to appear to acknowledge this meritorious cause (Session VI, Canon 7): "The meritorious cause," they say, "is the most beloved only-begotten of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, who merited justification for us on the wood of the cross." However, the sincerity of this confession seems to be undermined and tarnished in more than one way by the Scholastic disputations which they approve, foster, and defend. For example: when they deny that Christ is Mediator according to His divine nature; that Christ in His passion felt the wrath of God and the punishments of hell; that Christ made perfect satisfaction for sins and their penalties; that He merited such righteousness as is imputed to us through faith; when they make the blessed Virgin Mary an assistant of redemption; when they deny that the satisfaction of Christ was simply necessary (as Thomas, Biel, Tataretus, and others do); when they add to the merit of Christ the merits of saints and our own merits.

XVI. 4. They posit as the material cause the soul of man or his will. If technical terms are to be applied to this matter, they would more correctly have said that the will of man—indeed, the whole man—is the object of justification, not receiving some new form but presenting himself to divine judgment. For our theologians not without reason prefer to posit as the matter of justification the righteousness and obedience of Christ which is imputed to us. But this is less important. Meanwhile, it is said improperly and not without suspicion of deceit. For they can bring it about that it is established that justification is in man as a form in its subject—which we declare to be false. For the righteousness by

which we are justified is not some form inherent in us but inheres in Christ and becomes ours through imputation.

5. They determine the formal cause both falsely and unjustly. Falsely, because they make it inherent righteousness and make the imputation of Christ's righteousness only a condition of the formal cause. But by inherent righteousness we are in no way justified. For it is impossible that God could accept any quality of ours—foolish and after sin—as righteousness without spot according to the law and as a cause of life. Then, when they call the imputation of Christ's righteousness a condition of the formal cause, what do they understand by "condition of the formal cause"? I believe that through and on account of the merit of Christ inherent righteousness is given or communicated to us. This is most false because in this way the merit of Christ would not be a cause of justification but only of regeneration or, as another (witness Bellarmine) speaks, of a faculty for doing good works. Unjustly, because in this opinion they say that Protestants agree with Papists. From which opinion we so greatly abhor that we oppose it in every way as impossible, impious, and unjust to the glory of Christ's merit and God's mercy.

6. They make faith the instrumental cause of justification, by which the merit of Christ is apprehended. This is done deceitfully, to deceive and entangle the unwary and inexperienced. Concerning this matter we shall speak immediately.

XVII. III. They teach that the Evangelicals agree with Bellarmine in this: that he teaches the Protestants' opinion would be correct if they only meant that Christ's merits are imputed to us because they are given to us, and we can offer them to God the Father for our sins, since Christ took upon Himself the burden of satisfying for us and reconciled us to God the Father. Bellarmine says that this is what the Protestants want, in Book XIV, Chapter 6.

I respond:

1. Bellarmine knew better what the Protestants want than he knew his own eyes. What reason, then, did he have to wage such a contentious war against them?

2. Lifting the veil, let us state the matter plainly. Bellarmine either lays waste to his own harvest or is remarkably sophistic. He lays waste to his own harvest if he teaches that the imputation of Christ's merit and passion is sufficient. Yet he himself fights with all his might that the formal cause of justification is the habit of grace itself, or infused charity, as in his work on justification, Book II, Chapters 3 and 4, etc.

He is remarkably sophistic if he does not approve this opinion except in his own clearly erroneous sense. Specifically, he distinguishes between the formal intrinsic cause of justification and the extrinsic cause, which he calls exemplary. He calls the infused habit of charity the intrinsic cause. The extrinsic or exemplary cause he calls the righteousness

of Christ. Although, therefore, he does not exclude Christ's righteousness from justification, he cannot be brought to acknowledge it as an internal cause—of the kind that is either matter or form—but only as an external cause, namely, like an efficient cause, because Christ merited for us before the Father whatever grace is conferred upon us.

As for the rest, he hates the term "imputation of Christ's passion" worse than a dog or a snake. In this sense, we detest Bellarmine and wish him to keep his opinions to himself. For Christ's righteousness is not only an external, exemplary, efficient cause—or, as the Walenburgians say, a condition of the formal cause—but is itself the internal formal cause. It becomes ours through imputation, and on account of its communion alone, not in any way on account of inherent righteousness, our sins are forgiven and we enter into the right to life.

What the Walenburgians argue in the following seventh chapter about the priority of righteousness, they do so to fortify the Syncretism of Protestants with those theologians whom Valquez cites, teaching that a person is pleasing to God before receiving inherent righteousness. And indeed, if a person is pleasing to God before being endowed with inherent righteousness, it must be that justification precedes the infusion of the habit of charity. For no one can be pleasing to God unless they are accepted in Christ. No one is accepted in Christ unless their sins are forgiven. No one has their sins forgiven unless by that same act they are justified.

It follows, therefore, from the opinion of those theologians whom the Walenburgians favor, that justification precedes the infusion of inherent righteousness, and hence regeneration. For, unless I am mistaken, what is posterior to justification itself cannot be its formal cause.

Behold the chasm of the Papist Kingdom! Behold the spirit of dizziness and stupor! If they sincerely hold this view, why do those theologians not renounce and execrate—and with them the brethren—the yoke of the Council of Trent and the common Papist opinion, and join hands with us?

XVIII. They Fabricate a Consensus in This: That the faithful, by the power of inherent righteousness, are pronounced righteous in the judgment of God—that is, they are found perfectly righteous before the most just and most upright tribunal of God. To this end, they draw upon the words of Crocius: "When the Reformed say that a sinner is reckoned as righteous, they do not mean a bare estimation or an opinion contrary to the truth, but an estimation joined with truth" (Chapter II, page 826).

Response: These men have rubbed their foreheads, asserting whatever pleases their fancy.

1. They fabricate a consensus where there is complete disagreement among our ranks. The question is: By what are we constituted and judged perfectly righteous before the most upright and most perfect tribunal of God? We steadfastly answer that it is the imputation or participation in the merit and satisfaction rendered by Christ—and thus, the righteousness of Christ through our faith. We will have nothing here established with inherent righteousness. We remove it from the matter of justification both because it is imperfect and cannot withstand the judgment of God, and because, even if it were absolutely perfect in the highest degree, sins already committed would still need to be atoned for.

2. Indeed, from righteousness—both imputed and inherent—we are truly and denominated righteous, not by mere opinion and fallacious judgment. Our Crocius rightly insisted on this and opposed it to the Papists, who by calumny attribute to us some sort of putative righteousness. From this they now conclude: If the faithful are truly pronounced righteous in the judgment of God by inherent and infused righteousness, what prevents them from being called perfectly righteous by that same righteousness before the most perfect and most upright tribunal of God?

Behold for me the theological liver! We declare that both imputed and infused righteousness are true righteousness, not putative. Hence, we are forced to agree with the Papists that we are justified before the tribunal of God by infused righteousness. But the righteousness by which we are justified before the most upright tribunal of God is not only true righteousness, but also perfect, consummate in every respect, equivalent to glory, accomplished by Him who never sinned and had nothing to atone for.

The law of God indeed demands true righteousness—but not a partial one; rather, a universal one, perfect in its parts and degrees, persevering, and never defiled by the border of any vice.

XIX. They teach that we agree with the Papists concerning justifying faith: that the presence of other virtues, which are dispositions for obtaining righteousness, is required for justification; meanwhile, faith alone is that instrument by which man apprehends and applies to himself the righteousness of Christ, given and imputed to us. (Book XIV, chapter 17, theses 12 and 13.)

Response 1.

That other virtues besides faith alone are required for justification—which are dispositions for obtaining righteousness—has an ambiguous meaning. For by those preceding dispositions, the Walenburgians understand either dispositions without which justification does not occur, or formal dispositions. We acknowledge dispositions of the first kind. Such are knowledge of the Divine Word, a sense of sin, fear of punishment, thought of deliverance, hope of pardon under the condition of faith and repentance.

Concerning these, the Confession of the Palatine, Nassau-Wetterau, Genevan, and British theologians at the Synod of Dort on the third and fourth articles is clear. However, we do not acknowledge any formal disposition. For these preceding acts accomplish nothing at all in justification but are conditions of the subject. For it can happen that enough has already been sown, but God denies the growth. Just as in the healing of a wound, the surgeon treats the soldier by removing his armor, then his clothing, and often applies a bandage; yet the wound is not healed in this way, but by the power of the plaster. So it clearly happens in justification.

But do we agree with the Papists in this? Do they not say that other dispositions precede justification? Certainly the Walenburgians speak of the presence of virtues. And Bellarmine has asserted that many such dispositions run in equal degree: such as faith, fear, hope, charity, repentance, the purpose of receiving the sacraments, and a new life. And indeed he not obscurely ordains these dispositions before justification, as causes in some way efficient and as merits of congruity. His words (Book 1 on Justification, chapter 21): “Gratuitous justification does not exclude works which concur to justification as dispositions or as merits of congruity.” Moreover, they attribute those dispositions partly to the aid of grace, partly to the powers of free will.

2.

We do not wish preceding dispositions to be designated by the name of virtues, by whose presence, conjoined with faith, justification occurs. For we remove the presence of virtues from the very act of justification. How much less do we say that they precede justification.

3.

Faith which precedes justification by way of a right impulse or motive is not justifying faith, but a general faith in the truth of the Divine promises. Therefore, the Brethren write on the shore when they infer from the fact that our theologians acknowledge preceding dispositions—and among them faith disposing toward justification—that we agree with those hypotheses by which they assert that man is justified by faith conjoined with virtues and dispositions. Away with such confusion!

4.

Nor do they act more candidly in this, that they wish to seem to acknowledge that faith alone by way of an instrument apprehends imputed righteousness. This proposition the Tridentine Fathers condemned in express words and cursed. Nor will they ever deceive us in this. For we know that they relegate the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to a secondary place and everywhere make inherent righteousness the cause of justification. Therefore, it is necessary that one who asserts faith to be the instrument by which

inherent charity and righteousness are apprehended—according to their sense, interior charity justifies—must then be forced to say that faith apprehends it. There is not a crumb here of sober and sound mind.

§ They wish faith alone to justify—namely, faith informed by charity, and living and active, as they speak. Medina denies that the Tridentine Fathers condemned this sense. We indeed call faith—by no means dead nor separated from charity, but comprehending it by way of a virtual cause—the instrumental cause of justification: just as the sun, when it illuminates with its light, also contains heat in virtue of its cause. Meanwhile, none of us ever has given or will give that faith is informed by charity or that it justifies insofar as it is endowed with charity. They, on the contrary, cling to their dreams and impose such a faith as can consist with justification by works and infused quality.

XX. Thus far, therefore, we have dislodged our adversaries from their lairs, in which they pretended to be asleep before us with their crafty cunning. Moreover, it is clear that they are separated from us—who defend the truth—by an infinite chasm. Next, as we intended to do in the second place, we will undertake the task of proving most firmly that point which is the very height of the contradiction: namely, that the formal cause of our Justification, or that by which we are absolved before the tribunal of God from eternal death and the guilt of all sin, is not inherent righteousness and an infused habit of charity under the condition of imputed righteousness; but solely the imputation of the righteousness and merit of Christ, or the gratuitous remission of sins on account of the obedience of Christ. Our arguments will be distinct.

First, because even our most perfect righteousness does not justify after sin.

Second, because our righteousness by its own perfection cannot rise to that point.

Third, because our Justification is gratuitous.

Fourth, because our Justification is not by the law and works.

Fifth, because our Justification is defined as the remission of sins.

Sixth, because the Scriptures teach that we are justified not by our own righteousness, but by the imputed righteousness of Christ.

XXI. The first argument is from impossibility. Even the most perfect righteousness cannot justify us—that is, absolve us from penalties—before the most perfect tribunal of God. Therefore, the formal cause of our Justification is not the infusion of inherent righteousness; nor indeed can it be. The antecedent shines with clear light. For we are dealing with the Justification of a sinner. A sinner can in no way be justified except by paying the penalty of his offense to the glory of God's justice. This is demanded both by God's natural justice and His truthfulness. His justice, because He hates sin as contrary to

His purest nature and cannot leave it unpunished. Nor is God's hatred powerless, but armed. Whom He hates, He desires to perish. Jehovah is indeed long-suffering, but great in power: "Jehovah will by no means clear the guilty," Nahum 1:3; Exodus 34:7. Lest He should seem to be like the sinner. Hence He protests in Psalm 50:21: "These things you have done, and I kept silence; you thought that I was altogether like you. But I will rebuke you and set the matter in order before your eyes." His truthfulness, insofar as He threatened dire death to the sinner, Genesis 2:17; Deuteronomy 27:27. And He cannot retract His words, since He desires to be justified in His sayings and to be sanctified in His judgments, Psalm 51:6; Romans 3:4. Indeed, He can cleanse the sinner through mercy and bear with him through clemency. But He cannot refrain from judging sin without denying Himself and His holiness. Therefore, when we seek that Justification which belongs to a guilty person whose sin must be expiated, even the most consummate righteousness in every respect has no place. Neither by preceding nor by subsequent works is the guilt of sin once committed taken away. Just as a murderer is not therefore not to be condemned because he refrained from this crime with hand and mind for some years or days before or after committing the murder. For each day, hour, and moment you owe to the Law a debt of most perfect obedience, so that at the time you observe the Law, you free yourself only from the debt you were bound to pay at that very time; nor do you in any way cancel debts previously contracted or to be contracted afterward.

XXII. It may be objected:

I. That the Law of God includes a tacit condition of repentance; so that the sense of the penalties denounced by the Law is: "Whoever transgresses the Law shall be punished with death, unless he repents."

II. That we can at least be justified in part by works of the Law, if not wholly.

III. That Christ has expiated our sins by His merit, but Justification is accomplished by the merit of inherent righteousness.

These responses have no solidity.

Not the first: For the condition of repentance is nowhere expressed. On the contrary, the Apostle says in Hebrews 10:28: "Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy." Nor would there have been any need for Christ's coming if it were permitted to be renewed through repentance. So also, if the sinner had performed repentance, he would have satisfied the law and could demand to be absolved by the judge not out of grace but by right. For the judge would be bound to justify him by law.

Not the second: For a sinner cannot be justified by the law either in part or in whole. For either you have transgressed the law or you have not. If you have transgressed, you are

condemned. If you have not transgressed, you are justified by the law. Between transgression and non-transgression of the law there is no middle ground.

Not finally the third: For what is more absurd—indeed, more cruel—than to imagine that we are justified twice before God: once on account of Christ and once on account of the merit of our own righteousness? If on account of Christ's merit the sinner is pronounced righteous, our own righteousness has no part in it. Let our adversaries say: Did Christ's sacrifice, which had infinite value, lack anything that needed to be supplied by our worthless addition—we who are mere nothings and, apart from Christ, useless slaves of Satan?

XXIII. We now draw our second argument from impossibility. It is impossible for us to be justified by a righteousness that is not perfect and complete in its degrees and measures. It is impossible for our inherent righteousness to be such. Therefore, it is impossible for us to be justified by and on account of it.

The major premise is beyond dispute. For imperfect righteousness, which has the dross of sin attached to it, is guilty before the law in the sight of God. Sin wonderfully diminishes and impairs the praise and perfection of our righteousness. And whoever stumbles in one point is guilty of the whole law (James 2:10). Indeed, God required in the law the most rigid and exact observance—namely, the love of God and neighbor with all the heart, all the soul, and all our strength. And He pronounces a curse upon him who does not remain in all things.

The minor premise is evident both from experience and the testimony of every conscience, as well as from the light of Scripture. Isaiah's candid declaration is: "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). Similarly, Paul says: "I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified" (1 Corinthians 4:4). If to Paul, the most holy apostle, his inherent righteousness—however uncontaminated by more serious crimes—could not be considered sufficient for justification, what rashness is it for those who are by no means equal to Paul in the line of holiness to place the soul and form of their justification in an inherent habit of sanctity? Job speaks gravely: "How should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me" (Job 9:2–3, 20). And Saint John charges with falsehood anyone who denies that he has sin (1 John 1:8). This is the reason why even the most just and holy servants of God seriously implore the rigor of divine judgment regarding their own exact righteousness (Psalm 130:3; 143:2; Romans 7:24).

XXIV. Bellarmine, Stapleton, and Walenburg object:

I. That perfect righteousness is indeed required for justification, but habitual righteousness, not actual. Actual righteousness is imperfect, and by it man cannot be

justified. Habitual righteousness is so perfect that we are called righteous absolutely, simply, and properly.

II. That infused habits are the works of God. But all the works of God are perfect.

III. That perfect righteousness excludes mortal sins, but not venial sins. Moreover, a faithful person can abstain from mortal sins.

IV. That perfect righteousness is infused into infants in baptism. Therefore, at least they are justified on account of an inherent habit.

V. That our righteousness is perfect by the liberal acceptance and favor of God.

VI. That he also fulfills the law of God and is just in God's sight who has the will and desire to fulfill the law, and fulfills it insofar as human frailty aided by grace is able or accustomed to fulfill in this life.

VII. If anything sometimes seems lacking for the perfect fulfillment of the commandments, Christ's grace indulges and pardons it.

VIII. That Isaiah in the cited passage speaks of the impious and wicked Jews, and not about all their works, but only about their sacrifices and new moons.

XXV. These objections have the appearance of truth, but only the appearance, like what philosophers call "gilded dross" that counterfeits gold. Therefore, we respond succinctly:

I. It is pointless to distinguish between actual and habitual perfection. For Scripture requires both for justification. "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things." This properly pertains to acts, not habits. Thus, Adam was condemned by his imperfect and faulty acts, not by habits alone. Moreover, how can faulty acts spring from a perfect habit? In the next life, with perfect habits, acts will also be perfect. Indeed, acts prove the habit, just as the fruit makes the tree known. Finally, they boldly invent and assume habitual perfection but do not prove it. Certainly, habits exist only in the inner disposition of the mind. But it is established that this is corrupt. Paul says of himself not only, "I do not do the good I want," which the Sophists interpreted concerning acts, but also, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind," which cannot be explained otherwise than as referring to habit (Romans 7:19, 23). Therefore, they greatly err from the truth by dreaming of habitual righteousness.

II. I distinguish between God's immediate and mediate works. The former are simply perfect in their kind, so that nothing in them can be amended. The latter are not all simply perfect. For God moves His instruments mostly according to their capacity. Thus, faith is a work of God, yet not perfect, since the saints pray to God for its increase. Adam and Cain were works of God. But Adam was created perfect because immediately by God.

Cain was imperfect, both mortal in body and a sinner in soul—not because made by God, but because made through Adam. Even our faith is God’s work, but not yet perfect. What is God’s work and insofar as it is God’s work cannot be imperfect. But it becomes imperfect either due to the incapacity and indisposition of the subject, or because of the admixture of a contrary quality, or in relation to this or that effect which it cannot attain by the perfection of its virtue.

III. The distinction between mortal and venial sins is a fantasy of the Papist brain, condemned in Scripture. Not only are believers in this life subject to venial sins in the Papist sense, but examples cry out that they are also subject to mortal sins, although they do not grant them dominion in their members. Indeed, they have the flesh, concupiscence, which by its very nature brings forth death, and the body of death; when these fight hostilely against the Spirit (which they very often do), they produce the gravest sins; indeed, even without external acts they alone suffice for damnation.

IV. We grant that infants are justified—not, however, through habitual righteousness communicated in baptism, but through the appeal of a good conscience to God, the promise made to them in the covenant, and through the sprinkling of Christ’s blood. The Papists themselves do not grant that habitual righteousness is acquired except through faith. But infants lack both habitual and actual faith. And since habitual righteousness is a virtue, and according to our opponents’ hypothesis no habit of virtue exists without the exercise of free will, it will certainly be concluded that infants lack the habit and perfection of righteousness, since they lack the faculty of free will.

V. God indeed accepts in Christ whatever righteousness we have. But in judgment He does not regard it as perfect so as to warrant absolution from punishment. The justice and truthfulness of God and the condition of the sinner stand in the way. Therefore, whose effort He accepts, that one’s justification through and because of Christ has already preceded.

VI. Nowhere does Scripture require only the affection of our righteousness for justification, but commands full and perfect observance. Compare Matthew 5:22, 28; 22:37; Romans 7:14ff.; Galatians 3:10; James 2:10.

VII. It is certain to us that Christ’s grace supplies the defect of our righteousness and brings it about that it is not damnable and lethal to us. But what is this grace of Christ? Namely, that which is opposed to our works with respect to the effect of justification (Romans 11:6), by which all our sins are forgiven and through which we are absolved from their guilt before the tribunal of God.

VIII. There is a manifest distortion of the prophetic saying, however much it may flatter Becanus and Cornelius à Lapide. For it is clear from the context of the prophetic discourse that it is not about wicked Jews. For they are described as acknowledging their

sins from the heart (v. 6), lamenting that no one is found who can placate the angry God with prayers and piety (v. 6), fleeing to God's mercy (vv. 8–9), grieving that God's glory lies prostrate (vv. 10–12). Unless I am mistaken, the impious and wicked Jews were of a different character.

XXVI. The third argument we derive from this is that the Scriptures declare our justification to be gratuitous. What is gratuitous is not by merit of works and inherent righteousness. The justification of a sinner is gratuitous. Therefore, it is not by merit of works and inherent righteousness.

The major premise is proven both by the Pauline antithesis and by the nature of opposites. The Pauline antithesis: "To the one who works, the reward is imputed according to debt; but to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, faith is imputed according to grace" (Romans 4:4–5). "If by grace, then it is no longer by works; otherwise grace is no longer grace" (Romans 11:6). The nature of contrary opposites, which are of a repelling nature. Now, justification by grace and justification by works are contrary opposites. The former, with respect to the one who does not work, is an act of mercy; the latter, with respect to the one who works, is an act of justice, rewarding merit with equal compensation.

The Papists themselves concede this point. Salmero, in his Thirty-Fifth Disputation on Romans, states: "It is contradictory for something to be given freely and yet to be rendered for works, just as gratuitous and owed are contradictory." Benedictus Justinianus says: "There is an antithesis between works and grace, as if what is from works cannot be from grace."

The minor premise is clearly supported by the testimonies of Scripture: Romans 3:24, "We are justified by His grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ"; and Romans 4:4–5, "To the one who works, the reward is not imputed by grace, but by debt; but to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, faith is imputed for righteousness."

XXVII. The Sophists vainly interpret grace, from which the Scriptures suspend the justification of the sinner, as referring to an infused habit of love divinely bestowed. Thus, Dominic Soto, Bellarmine, Stapleton, and many others hold that in the matter of justification, grace—that is, the infused habit of love—is opposed to works done without grace and faith. In this matter, it is clear that they speak confusedly. For in this context, grace never signifies an inherent habit in us, given by divine donation; but rather favor, benevolence, acceptance, the χάριτης and φιλανθρωπία of God. Nor do the works opposed to grace denote that empty mask of righteousness—that is, works done without grace and faith. Both points are evident.

First, the Apostle in Romans 3:24 says that we are justified δωρεάν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι (“freely by his grace”). This cannot be understood as referring to the gift of infused righteousness. For that is indeed God’s grace efficiently, but it is ours subjectively. Therefore, it would have to be said: “We are justified freely by our own grace.” Indeed, he emphatically adds the word δωρεάν (“freely”), namely so that we may understand that we are not justified by the grace of God insofar as it is a gift of God inhering in us. For in this way our justification would not be entirely gratuitous. Although this gift is from God insofar as it is from God, yet it is in some way also ours insofar as it is in us and we make use of it—just as Christ also calls the faith which he gives us “our faith.” And thus in some way our justification would not be gratuitous but from works. Therefore, to make it clear that it is entirely from God and that we are justified without working or rendering a return (as Ambrose says), he added the word δωρεάν.

Second, he adds the redemption of Christ. By mentioning this work of Christ, he excludes all our works. For justification is redemption from the guilt of death through the substitution of another’s death. Moreover, the acceptance of that redemption is from the pure grace of God.

Third, Scripture consistently opposes grace to works, law, merit, and debt. Therefore, it is not understood as the infused habit of love, to which these are not at all opposed but rather in some way subordinated.

Fourth, the Apostle in Romans 5 institutes a comparison between the first Adam and the second: from the one sin has overflowed upon us, from the other grace. And he adds in verse 16: “But not as the offense, so also is the gift. For if by one offense many died, much more has the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.” Here he opposes the grace of God to the offense; but the gift which proceeds from grace he opposes to death itself. Accordingly, just as the offense is the cause of death in Adam, so grace is the cause of the gift in Christ. Moreover, it is clear that by the name δωρεᾶς (“gift”) the Apostle understands reconciliation or justification, which Christ obtained by his death. Whence comes this gift except from the gratuitous benevolence and acceptance of God?—as Christ teaches in John 3:16. Therefore, grace, the cause of the gift, is not a quality or dignity inhering in us.

Fifth, a most illustrious passage is Ephesians 2:8: “By grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Here first the Apostle establishes the grace of God as the cause of all salvation. Second, faith as the instrumental cause. Third, works as contrary to grace. Fourth: that salvation itself is the gift of God—lest anyone dream up any concurrence of merit or a cause outside God. Fifth, he reveals the final cause: “lest anyone should boast”—lest anyone be able to boast in himself and in what is in him. Certainly one could boast in grace infused in us; for what is in us, although it flowed from the liberal gift of God, does

not exclude our boasting. For even wisdom, strength, and virtues of soul are gifts; nevertheless, Jeremiah 9:23 teaches us that people can and do boast in these things insofar as they have been given and have become ours.

Sixth, again Paul interprets grace as χρηστότης καὶ φιλανθρωπία (“kindness and love for mankind”) in Titus 3:4. This can by no means be referred to an infused habit. When Thomas Aquinas comments on this passage, he explicitly interprets grace as mercy. And certainly there Paul simply opposes mercy to works, so that adversaries can no longer refer grace to an infused quality.

Seventh, in all languages grace signifies favor, which arises not so much from any excellence in the one favored as from the affection of the one bestowing it. Thus subjects are strong by favor with a prince. The Hebrew word is from חָנַן, which means “to be merciful” and “to show favor.” Therefore, what the Apostle says in 1 Timothy 1:16—ἐλεηθῆν (“I obtained mercy”)—in Hebrew in Hophal would be יִחַן, whence prayers are called תַּחֲנוּנִים (“supplications for favor”), and תַּפִּלָּה means “to pray.”

Eighth, the effects of grace also more strongly confirm the same. For upon grace depends our calling (Galatians 1:15). Moreover, our calling is a work of the pure mercy of God (2 Timothy 1:9–10), where grace and God’s purpose are joined, and his grace is said to have been given to us in Christ before eternal times. Likewise, our predestination is attributed to grace (Ephesians 1:5). But predestination cannot be said to be the effect of some gift inhering in us.

Ninth, that all works simply—whether performed from faith and grace or without them—are opposed to grace with respect to the effect of justification can be established by most solid reasons, which we will produce below.

XXVIII. A fourth argument is drawn from this: that our Justification is expressly said to be without the works of the Law. Those who are justified without the works of the Law are not justified by an inherent habit of righteousness. Sinners are justified without the works of the Law. Therefore, not by an inherent habit of righteousness. The major premise is undeniable. For inherent righteousness itself consists in the works of the Law, at least in habit, from which flow works conformed to the Law. The minor is established by all the axioms and arguments that Paul weaves together in his Epistles both to the Romans and to the Galatians.

Romans 3:20: "By the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God."

Verse 28: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law."

Chapter 4:2: "If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God."

"What does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'"

Verse 6: "Even as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works."

Galatians 2:16: "We know that a man is not justified by the works of the law."

I will pass over the innumerable arguments which the holy Apostle, with an adamant chain, binds together in both Epistles to establish this thesis. Whoever is ignorant of these either has never read the Epistle with due attention or must be blinder than a mole.

XXIX. Our adversaries cannot ignore the Apostle's plain words. Therefore, they labor to distort and corrupt them with a falsifying pen, lest they be forced to surrender to the truth. Yet these Sophists are not in agreement among themselves.

To some it seems that the Apostle is speaking of ceremonial works, not moral. Among these was Lombard, whose words are: "The works of the Law are said to be those which were instituted and terminated with the Law; such were the ceremonial and figurative works, which never availed to cleanse the conscience, even if done with charity and devotion." Lombard is followed by Daventria, Virvelius, and Alphonsus à Castro.

Others go a different way and interpret the works as those done by the law and the powers of nature, excluding grace and faith. The leader of this flock is Thomas Aquinas, whom Salmero, Dominicus à Soto, Justinianus, Cunerus, Cornelius à Lapide, and Becanus follow.

Certainly, neither interpretation agrees with the Apostle.

Not the first, which explains it as concerning ceremonial works. For the Apostle simply excludes works, making no mention of ceremonial laws, which are not even usually called ἔργα νόμου in Scripture, but rather δικαιώματα and νόμοι. Moreover, he speaks of that law by which comes the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20), which works wrath (Rom. 4:15), which convicts all men of sin (Rom. 3:10), which condemns the whole world (Rom. 3:19), which is written in men's hearts (Rom. 2:15). Finally, the Apostle prosecutes as guilty of violating this law not only the Jews (to whom alone the Ceremonial Law was given) but also the Gentiles (Rom. 1 & 2). All these things either do not apply to the Ceremonial Law or not to it alone.

Moreover, Abraham's justification is denied to be from works. From ceremonial works? But he had not yet received the commandment of circumcision, but was justified in uncircumcision.

Nor can the latter interpretation—concerning works done by the law and the powers of nature—hold any place. For works are absolutely excluded. Therefore, even the works of the regenerate are excluded. If we are allowed to set limits according to our own judgment, which the Apostle himself did not set, then not the Apostle but we will be the rule of faith.

2. Paul argues against the Pseudapostles, who never intended that a sinner should be justified by works done before faith and grace. But they dreamed that justification was obtained by a badly composed mixture of works and faith. For these Pseudapostles were already converted to Christianity. Hence they are called *πεπιστευκότες* (believers) in Acts 15:5.

3. Paul was regenerate and performed works of the law not only by the powers of nature but through grace and faith. Yet he himself does not dignify his works with so proud a title as to attribute to them the power of justifying. For he says he believed in order to be justified by faith, not by works of the Law (Gal. 2:16). Nor was he conscious of anything against himself; yet he denies that he is justified by that (1 Cor. 4:4). Could he by the powers of nature, without grace and faith, have kept the law so exactly as to be conscious of nothing against himself?

4. The argument with which Paul contends is this: No one who transgresses the law is justified by the works of the law. But all transgress the law. Therefore, no one is justified by the works of the law (cf. Rom. 3:19–20). Do all transgress the law only before, and not also after, faith and grace? But in our second argument we have proved that inherent righteousness, infused in us by the gift of grace, is imperfect and contaminated with sins.

5. The Apostle also denies praise for justifying power even to those works for which we were created in Christ (Eph. 2:8–10). The connection there is this: Therefore we are not saved by works, because God prepared them for us. Are such works performed before faith and grace?

6. Even the works of the most holy Patriarch Abraham and of David, most dearly beloved of God, are removed from the business of justification and set aside (Rom. 4:3, 6). Yet their works were by no means done without grace and faith. The Apostle indeed concedes that Abraham had good works about which he could boast before men, but not before God. What sort of works were those about which he could boast before men? Surely obedience attested by unusual examples: readiness to obey divine commands, which he did not perform without grace and faith, as the Apostle himself testifies (Heb. 11:8–9). If the rule answers to the example of Abraham and David (and it ought to answer, unless

the Apostle cited them uselessly), then it cannot be understood as referring only to works done without faith.

7. The chief error is that these men, enemies of divine grace, imagine that good works can be performed without the grace of God and faith; and therefore they thought it necessary for the Apostle to deny the power of justification to such works. For if they considered works done before grace and faith to be evil, why would they make the Apostle deny justifying power to such works—evil by their very nature? All could understand that such works condemn, not justify. In this matter they vigorously pull the rope with the ancient Pelagians.

XXX. The fifth argument follows, derived from the fact that Scripture defines justification as the remission of sins. Therefore, it does not consider inherent righteousness as the formal cause. For to be justified by inherent righteousness and to be justified by the free remission of sins are diametrically opposed. Where there is inherent and perfect righteousness, there is no sin. Consequently, the remission of sins cannot take place. Paul defines justification by the remission of sins, citing from the Psalms in Romans 4:8: "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." In Acts 13:38: "Through Christ, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses, in him everyone who believes is justified." Hence, the Pharisee, boasting of his works, fell short of justification. The tax collector, humbly suppliant for mercy, went down to his house justified (Luke 18:11–14). Indeed, the Pharisee was not boasting of works done without grace, since he gave thanks to God for them as gifts from God. The tax collector, however, implored only God's mercy, which forgives and pardons sins.

XXXI. The adversaries respond:

1. That sins ought to be forgiven because the law cannot be fulfilled before the remission of sins. However, justification does not consist in the remission of sins but in the fulfillment of the law aided by the power of grace.
2. That the remission of sins is not only the pardon of punishment but also the cleansing of guilt, with the brightness of grace succeeding and expelling sins.
3. That the remission of sins pertains to past sins, not to future ones, as Paul testifies in Romans 3:24–25, where Christ is said to have been given as a propitiation for the remission of sins previously committed.
4. That in Romans 4:7–8, remission and non-imputation of sin occur when God protects a person so that they no longer commit a sin that would be imputed to them.

5. That in Acts 13:37, the Apostle intends that through Christ the remission of sins is proclaimed as the efficient cause; but that phrase does not exclude inherent quality, which is the formal cause of justification.

These responses do not at all bear the light of truth.

Not the first, because the remission of sins is opposed to the fulfillment of the law, not as a means by which we strive toward it. Hence, in Acts 13:37, the Apostle simply opposes faith—which apprehends the righteousness of Christ and obtains the remission of sins—to the observance of the Mosaic law; and he denies that anyone could have been justified through the law of Moses. Moreover, he to whom sins are forgiven is already justified. Just as when a crime is pardoned for a guilty person, by that very fact they are justified. Nor can sins be forgiven to anyone except through and on account of the righteousness of Christ, which becomes ours through faith. But the righteousness of Christ takes the place of our righteousness. Why then do we dream that the remission of sins assists in fulfilling the law but does not itself justify? Finally, either the remission of sins justifies, or our own righteousness does. If the former, then let the latter give way. If the latter, then let the former give way: because righteousness that has the power to justify ought not to be contaminated by any sin, whose remission must necessarily precede.

Not the second, because the remission of sins is indeed both the pardon of punishment and the cleansing of guilt. However, the cleansing of guilt does not entirely remove the stain and blemish in this life. Otherwise, what need would there be for the Apostle's miserable complaint in Romans 7:18, 20, 24? But it only brings it about that sin does not reign, dominate, and is not imputed. Therefore, the true brightness and beauty that makes us pleasing to God is the righteousness of Christ imputed by faith. The brightness of renewal and the beauty of inherent righteousness in this life are imperfect and unclean, to be perfected only in the next life.

Not the third, because past sins are not forgiven to anyone exclusively, such that future sins are not to be pardoned. Otherwise, one and the same person would be loved by God and not loved. For love and hatred are in God's will, and thus from eternity. But there is no love without the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, he to whom past sins were forgiven would be in God's love. But because future sins would not be forgiven, the same person would be in hatred—which is most absurd. Now Paul indeed said in Romans 3:25 “the passing over of sins previously committed,” but he did not exclude future ones. Rather, he extends it to future things in Romans 8:31: “He will also graciously give us all things with him.” Moreover, he spoke of past sins not in comparison to future ones that the Romans were about to commit, but he understands absolutely the sins that were committed by believers under the Old Testament before Christ was manifested in the flesh. Nor does he properly say those sins were remitted, but passed over and tolerated

until Christ—who had already beforehand pledged payment to God the Father—represented it in time through his death.

Not the fourth, for that interpretation of Cornelius à Lapide is most perverse: that remission of sins and non-imputation of sins occur when God protects the faithful so that they do not sin. For remission and non-imputation of sins presuppose the existence of sin. Indeed, God, who forgives and does not impute sin, also protects that person so that sin may not exercise dominion in their members. But that grace of protection is by its nature subsequent both to the remission of sins and to justification.

Not finally the fifth, for indeed the obedience and satisfaction of Christ are the efficient meritorious cause of our justification; yet that same obedience and satisfaction, insofar as it is imputed to us through faith, is also the formal cause of our justification. Just as the payment of another's debt is the efficient meritorious cause on account of which the debtor cannot be sued; yet with respect to the debtor to whom it is imputed by the creditor, it is the formal cause of non-prosecution. Moreover, when faith is named, infused qualities and dignities are strongly removed, since in this article there is a perpetual opposition between faith and works.

XXXII. The sixth and final argument is drawn from the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

For although this is not in reality distinct from the remission of sins—since the non-imputation or remission of sins is the imputation of righteousness, and not only sins of commission but also of omission are forgiven, which cannot occur apart from the imputation of righteousness—nevertheless, they differ in concept. Thus, we are permitted to draw a distinct argument from the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

This argument is as follows:

Those who are justified through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them are not justified by a habit of inherent righteousness.

Sinners are justified through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them.

Therefore, they are not justified by a habit of inherent righteousness.

The major premise cannot be called into doubt. For to be justified by one's own righteousness and to be justified by another's righteousness are utterly opposed—especially before a just judge, who neither requires nor accepts a double payment; and especially in this matter, where the payment cannot be divided so that part is paid by Christ's righteousness and part by our own, since the former is most perfect, while the latter, on account of innumerable defects, has no force.

Hence, our adversaries themselves acknowledge the connection of this inference but deny that the minor premise holds. Yet it rests upon indubitable testimonies of Scripture:

Romans 4:3: "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness."

Now to one who works, his reward is not reckoned by grace, but by debt. But to him who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

So also David pronounces blessed the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works.

And indeed, the righteousness by which we are justified is alien. Hence Paul says in Romans 5:18–19:

"As through one offense condemnation came to all men, so also through one righteous act justification of life came to all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous."

1 Corinthians 1:30: "Christ Jesus became for us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption."

2 Corinthians 5:21: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us."

Therefore, the righteousness by which we are justified is alien.

Moreover, it cannot by itself effect or work anything in us intrinsically, but only morally, insofar as it is reckoned to be ours. This is what we designate by the word "imputation."

XXXIII. Nevertheless, our opponents scrutinize the very word "imputation" with narrowed eyes and, so to speak, a bullish stubbornness. Thus, they commonly call it putative and imaginary righteousness. Andradius, in his *Defense of the Tridentine Faith* on page 477, labels it the most foolish insanity. Stapleton, in his *Antidote against the Apostates* on page 97, calls it a phantom of the Lutheran brain. William Rainolds, in his book against Whitaker, with stomach churning, calls it a mathematical Solifidian fiction.

Let us therefore examine their subtleties by which they strive to overthrow our argument drawn from the imputation of righteousness.

They object as follows:

I. The word "imputation" does not occur. For λογίζεσθαι means "to reckon," not "to impute." Furthermore, these two differ: things are "reckoned" which seem to us to be so; things are "imputed" when their effect is ascribed to others so that they are morally esteemed from it.

II. The Apostle does not say that Christ's righteousness was imputed to Abraham, but that his own faith was imputed to him. However, faith is not Christ's righteousness, but our own, by which we are righteous from the gift of God.

III. Faith is imputed for righteousness insofar as it is a quality which merits righteousness, or a disposition toward it.

IV. "To impute" does not signify a bare estimation, but an estimation to which truth in the thing itself corresponds. For a reward is imputed to a worker according to what is due—truly so, not by opinion alone.

V. In Romans 5, the Apostle deals with justification, by which one is constituted righteous through the acquisition of inherent righteousness. They interpret the words "κατασταθῆναι"—"they shall be constituted righteous"—in this way, and deny that this can be said of imputed righteousness. And they claim this is clear from the antithesis of Adam and Christ: Adam derived inherent unrighteousness into us; therefore Christ [derives] inherent righteousness.

VI. In 1 Corinthians 1:30, the Apostle calls Christ our righteousness both because He is the cause of our inherent righteousness and because He satisfied for us, and gives and communicates that satisfaction to us, so that through it we may satisfy God for our sins and eternal punishment.

VII. Likewise, in 2 Corinthians 5:20, Christ is said to be sin or a sinner, not as if our sins were imputed to Him, but only in that the debt of satisfaction was imputed to Him, which He voluntarily undertook. So righteousness is imputed to us with respect to His satisfaction, which He rendered for us. But we cannot on that account be considered righteous if the stains of sin truly inhere in us.

VIII. Even if the imputation of righteousness were granted to the utmost, we still could not be formally righteous through it. For when in a subject there are two contrary forms—one inherent, the other extrinsic—without doubt the absolute denomination is taken from the inherent form. And thus by this reasoning we ought to be denominated not righteous, but sinners. Just as if someone clothed an Ethiopian in a white garment, one would not rightly say, "This Ethiopian is white." So also a bride (a simile used by the Walenburgs) who has a small coin of her own, given by the bridegroom, is said to be rich more from the coin she holds in her hand than from the riches she holds in common with her bridegroom.

IX. Christ restored to us what we lost in Adam. But in Adam we did not lose imputed righteousness.

X. It is impossible for anyone to be righteous through another's righteousness. Just as no one lives by another's life, or is rich by another's riches.

XXXIV. In these exceptions, who does not clearly perceive the spirit of Antichrist? They cast the merit and righteousness of Christ from the bridge and establish the inherent righteousness of man, bringing up all their defenses and ramparts, as if driven by unspeakable crime. For us, from the Word of God, it is sufficiently prepared how we may respond.

We reply, therefore, to the first: They hunt after grammatical subtleties without any profit. For the Vulgate translator himself, whose authority they suspect, renders τὸ λογίζεσθαι in this place as "to impute." Now to him that works, the reward is not imputed according to grace, but according to debt. Moreover, there is another passage where no other meaning can hold, namely 2 Timothy 4:16: μὴ αὐτοῖς λογισθεῖν, "let it not be imputed to them." In the Greek version many examples occur, such as Leviticus 17:4; Numbers 18:27, 30; 2 Samuel 19:19; Psalm 32:1 and 105:30. I admit that when it is used absolutely without a personal case, it never signifies imputation. But when constructed with a dative of person, it sounds the same as ἐκλογίην.

To the second: The notion of faith must be distinguished, which is taken either qualitatively, so to speak, or relatively. In the former way it signifies a habit inherent in us; in the latter it signifies the act by which the righteousness and satisfaction of Christ is apprehended. When Paul asserts that faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness, he does not say this about faith as a quality or inherent habit. For otherwise it would be absurd and contrary to the mind of the Apostle to say that something is imputed for righteousness which itself is righteousness. Furthermore, Abraham would have been justified by works if faith, which is habitual righteousness, were imputed to him; yet Paul there defines justification by remission, restitution, and non-imputation of sins. What then? Faith taken relatively—that is, the righteousness of Christ in whom Abraham believed—was imputed to him for righteousness before the tribunal of God.

To the third: The same effort refutes it. For it is most absurd to say that faith is either legal righteousness and obedience—since justification does not come from legal obedience but is opposed to it with respect to us—or a disposition to it in the Papist sense. For they presuppose without reason that faith is only assent, not a fiducial apprehension, and thus that it justifies by way of disposition joined with other virtues. And thus they are ignorant of the true image of faith.

To the fourth: We by no means imagine a bare estimation or opinion—as we often esteem a man good who is a hypocrite and betrays weak faith on another occasion. But we join estimation with reality. Therefore faith—that is, the righteousness of Christ imputed to us before the tribunal of God for righteousness—is as truly imputed as a

reward is truly imputed to one who works. Surely its imputation is such that in divine judgment it is truth, so that the righteousness of Christ is really ours, although it does not inhere in us. Just as in any other judicial act, another's payment which is imputed to the debtor for immunity and freedom is true, and he is truly considered to have paid the debt. Truly, our adversaries attribute this hypocrisy not to us but to God. For we do not impute Christ's righteousness to ourselves; but God imputes it to us insofar as He is judge. Would He then consider those righteous in Christ who are not truly such? This truth of imputation suffices for us. In Christ we are truly righteous because He fulfilled the law for us. Let them be outside Christ; in themselves they are truly unrighteous, foolish, impious, liars.

To the fifth: To say that the Apostle in Romans 5:18–19 speaks of inherent righteousness is a very great error. It is not proved from this: that by that obedience we are constituted righteous. For $\kappa\alpha\theta'\ \acute{o}\sigma\omicron\nu$ does not necessarily pertain to the inherence of a quality but signifies truth and certainty, whether of an inherent quality or of a relation. Just as man is constituted lord of creatures not by inherence but by relation. Nor is this solidly gathered from the antithesis of Adam and Christ. The Apostle compares Christ and Adam in the amplitude of each extreme: as through Adam guilt came upon all to condemnation, so through Christ's satisfaction the benefit overflowed from many offenses to justification of life; as through one man Adam's disobedience many were constituted sinners, so through one man Christ's obedience many will be constituted righteous. But he does not compare the mode of deriving righteousness and unrighteousness. Indeed, even if he did compare them in mode, I do not see what harm would come to us. For Adam's disobedience is certainly ours also by imputation; similarly Christ's obedience will be ours by imputation.

To the sixth: We acknowledge that Christ is said to be our righteousness efficiently and meritoriously, but in such a way that the imputation of His righteousness is also the formal cause of our justification. Otherwise, if you call it the efficient cause insofar as by its power inherent proper righteousness is infused into us, by which we are justified, we contradict the error because it is repugnant to the analogy of Scripture. Furthermore, what they say is indeed right: that Christ is our righteousness insofar as He satisfied for us and gives and communicates that satisfaction to us so that it can also be called ours. But this is distorted: that they couple that righteousness with inherent righteousness, which they say is absolute, to which by God's just judgment not punishment but glory is due, as Bellarmine says. Truly this is the prodigious stupidity of those men. If Christ's righteousness is imputed to us and through it we satisfy God for faults and eternal punishments, why do they fight so strongly besides for inherent righteousness and assign to it the glory of justification?

To the seventh: We confess that Christ is by no means said to be sin because He Himself committed sin and could be held as unrighteous. For this in itself is blasphemous and it would be absurd to say that Christ was made sin for us if He had been a sinner in

Himself. But Christ is not said to be sin nakedly; He was made sin, namely by imputation. Indeed, how ought He to have undertaken the debt of satisfying if He was not made a debtor and our debts were not imputed to Him?

To the eighth: It is a paint smeared with a desultory little argument—that denomination ought rather to be taken from an absolute and intrinsic form than from an extrinsic one, such as the imputed righteousness of Christ. For denomination is primarily taken from the stronger. But in this matter imputed righteousness is stronger than inherent unrighteousness. Suppose a debtor guilty of owing one hundred florins, for whom another satisfies. According to Bellarmine, he will not be called free on account of another's payment as sponsor, but in himself a debtor. What madness is this? Furthermore, if we must altogether judge by earthly principles wisdom hidden in mystery, I admit that denomination is sought from the intrinsic rather than the extrinsic where two contrary forms are in the same subject. But I deny that Christ's righteousness imputed to us and inherent unrighteousness are contrary forms in the same subject. For he who is freed from debt by the creditor's pardon and yet is detained for some time in chains is called free and bound, but not by contrary forms; for there is no opposition to the same thing. Nor are these two forms—inherent unrighteousness and imputed righteousness—under the same genus, which however is required for true contrariety. But this also ought to be observed: that denomination can be made more from the intrinsic than the extrinsic when the intrinsic retains its vigor and its, so to speak, formality. But sin in the regenerate has lost its vigor and formality—namely guilt—and remains only material, and that itself indeed begun to be mortified so that it no longer subjugates the regenerate.

The example of the Ethiopian by no means squares with the adversaries' opinion. I will not say that there is a far greater conjunction between Christ and us than between a white garment and an Ethiopian. I will say this: an Ethiopian is called white in one respect—namely according to the garment—and black in another—according to the inherent form of blackness. In this way it rather confirms our opinion by a likeness. For a man is righteous and unrighteous in different respects: righteous according to Christ's imputed righteousness, unrighteous in himself.

Nor is the other likeness of the bride any better. For after sin we do not have a farthing left with which to buy back justification. Furthermore, it is impious and blasphemous to esteem our riches greater than Christ's riches imputed to us, since outside Christ we must languish in poverty.

To the ninth:

What we lost in Adam is either the ultimate end, which is unbroken communion with God, or the means to that end. Christ restored both to us. But he restored the latter in a more excellent and noble way. For whereas in the covenant of works our justification

depended on our own mutable righteousness, Christ restored to us through imputation an immutable and unfailing righteousness. Then he also restored inherent righteousness—not, however, that by which we are justified. And no wonder, since it was impossible for such a righteousness to be infused by which both sin might be expiated and a right to life obtained. Therefore, Christ had not only to restore what we had in Adam, but also to remove the evils which we contracted in him.

To the tenth point: Is it then impossible for us to be righteous through Christ's righteousness? How then are we made righteous by his obedience? How is Christ made righteousness for us and made sin for us? How can anyone be declared free and immune from legal action in court by the payment of another? Let them therefore distinguish between personal attributes—such as living or being rich—which must inhere in a person, and judicial attributes, which in the court or tribunal can be imputed to us by the judge through the guarantee and surety of another—and they will teach correctly.

XXXVI. Thus far, we have completed the section according to the plan of our argument. The third point remains: that faith alone is that means of union by which the Holy Spirit makes the righteousness and obedience of Christ our own.

Indeed, justification itself was accomplished on God's part before the foundation of the world was laid. But with respect to human beings, it is like a certain power that must be brought into its first act, which occurs when we apply so great a benefit to ourselves. Therefore, since in justification both the proper and full justifying cause—the will of God—and our own act, as it were accepting such a magnificent effect of generosity, are considered, and since it is acknowledged only through faith, it has come about that people attributed justification to faith.

In this, the following points are clear:

1. Faith is not for us the active cause of justification, but only the instrument—just as the hand of a beggar is the instrument for receiving alms for his own use.
2. Faith is not for us a virtue, a good work, or any part of righteousness, whether legal or evangelical. For in that case, sanctification would be the means to justification by reason; whereas Scripture teaches, and reason sees, that the opposite is true. Indeed, nature does not allow that which is more excellent to be the means. But sanctification is more excellent than justification: through it we are freed from sin, a moral evil; through justification, from punishment, a physical evil. Nor is it fitting, surely, for God to bestow the gift of charity on one to whom He has not yet forgiven sin. Moreover, faith does not act or give, but receives or undergoes. And this passive role cannot occur in any theological virtue. Without doubt, because neither charity nor hope returns to God as justifying; rather, works are sacrifices of thanksgiving which we offer to God. Faith is indeed called the work of God in John 6:29, but this is said by allusion—just as Paul calls

it the law in Romans 3:27. The Jews wanted to be justified by works; Christ, therefore, alluding to their manner of speaking, says: “You wish to have life by works; therefore, perform that work: believe in the Son of God.”

3. Faith is established by us as justifying, not as a disposition of the soul for the introduction of inherent righteousness—as our adversaries teach that a person is justified by faith which is the beginning and preparation for justification—as if those to be justified must be twice dyed to be like double-dipped purple. Rather, it justifies as the condition of the new covenant, which God requires of us in place of the condition of the legal covenant, which has become impossible for us due to the weakness of the flesh. Through it, the hearts of the children of God are affected toward Christ just as newborn infants are affected toward their mother’s milk (1 Peter 2:2), so that they sincerely desire to be filled with Christ’s benefits and confidently cast themselves upon God and Christ for salvation and commit their cause to Him. As David says: “In You I have trusted” (Psalm 22:11); “Cast your burden upon the Lord” (Psalm 55:23); “Commit your way to the Lord” (Psalm 37:5).

4. Here we carefully guard against ambiguity, in which our adversaries take great delight. For when we say that faith alone justifies, we do not separate faith from the other virtues—hope and charity—as the Papists constantly imagine, a faith that consists only in the intellect and moves the will no more than the epicycles of Mars and Venus influence the life of astrologers. But our meaning is this: however much faith is not alone—indeed, it is inseparably joined with hope and charity—yet neither hope nor charity has the power of justifying, but faith alone. So that the particle “alone” does not determine the subject but the predicate. Just as the heat of the sun alone draws out the roots of trees, even though heat in the sun is never without light.

Therefore, we will make it clear in this sense that faith alone justifies:

First, because Scripture here names faith alone and explicitly excludes works.

Second, because we are justified through the remission of sins; but there is no faculty of the soul that acknowledges the remission of sins if you depart from faith.

Third, because faith alone lays hold of Christ’s satisfaction.

Fourth, because through faith we are children of God and members of Christ, not through works.

XXXVII. Therefore, the Scriptures clearly prove from the outset that it is the role of Faith alone to receive such a glorious benefit. Indeed, when this matter is discussed, Scripture names faith and no other work, because faith is contrasted with works. For example, concerning Abraham, who is the model of righteousness and justice, Moses writes in

Genesis 15:6: "Abraham believed the Lord, and it was credited to him as righteousness." It certainly cannot be said that faith was imputed to Abraham as a virtue, because Paul contrasts it with his works and declares that Abraham would have had something to boast about if he had been justified by works. On the contrary, Paul concludes in Romans 4:5 that the ungodly are justified, not the one who works. Isaiah 28:16 says: "Behold, I am the one who has laid in Zion a stone." "The one who believes will not be put to shame." Who is that stone laid in Zion? Christ Jesus, as 1 Peter 2:4-6 confirms. Therefore, by faith in Christ the Messiah, the Fathers of the Old Testament were saved from falling. In love, hope, and fear alone there is a fall, because these are not grounded in accepting the stone of Zion. Habakkuk 2:4 states: "Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith." Some translate it as "by his faith," and the Apostle almost omits the pronoun, which is not in the Greek. But it is clearer to retain the demonstrative pronoun of the third person and refer it to the coming witness. Therefore, the righteous one—that is, the one absolved in God's judgment, who has the right of a son of God to hope for the life promised in the law—will live by faith; that is, if we consider the etymology, by the sustenance or bearing of him, namely the coming witness who will not delay nor lie (v. 3), and thus of Christ. He will live, be raised on the last day, and experience the perpetual manifestation of Christ's life in sanctification, preservation, and joy. Christ says in Matthew 9:22: "Your faith has saved you." Luke 8:50: "Only believe, and your daughter will be saved." We see a perpetual relationship between the word of promise and faith. Faith also received the promised bodily benefits. John 3:36: "The one who believes in the Son has eternal life." Paul says in Acts 13:39: "Through Christ everyone who believes is justified." Romans 1:17: "The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith." Romans 3:28: "Therefore we conclude that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the law." Romans 4:5: "To the one who believes in him who justifies the ungodly, faith is credited as righteousness." Galatians 2:16: "We know that a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ."

XXXVIII. Although these passages are very clear, adversaries do not relent in their obstinacy. They object as follows:

I. The Scriptures indeed assert that faith justifies, but nowhere do they explicitly state that faith *alone* justifies.

II. Faith is understood as living—that is, formed by love—which is contrasted not with works of grace and holiness, but with works of nature. This is because:

- The Apostle in Romans 4:4 implies that faith is contrasted with works for which what is given is a reward, not grace.

- The purpose of the Apostle in his letters to the Romans and Galatians is to demonstrate that no one can be justified without faith in Christ and God's gratuitous mercy.

- Finally, he intends to exclude boasting—not all boasting, but specifically boasting about works done without grace and faith.

III. The Scriptures mention faith in the passages cited above, but elsewhere they also name love, fear, hope, and other virtues or sacraments.

IV. Therefore, faith is named rather than other virtues because faith is the beginning of justification.

V. The Prophets, Christ, and the Apostles speak of the first justification, which occurs by faith alone, not of the second justification, which requires an abundance of works.

XXXIX. I respond as briefly as possible to the first point. Indeed, the Scriptures do not teach that faith alone justifies if you scrutinize the words too meticulously. And truly, what need is there to cling to such narrow constraints? We have explained the matter itself quite clearly. Here, the Sacred Writings express faith, and nothing besides. Indeed, they oppose works and remove them from the threshold of justification. They deny that anyone is justified ἐκ μὴ πίστεως (Galatians 2:16), where the matter itself demands an exclusive particle. Accordingly, Dr. Luther did not rashly insert the exclusive particle in Romans 3:28, since the nature of the German language requires that an exclusive term be used whenever one thing is affirmed and another denied. Thus, the Syriac version has the exclusive term בלחוד in Romans 4:5. Moreover, even the Italian Bible printed in Venice before Luther's death includes the same particle in the parallel text of Galatians 2:16. Indeed, before Luther was born, a German Bible was published at Confluentia which admits the exclusive particle in Romans 3:28.

To the second point: When we attribute these functions of faith—namely, receiving the righteousness of Christ—we certainly do not mean a dead faith, which is not faith at all but a mask and phantom of faith; rather, we mean a living faith. Furthermore, it is very important to recognize in what the life of faith consists, what its form and essence are. We contend that it consists in the knowledge and trustful apprehension of Christ. Our adversaries deny this and teach that the form and life of faith consist in the habit of love. Indeed, the habit of love demonstrates faith a posteriori, as an effect demonstrates its cause. But it is by no means its form and life, since it is posterior. For love comes from faith that is not feigned (1 Timothy 1:5). Moreover, the Apostle distinguishes love from faith (1 Corinthians 13:13). But to claim that faith is opposed to works of nature and not to works of sanctification is a vain fabrication, which we have sufficiently refuted above on page 33. To this we add one thing: if the Apostle had intended to oppose works of the law, not works of sanctification, to faith, then somewhere he would have said that a

person is justified by works of sanctification. In this way, he would have softened the severe hostility. For indeed, his adversaries accused him of loosening the reins of fleshly license. Nor does their fiction stand on the threefold support which we exposed in our objection. For those who are justified by works have their reward imputed as a debt, not by grace. But it is false that anyone is justified by works with a reward imputed either as a debt or by grace. Therefore, Paul's meaning is this: no one is ever justified by works, because whoever is justified has his reward imputed as a debt. But to him who is justified by faith, the reward is imputed by grace.

As for the Apostle's aim in his twofold epistle, it is not merely that no one is justified without faith and grace, but that no one is justified except by faith alone and the grace of God. He wishes to exclude any boasting that arises from works—even those done by grace—so that God alone may be just and the justifier of those who believe through faith (Romans 3:26). Boasting is also excluded through the law of faith (v. 27), that is, through the teaching of the Gospel, which declares that we are justified freely on account of Christ. There is indeed a certain boasting in us, but it is a good conscience, not our own righteousness.

To the third point: To say that love, hope, fear, and sacraments are named in Scripture as causes of the forgiveness of sins is far from the truth; nor could Bellarmine establish this. For it is not permissible to call something a cause which Scripture introduces as an effect, a sign, a seal, or any other adjunct. Yet the Papists do this, as is clear to anyone who carefully weighs the passages they cite here.

To the fourth point: How is faith the beginning of justification? Is it as if it merits justification or produces it as a disposition? False. Rather, it is insofar as it embraces the merit of Christ. In this sense, faith is not only the beginning but the very completion—the whole means by which justification is accomplished—excluding any other worthiness or quality. For we stand by faith (Romans 5:2). We are guarded by the power of God through faith (1 Peter 1:5). The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith (Romans 1:17). Justification is confused with renewal. Faith is the beginning or root of renewal, not of justification.

To the fifth point: The distinction between first and second justification is a mere figment of Stapleton and Becanus. They place both in an internal quality of the soul, whereas Scripture defines justification as the forgiveness of sins without any price interposed by works.

XL. We will explain the remaining arguments as briefly as possible. Therefore, let this be the second point: Justification consists entirely in the forgiveness of sins, which is offered to us in Jesus Christ. Now, I ask, what faculty is there that can accept this? None, I believe, other than faith. For it is faith that believes God when He promises and offers the

forgiveness of sins—not hope or charity. Hope awaits the promised thing, which is in some way already ours; charity, having perceived the greatness of the promise and the goodness of the Promiser, loves it. But faith alone rests in the promise made and apprehends it, and therefore justification is attributed by the Holy Spirit to faith alone.

Third: The cause of the forgiveness of sins is the satisfaction of Christ. But the satisfaction of Christ cannot be apprehended except by faith. For to apprehend it by another satisfaction proceeding from us is as foreign as can be.

Fourth: We are justified by the same right by which we are sons of God and members of Christ. But we are sons of God and members of Christ through faith, not through works. For we perform works after we have been made sons of God and members of Christ. For spiritual operations, just like natural and animal ones, presuppose the existence of the operating subject.

**DISSERTATION XII:
ON THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE THE TRIBUNAL
OF GOD AND CONSCIENCE, AS WELL AS BEFORE MEN.**

In which, after an exegesis of the second chapter of James, the fullest agreement between the holy apostles Paul and James in the doctrine of justification is set forth.

BREVIARY.

On the canonical authority of the Epistle of James, there has been doubt both recently and in ancient times. Eusebius's testimony concerning the doubt of the ancients. 1. The arguments of the ancients by which they held it suspect are addressed. 2. The arguments of more recent writers—Cajetan, the Magdeburg Centuriators—opposed to its authority are discussed. 3. The principal argument by which some attempt to undermine its authority—namely, its alleged disagreement with Paul's teaching on justification—is presented. Propositions, both particular and universal, that seem contradictory are cited. 4. The different theme and scope of the Epistles of St. Paul and St. James are examined. 5. The general divisions of the second chapter of James are set forth. 6. The first part, from verse 1 to verse 14, is explained. What kind of partiality (θεοσωποληψίαν) does the Apostle forbid? Zwingli's opinion concerning the harm of such partiality. 7. Arguments against showing favoritism are woven together. What is meant by "evil thoughts" (κεῖται ἀδελφομῶν πονηρῶν)? What is meant by "the law" (νόμῳ) and "royal law" (βασιλικός)? How is one who stumbles in one point guilty of the whole law? What is meant by "law" (νόμῳ) and "free" (ἐλεύθερος)? 8. The second part of the chapter is explained. The Apostle's proposition that faith without works is useless. What does he understand by "faith" and by "works"? 9. The assertion of Baronius and Grossius concerning the Apostle's purpose, and their calumny against Protestants. The necessity of good works. 10–11. Can anyone be saved without works? 12. The Apostle's proposition is confirmed first by a similitude drawn from ineffective wishes. What is meant by "daily food" (ἡμέρας τροφή)? Καθημεροβίος (daily life). 13. The application (Σπόδοσις) of the parable: Faith without works is dead. In what sense is the word "faith" used? What is meant by "faith without works" (πίστις χωρίς ἔργων)? 14. Verse 26, in which dead faith is compared to a body without spirit, is explained. "Spirit" (πνεῦμα) there denotes not the soul, but breath. Grotius's objection is refuted. 15. The futile assertion of the sophists concerning unformed and dead faith is refuted. 16. The subtle arguments of Bellarmine defending that same assertion are refuted. 17–18. The second confirmation of the Apostle's proposition, drawn from the fact that faith without works cannot withstand serious examination. The reading of the words, "Show me your faith by your works" (δειξόν μοι τὴν πίστιν σου ἐκ τῶν ἔργων σου), is debated. Cappel is noted. 19. The hypocrite's objection expressed in verse 19. The agreement between faith without works and the faith of demons. 20. The proposition is confirmed by the examples of Abraham and Rahab, who were justified by works. What is meant by "a dead man" (νεκρὸς ἄνθρωπος)? 21. The example of Abraham is presented. 22. Does Abraham's example clearly prove the Apostle's teaching that we are justified by works? 23. In what sense are Abraham and all believers said to be justified by works? Various opinions on this are weighed: those of Primasius, Augustine, Oecumenius. 24–26. Those of the Tridentines, Socinus, Volkelius, Osterodius, 27–28. Those of Grotius, Piscator, Cappel, 29–30. That of Johannes Vorstius; 31–39. The author's opinion is presented: that Paul speaks of the justification

of a sinner, and therefore from causes; James speaks of the justification of the righteous—that is, of the demonstration and declaration of righteousness received through faith, by its signs and effects. This opinion is explained: I. From the connection between justification and its declaration through works; II. From the twofold judgment of God to which man is subject; III. From the twofold acquittal by which one justified is freed from condemnation; IV. From the twofold accusation of Satan; V. From consideration of the tribunal before which even the justified stand—namely, both God’s tribunal and that of conscience; In what sense are believers said to be justified before men? I. Finally, from the phraseology of Scripture; The fiction of a first and second justification in the Papal sense is anticipated. 40–43. That James deals with the justification of the righteous a posteriori, from signs and effects—and therefore with the declaration of justification received through faith—is demonstrated by seven arguments; In what sense is Abraham’s faith said to be working with his works? The meaning of the word συνέργειν (to work together). In what sense is it said to be perfected by works? How can Scripture say Abraham was justified by works, when it elsewhere declares justification by faith? Verse 24 is explained: Is it implied there that faith and works are joint causes (συνάιτια) of the same justification? 44–46. The example of Rahab justified by works is explained. Rahab’s justifying faith is affirmed. 47–48. The full agreement (παραμοία) or perfect harmony between Paul and James is affirmed. The exposition in harmony with the Helvetic Confession; Oecumenius’s admonitions. The discourse concludes.

I. Not only in the immediately preceding age, but even in the first centuries of the flourishing Church, some have called into question whether the Epistle which bears the name and authority of James, the brother of the Lord, and is numbered among the seven Catholic Epistles, ought to be considered canonical and divinely inspired. Concerning this, we have an ancient witness, Eusebius, who in his Ecclesiastical History, Book II, Chapter 22, distinguishes as follows:

“Of him (James) it is said that the first of the so-called Catholic Epistles was written. Yet it should be known that although it is judged by some as spurious, since not many of the ancients made any mention of it—just as with the so-called Epistle of Jude, which is also counted among the seven Catholic Epistles—nevertheless, we know that these, along with the rest, have been publicly received and approved in very many churches.”

Jerome also implies the same in his Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers with these words: “He wrote only one Epistle, which is among the seven Catholic Epistles. Yet it is asserted by some to have been published by another under his name—though gradually, as time went on, it obtained authority.”

II. As far as the ancients are concerned, Eusebius indicates that the reason for their doubting the authority of this Epistle was that not many of the ancients made mention of it. But it is clearly evident that this is a less than adequate reason for doubt. For, first, whatever may be said about those who remained silent, this much can be asserted for certain: no one among the ancients ever rejected or repudiated this Epistle. Second, it could have happened that the writings of many who praised this Epistle before Eusebius

and Jerome perished. Third, the most celebrated doctors of the primitive Church—far outweighing those who remained silent—included it among the Apostolic writings and praised it: Cyprian in his Exposition of the Creed, Origen in his Homilies on Isaiah, Epiphanius in Heresy 76, Augustine in On Christian Doctrine Book II, Chapter 8, Gregory Nazianzen in the preface to his work on the Holy Scriptures, where he lists this Epistle first among the seven Catholic Epistles; and many others who, on appropriate occasions, cite it and draw from it arguments of faith. These you may see in Cardinal Baronius himself under the year 63, number 10, etc. I say nothing here of the radiant marks of divinity in it, which are usually treated more fully in their proper place. Therefore, we are by no means of the opinion that this divine Epistle obtained authority only through the passage of time—a charge which Baronius may hurl at the Innovators as long as he pleases. It does not so much strike the orthodox as it does those of his own communion, for whom Scripture is not held to be the Word of God unless it pleases the palate of the Church—that is, of men who place it on a divine footing.

III. Concerning more recent writers, doubt about the authority of the Canonical Epistle has arisen for various reasons.

Cardinal Cajetan (I place him at the very threshold, so that Papists may cease to censure Luther—who erred after him—with their usual severity) in his commentary on this Epistle judges it crudely in these words:

“It is not so certain whether this Epistle is by the brother of the Lord. The salutation here is so plain that it conforms to no salutation of any other Apostolic Epistle: for it contains nothing of God, nothing of Jesus Christ, nothing of grace, nothing of peace, but in a profane manner it says ‘greetings’; nor does he call himself an Apostle, but only a servant of Jesus Christ.”

Moreover, it does not seem to reflect that Apostolic majesty and gravity in any way, nor, he says, does it contain as much Hebraism as one would expect from James, who was a Jerusalemite.

But Luther also, in the first heat of his struggle with the Papists, was somewhat unfair to this Epistle.

He denied that it was Apostolic; indeed, he called it “straw-like”—not absolutely, however, but only if compared with the Pauline Epistles and the first Epistle of Peter, as his words in the Appendix to the Preface of the New Testament (published at Wittenberg in 1526) make sufficiently clear.

But when he saw that this very word was being attacked by his adversaries, he removed it from later editions and allowed everyone free judgment concerning its authority.

After him, the Magdeburg Centuriators (Century I, Book II, Chapter 4) attempted to impugn the Epistle of James with various arguments, such as:

- That many ancient writers do not mention it;
- That it departs from the analogy of Apostolic doctrine when it ascribes justification not to faith alone but also to works;
- That it is almost silent concerning the benefit of Christ and scarcely mentions the name of Christ once or twice;
- That it repeatedly makes use of the sayings of Peter and Paul;
- That he calls himself not an Apostle but a servant of Christ.

Hence they think it not unlike the truth that this Epistle was written by some disciple of the Apostles toward the end of the first century, or even at a later time.

However, these arguments are as worthless as straw, whereas the Epistle itself ought to be held by all the devout as divine and more precious than gold.

We have already responded to the first point above.

How ignorant and unfair are those judges who think that the same argument about faith and the benefits of Christ, or the same articles of faith, must be treated in all the Canonical Scriptures?

James's concern was not with those denying grace and the benefits of Christ, but with those who were misusing the benefits of Christ for unrestrained license of the flesh.

And what then if James expressed the name of Christ the Savior only once or twice?

It is just as if the Book of Esther, because the name Jehovah is not mentioned even once in it, ought therefore to be marked with an obelus.

It is also frivolous that they complain about the sayings of Peter and Paul being quoted in it—as if the Holy Spirit could not have inspired the same sayings in the Apostles.

Not to mention that the same saying which appears both in 1 Peter 4:8 and James 5:20 also occurs earlier in Proverbs 3:34.

Yet it occurs to no one on that account to tear apart Peter's Epistle.

Finally, what does it matter whether James adorned himself with the title of Apostle or not, so long as the writing itself shines with Apostolic doctrine and gravity?

Not even in the Second and Third Epistles of John, nor in the Epistle of Jude, is the name “Apostle” inscribed.

And in the Pseudogospel of Mani, the title “Apostle” inscribed avails not at all.

But leaving aside these lighter matters for now, I should like to address a little more carefully the chief argument by which they were led to class this Epistle among the Pseudepigrapha—namely, that it departs from the analogy of Apostolic doctrine when it ascribes justification not to faith alone but also to works.

IV. Indeed, it cannot be denied that in James chapter 2, verse 14 and following, there appear propositions—both particular and universal—that seem diametrically opposed to those of St. Paul concerning justification. As for the particular ones: Paul in Romans 4:1–2 seems to deny that Abraham was justified by works, arguing that otherwise he would have grounds for boasting before God. But James in chapter 2:21 asserts explicitly that Abraham was justified by works, such as the offering of his son upon the altar.

Moreover, universal statements also appear contradictory. For Paul explicitly denies that any flesh is justified by works of the law in the sight of God (Romans 3:20) and affirms in verse 28 that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the law. This is equivalent to saying that a person is justified by faith alone, since what is attributed to faith is taken away from works of the law, and no third option is given. Hence, more clearly in Galatians 2:16, the same Apostle teaches that a person is not justified by works of the law except—or rather, but—through faith in Jesus Christ. For the particles *ἐὰν μὴ* are not conditional or exceptive but adversative, as their usage in Matthew 12:4 and Revelation 21:27 shows. Philologists also demonstrate that the Latin particle *nisi* is sometimes adversative and corresponds to the Greek *ἢ μὴ* in that sense. Where these particles are adversative, the exclusive word *μόνον* (“only”) or *μόνος* (“alone”) is readily understood. Erasmus himself acknowledges that the ancients held this sense, writing: “The word ‘alone,’ so stoned with clamor in this age because of Luther, is reverently heard and read in the Fathers.” The Syriac version at Romans 4:5 adds the word *בלחוד* (“only”), and the Arabic adds *tantum* (“only”). It is therefore plain that Paul’s universal axiom is that all who are justified are justified by faith alone.

But James’s universal assertion sounds apparently contrary: “You see then that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone” (James 2:24). Since some could not reconcile and harmonize these statements, they fell into such error that they not only failed to resolve them but even turned to accusing the Epistle itself.

For our part, we presently endeavor to show that these most friendly Apostles do not fight—since they joined right hands in cooperation (Galatians 2:9), not dividing their tongues for contention—but only appear to fight to those who pay less attention to the

purpose of their respective discourses; and that otherwise they agree well, with great symmetry, if not of words, certainly of sense and substance.

V. In advance, it is worth noting that the scope of the Pauline Epistles and that of James is not the same. For Paul, in his Epistles written either to converts or to those being converted—especially new converts—almost everywhere treats professedly of the first elements, principles, and foundations of faith, and in some places also of the solid food of the mature. Thus you may see him graphically discoursing everywhere on the chief doctrines of the Christian religion: on the conviction of sin for the whole human race; on justification or absolution from the guilt of sin and the curse of the law; on salvation obtained through Christ alone; on the abrogation of the law; on the priesthood of Christ; on Christian liberty; on law and Gospel; and similar topics elsewhere. He strives, therefore, not only to shape life but especially to form Christian faith and worship.

But St. James, who wrote his Epistle quite late—not to those being converted but to those already converted—addressed a time when sacred religion was turning sour, and not so much perfidy in faith as perfidy in life was bursting in through the floodgate of license; when God's grace was being turned into sensuality; when hypocrisy—professing evangelical faith emptily but denying its power—began to spread. Of these it could be said as in Proverbs 30:12: "There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, yet is not washed from its filth"; or those who say, "Lord, Lord," whom nevertheless the Lord does not know (Matthew 7:21–23); or like dogs returning to their vomit (2 Peter 2:22); or those crucifying Christ again (Hebrews 6:6). The Apostle's care, therefore, was to expose and carefully correct the hypocrisy openly spreading among God's people and sins cloaked by profession of the Gospel.

There were delicate ones who bore the name of Christ's faith but refused to bear his cross. These he teaches patience in chapter 1:1–13. There were patriarchs of libertines who attributed their falling into temptation to God as author. Their impiety he so refutes that at the same time he delivers the Christian doctrine of God's providence (chapter 1:13ff.). There were vain and irreligious people who boasted faith with their mouth and received the word of faith with itching ears but were utterly destitute of faith's fruits and blossoms. These also James corrects with apostolic severity and urges that, putting aside carnal affections, they express true religion by life, not by words or boastful utterances about faith—which he excellently carries out in chapter 2.

Others sought the teaching office without awaiting a legitimate calling; they were most ready of tongue and always armed for contention. The Apostle in chapter 3 teaches that the office should not be rashly sought and that the tongue especially must be restrained. Then he adds other holy and wholesome precepts for life. His whole aim, therefore, is to shape a life worthy of a holy profession, to rebuke underlying hypocrisy, and to tear out the roots of rampant sins. As a mirror of piety—especially deplorable in our times, when

(if ever) that hypocrisy drives deepest roots in the Christian church—it may deservedly be commended for continual examination by enlightened eyes.

VI. Having first set forth these preliminary matters, we will now present a succinct summary and explanation of the second chapter of James, on the correct interpretation of which the whole matter turns. Throughout the chapter, the Apostle censures hypocrites and nominal Christians, who considered the faith of Jesus Christ—adorned with such magnificent praises by the Spirit of God—as mere words, and in so doing both cut away its roots and intercepted its fruits. First, indeed, he teaches in verses 1–14 that the sin of partiality is opposed to that faith. Then he demonstrates that the nature of that faith is such that it cannot possibly be devoid of holy works.

VII. The primacy of this is contained in verse 1: “My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality.” He understands that partiality by which those who professed the faith of Christ—being rich and walking magnificently before the eyes of men—despised the rest as wicked, worthless, arrogant, and servants of mammon, with fraud and insult toward the poor faithful, just as if the wealth of money outweighed the riches of faith, and as if greater honor and reverence were due to wealth, nobility, and the pomp of this age than to virtue and faith in the glorious Jesus Christ—indeed, as if almost no honor were due to faith and virtue, while all were accorded to external splendor. This certainly is to hold the faith of Christ with partiality—that is, to hold it captive, as it were. This partiality, as our great Zwingli and, from his mouth, Leo Judä wisely warn, is the cause of all vices for us and, in short, of all evils, while both virtues and the true names of virtues have vanished. From this hydra have sprouted so many hypocrites, so many flatterers among us. For when there is no place, honor, or reward for virtue, but money reigns as queen, and everyone has only as much faith and esteem as he has coins in his chest, it follows that no one strives for solid virtue or true glory.

VIII. Furthermore, Saint Paul opposes this partiality with very effective arguments, since it is entirely inconsistent with the saving and fruitful faith of Christ, which we have decided to explain in some detail.

First, he says in verse 4: “Have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?” The sense is: When you act in this way, does not your conscience cry out within and condemn in your heart the unjust deed by which you bestow the honor due to virtue upon gold and purple, while despising the one whom Christ most earnestly commends and in whom true spiritual goods shine forth? And so, with a corrupted faculty of judgment—as Oecumenius says here—you have neglected to “test what is excellent,” preferring lesser things to the more excellent. Is it not clear that you are unjust and perverse judges, meditating on wicked things inwardly? For “judges of evil thoughts” is a common Hebraism meaning a judge who thinks perversely, just as in

Luke 18:6, "the unjust judge" denotes an unrighteous judge. Traces of this Hebraism are found everywhere. So also Oecumenius interprets it at this point as "unjust judges, affected by malice out of respect of persons." Others take the genitive not as objective but as attributive, i.e., "judgment according to evil thoughts," because you prefer fleeting things to those that endure. So Grotius. Either sense is suitable.

Secondly, he draws an argument from the person of the poor and the rich in verses 5–7: "Has not God chosen the poor of this world"—not just any poor (for there are also great scoundrels at times)—but "rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to those who love Him?" Is it not unworthy to cast down those whom God exalts, and to treat shamefully those whom He from eternity has deemed worthy of love and honor? Since all things are common among friends, does not the injury and insult with which the poor friends of God are afflicted also redound to God Himself? On the contrary, he says, the rich for the most part exercise tyranny over you: they drag you to court, treat you with contempt, and blaspheme the honorable name by which you are called—that is, the name of God and Christ. Is it not therefore foolish to honor ambitiously your own executioners and those who blaspheme God's name, while doing injury to friends, or at least to those by whom you have never been harmed or known to suffer any wrong?

Thirdly, he argues that this partiality opposes the royal law, which commands loving one's neighbor as oneself, and thus involves transgression of the whole law (verses 8–11). He calls the commandment of love for one's neighbor the "royal law," both because it was prescribed by Christ the King, the Son of God, to all who are in His kingdom and are therefore called "sons of the kingdom"; just as in Esther 1:19, the decree of King Ahasuerus is called "the royal law," as the Septuagint renders it (a passage which the very learned Heinsius not unfittingly compares here); and because it is like the crown, the queen of all virtues, the culmination of all commandments; and because, like a royal road, it is plain, straight, and even—thus implicitly contrasted with winding bypaths and detours. Therefore, since that royal law of Christ commands loving every neighbor, but partiality sets up for honor a few chosen by perverse judgment and perhaps unjustly, while rejecting better ones—and thus breaks the bond of God—the Apostle proves that it is manifest that they commit sin and are convicted as transgressors of the law. He adds that on account of this one offense they are guilty of violating the whole law, because whoever keeps the whole law but stumbles in one point becomes guilty of all. For in the transgression of even the least commandment there is contempt and violation of Him who gave the whole law (verse 11). For whoever obeys one precept but not another is considered not so much to obey as to choose for himself which duties to impute to his Lord, and thus to follow his own judgment rather than the divine law. Not to mention that all divine precepts are so inseparably connected that no one who hates his neighbor can be said to love God, nor anyone who hates God to love his neighbor. Moreover, all

commandments are referred to the love of God and neighbor. Therefore, when one commandment is violated, love for God and neighbor wavers, and the image of God and holiness of truth are no longer preserved—from which all duties proceed to the glory of God. That divine Reformer of ours, Zwingli, explains this passage excellently in his brief commentary, saying among other things: "Whoever therefore indulges himself in one sin, however small, opens a door to the enemy for greater sins, giving a sure proof by his carelessness and sluggishness that he is not greatly restrained by fear of the Divine Majesty and that he scorns the Lawgiver, who is offended by every even smallest sin. Let no one therefore flatter himself; let no sin be considered light. He who forbade one cannot approve another. Whoever violates the law in any part is convicted as a transgressor of the whole law. For all laws are as one body; whoever injures even the least member will rightly be accused of having injured the whole body." See more on this matter which he distinguishes admirably.

Fourthly and finally, he calls to mind the final judgment of God, which will be according to the "law of liberty" (verses 12–13). The commandment of love for God and neighbor is called the law of liberty because it is prescribed to those set free by Christ from the bondage of law and sin and endowed with the grace of justification and sanctification by the Spirit—not as a cause of life and righteousness. Therefore, since partiality greatly opposes that law—which is the rule for executing the final judgment according to the quality of works—it sternly threatens a "judgment without mercy" to those who, as it were, renounce all mercy.

These are the arguments by which he dissuades from that foul partiality and shows that a simple eye, purified by faith, should be fixed on solid virtue, not on external appearance.

IX. Next, the Divine Apostle proceeds to another point and strives to demonstrate against "vain men" (as they are called in verse 20) that faith which is not accompanied by works of love is of no avail for obtaining salvation. "What use is it, my brothers," he says, "if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?" (v. 14). It is clear that the thrust of the argument is directed against hypocritical and professing Christians—vain individuals—who "say," that is, who foolishly suppose in their own minds (for here "to say" refers not so much to speech as to thought, as in James 1:13; a sense in which *φάσκειν* also appears in Romans 1:22, and the Hebrew *אמר* frequently) that they have faith, while they are utterly lacking in works—not indeed the works of the law, that is, those things which the law prescribes for establishing righteousness (which are not under discussion here), but those which God prepared beforehand for us to walk in (Ephesians 2:10). For those hypocrites cherished a certain empty notion about God and religion, which was not followed by any change in life and conduct. And so they believed themselves already to be partakers of that faith to which so many benefits, so many advantages, so many graces of the Spirit of God are ascribed. But the Apostle declares that such an opinion is of no use and cannot save at all. For saving faith produces in the

hearts of believers a serene conscience, a tranquil mind, secure and not doubting in the least God's goodness and promises, but awaiting eternal life with unwavering hope. Moreover, it causes us to pursue holy and pious things, to renounce worldly lusts and carnal desires, to love God and our neighbors, and to serve them with acts of piety, mercy, and charity.

X. Baronius, the compiler of the Pontifical Annals rather than ecclesiastical history, departing from his usual practice under the year of Christ 83, digresses into a theological disputation concerning the Epistle of James, striving and contending to prove that the Apostle in this passage is arguing against the heresy of Simon Magus and consequently against the Innovators, against whom in Number XII he rails thus: "Let the Innovators of our time have this author and father for themselves, and let them glory in such a Prince—that foremost heresiarch and most treacherous impostor." In this way the crafty scoundrel slanders the Evangelicals. Simon Magus, that firstborn of Satan (as Irenaeus testifies in Book 1, Chapter 20), taught that those who believed in him and Selene could live as free persons, doing whatever they wished; for people are saved by his grace, not by righteous works. What agreement has the Church of Christ with this sort of piety? It preaches the grace of Christ in such a way that it acknowledges and teaches the supreme necessity not of works of election—such as the Papists impose—but of works that truly sanctify.

XI. Hugo Grotius notes on this passage that the same opinion—that faith devoid of works is saving—was formerly common among the Jews, who supposed that every Israelite, provided he had not renounced the profession of Judaism, would eventually have a share in the world to come. So it is. Elsewhere we have shown this from their fundamental articles explained by Maimonides. He adds that the same opinion had gained ground among many Christians, and Augustine in his book *On Faith and Works* shows this and at the same time refutes them sharply. Finally he appends: "In this unhappy age that opinion has been revived under the name of purified doctrine, and all who love piety and the salvation of their neighbor ought to oppose it." Clearly the Reformed are being disparaged. If he had made a complaint about the corrupt morals of those who feign a form of godliness, good men would readily agree. For all acknowledge with grief and detest the widespread decline of piety among many and the mere appearance of dead faith. But it is not to be endured that a man who lived so long among the Reformed should impute to them an opinion from which they wholeheartedly shrink—a fact which betrays his malicious mind itching to join the camp of Socinus and the Papists. Certainly the Helvetic Confession (to say nothing of so many other testimonies adduced) seriously urges the necessity of good works in Chapter 16, and among other things it states: "We therefore condemn all who despise good works and babble that they are not to be cared for and are useless." Moreover, our theologians everywhere press pregnant reasons for this necessity: such as that we were chosen in Christ so that we might be holy and blameless before him (Ephesians 1:4); that Christ came to destroy the works of the devil

(1 John 3:8); that Christ gave himself to purify for himself a people zealous for good works (Titus 2:14); that Christ came to bring us to God through our conversion to him (1 Peter 2:18); that hearts are purified by faith (Acts 15:9); that in those who are Christ's he himself lives by his Spirit (Romans 8:2, 5, 7); that those who are Christ's are conformed to Christ, crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24); that those who are Christ's are children of God; and children ought to imitate their heavenly Father (Matthew 5:45–48); that they are friends of God, whose part it is to do what pleases their Beloved; that they are not their own but acknowledge Christ as King and Lord, and therefore obey his precepts and desire to be for his glory, and glorify God. I pass over innumerable testimonies of this kind from Scripture—especially such clear passages as Matthew 5:8; 2 Timothy 2:12–13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 12:14; 1 John 3:2–9—and above all the most expressly attested teaching of James in this very passage.

XII. Meanwhile, our Confession acknowledges that we are not saved by good works, nor are they so necessary for salvation that without them no one has ever been saved. It proves the former from the fact that we are saved by grace and the benefit of Christ alone, not by works, as in Romans 11:6. The latter was long ago proven even by St. Chrysostom in his Oration on Faith, Law, and the Holy Spirit: “By works,” he says, “I can show one who lived a full life and was deemed worthy of the kingdom, but no one lived by faith alone. The thief, however, was justified by faith alone. And do not tell me that he had no time to live rightly. For I do not contend about that, but I have shown this: that faith by itself alone saves. For if he had survived by faith and neglected good works, he would have fallen from salvation.” Yet this is not to be understood as if anyone were saved without affection toward God and neighbor, which naturally flows from saving faith, just as heat from fire and light from the sun; but rather that faith may sometimes lack the course and appearance of external and visible deeds (for this is what “works” in the plural signifies, which Greek Christians, especially Chrysostom, are accustomed to call *πολίτεια*), namely, when the opportunity for such works is excluded. To this pertains that saying of Jerome on Matthew 12: “In the Law, works are required, and whoever does them shall live by them. In the Gospel, the will is sought, which, even if it does not achieve its effect, nevertheless does not lose its reward.” The example of Abraham applies here, whose obedience in verse 21 is commended as an excellent and most outstanding work, by which he is also said to have been justified. And yet it is certain that he did not complete the external work—he did not sacrifice his son by an external act—but only by the disposition of his heart and will, as Salvian says. Therefore, the Bishop of Ross rightly once declared that faith accompanied by good works saves even before their performance.

XIII. Furthermore, the Apostle illustrates his proposition with a simile, which is immediately added in verses 15–16: “If a brother or sister is naked and lacking daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not

give them what is necessary for the body, what good is that?" Hunger and nakedness, by synecdoche, signify all the calamities to which human life is exposed. And "daily food" denotes the daily measure of sustenance. What the comic writers Alexis and Epiphanes called "food for the day," and the Greek interpreters of Daniel 1:5 called "daily provision." Those who live content with this are called by the Greeks καθημεροβίοι. The sense, therefore, is: Just as splendid words, when not matched by deeds, are of no weight—as if you were to send away someone in need of everything, who expects help from you, with a farewell and refer them elsewhere when you both ought and could extend a helping hand—so that barren faith devoid of virtues will profit you nothing at all. As those mock the poor who delight them with words and send them away elsewhere, so do those mock God who imagine for themselves a life empty of works and any duty of piety. Good wishes and omens from one who cannot do more ought not to be despised; but from one who has the power to effect what he desires, they are reckoned as nothing. Then indeed it becomes clear that the substance of faith is in the heart when the inward parts are moved by a brother's need; when we love not in word only, but in deed and in truth, according to the saying of St. John in his first Epistle, chapter 3, verse 18: "My little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and truth." To this agrees that saying of the Hebrew Sages: "The essence of the matter is not speech, discourse, or oration, but deed is the foundation." And also that of Gregory Nazianzen, surnamed the Theologian: "A silent deed is better than vain speech."

XIV. The Apostle expresses the resolution of this parable in these words, verse 17: "Thus also faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself." Therefore, just as a dead man has the appearance of a man but is by no means a man, so he argues that faith empty of works is dead. That empty mask of faith is no more rightly called faith than a corpse is called an animal. In both cases, there is a misuse of the word and a rhetorical concession. Others observe a metaphor in the word "faith" in this passage. Moreover, it is often the case that appearances take on the names of realities. Grotius notes that in this passage, "in itself" or "by itself" is redundant, just as in Matthew 12:26, "by himself," Matthew 13:21, "in himself," and John 15:4, "from himself." The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it: "It is dead itself." The same statement of resolution is repeated in verse 20: "But do you want to know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" Drusius observes here that "without works" functions like an adjective, which the Greeks call an epithet, meaning "faith devoid of works." Hence, it is a manner of speaking such as "a boar from the forest," "thieves by night," and others of that kind, in which a substantive and a preposition take the place of an adjective—as when we read "water for the hands," "lions for the bridle," "dogs for hunting."

XV. Furthermore, the Apostle elaborates on the same statement very fully with a new and most fitting simile toward the end of the chapter, verse 26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead." "Body without the spirit" denotes an

inanimate body or rather one deprived of spirit. For since we never find the word נפש, which means "soul" in Hebrew, rendered by the word πνεύματος by early interpreters of Scripture, there is no doubt that in this passage also, "body without the spirit" means a body deprived of spirit—that is, of vital motion, breath, respiration, or air. For it is understood not so much strictly as "spirit of life." Thus, in Genesis 6:17 and 7:15, ברוח חיים denotes πνευμα ζωης, as the Greeks render it—the vital spirit, a living breath. And similarly in Isaiah 2:22, where it speaks of the Spirit of God departing from man, אשר נשמה באפיו, and ἀναπνοῇ ἐν μυστήρσι, "in whose nostrils is breath," meaning pure respiration and breath. In the same sense, Tertullian speaks in his Apology, chapter 6: "Therefore, it was necessary to offer kisses to relatives, so that they might be judged by the spirit." Cajetan also acknowledges this very point in his commentary on this passage, whose words—expressing the innermost notion of our mind—I shall not hesitate to append. He says: "By the term 'spirit,' it is not the soul that is signified, but breath or air." And he aptly compares works to breath. For just as the body of an animal, if it does not breathe, is dead, so faith, if it does not produce works, is dead. For breath is an effect of a living body, and similarly, operation is the proper effect of living faith. Whence it appears in what sense he said above that faith without works is dead—not because he holds that works are the form of faith, but because he holds that works accompany faith, just as breath accompanies the life of the body." Clearly wisely and aptly said.

Nor does the objection of Grotius help those who think otherwise—that πνευμα sometimes means "soul," as in Luke 23:46 and Acts 7:59. Granted. But nothing compels it to be understood so in this passage, since James intends to assert nothing else than that the body is dead when the spirit is absent—which is more strongly demonstrated by the evidence of absent breath and respiration from our perspective than by the indication of an absent soul. For the absence of breath or respiration evidently proves a posteriori the absence of the soul itself and its faculties, indeed even of bodily spirits and innate heat.

Hence it follows that the Apostle's meaning is that faith deprived of the effect, operation, and fruits of works is no more true and saving than an inanimate body can be called a true human body. Both are dead, and each is rather a corpse than the thing it is called. Moreover, the Apostle preferred to use the example of the body rather than an image, so that the matter might seem more worthless, contemptible, and foul. For nothing is fouler than a dead and decaying body.

XVI. Since these matters stand thus, one certainly begins to wonder at the folly of the Sophists, who from this passage of the Apostle construct a phantom—namely, that their formless faith (which they say is indeed devoid of the form of charity) is true faith and contributes dispositively something to justification or the attainment of charity.

But the Apostle denies that there is any profit or usefulness in that faith which he attacks (v. 16). He calls it “dead in itself” (v. 17), of such a kind as that of the demons (v. 19), and the hypocrisy of vain men (v. 20).

Certainly such is the faith which the Papists alone acknowledge—a faith which does not proceed beyond “saying they have faith,” and which according to itself is limited and terminated in mere assent, while in the meantime it is not accompanied by trust of the heart and will.

It is devoid of an internal and proper form and borrows that form from elsewhere. It is destitute of all life and vital motion—dead. It is vain, empty, unfruitful to its possessor, dried up, bloodless, lifeless, foul like a rotting corpse—with which epithets Tirinus adorns it.

Let them keep that faith for themselves and hold it tightly. We make no use of it, since it is hypocritical, common to demons and to vain and profligate men, and therefore—to speak with the Apostle—it confers no usefulness for salvation and justification.

And finally, it is either a carnal joy on account of certain things heard (such as about righteousness, remission of sins, life, liberty—all of which are pleasant and lovable), or a conviction of the truth of what has been heard; but it utterly excludes the very grace of God in Christ, which faith first apprehends through confession or assent to the divine stipulation, and then through petition and expectation of the promised good.

17. Nevertheless, to prove that dead faith, or that unformed corpse, is true faith—dispositive, as he says, for justification—Bellarmine strains every nerve in various ways in Book I, On Justification, chapter 15. His argument that such faith is called “faith” by the Apostle has been refuted. For we have already noted that the Apostle speaks hieratically and by mimesis. Thus Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:8, “You are already filled, you have already become rich, without us you have begun to reign.” Nor does he name faith absolutely, but speaks *δανειστικῶς* (in a loaned sense): for can such faith save him? Nor is his argument drawn from the Apostle’s comparison any stronger. For he says, “As the spirit is the soul, the form of the body, so also works of charity are the form of faith.” Granted that *πνεῦμα* denotes the soul; yet the simile ought not to be stretched beyond its limits. The Apostle’s aim is none other than to prove that works are inseparable from true faith. He proves this by the likeness of the spirit being inseparable from the living body. But whether the Apostle understood “spirit” as the soul, or as the vital motion, or as breath, the inseparability of works is abundantly confirmed. Beyond this scope, the Apostle’s comparison had to be taken not by force but by its proper value. Otherwise, just as the soul is established as the intrinsic form of the body, imparting every motion to it, so also the same would have to be asserted concerning works with respect to faith. But our adversaries themselves deny that works are the intrinsic form of faith. The Apostle

also clearly denies that the motion of faith depends on charity or works in verse 22, where he teaches that faith cooperates with works. But a body cannot be said to cooperate with the soul. Elsewhere, Paul in Galatians 5:6 declares that faith works through love. By the same reasoning, then, does the body work through the soul, or rather does the soul work through the body?

18. But he insists that dead faith is no less true faith than a dead body is a true body. So be it: just as a dead body is a true dead body, so dead faith is true dead faith. In this way, the epithet “true” (ὅντως ἀληθές) increases rather than diminishes the foulness of that faith. Next, a dead body is a true body, but not a true human body. For the members of a corpse—the eye, ear, etc.—are called by that name only homonymously. For a living body and a dead body are not the same substance and numerically the same body of a human being. In a living body there is a form through which it is a being, and indeed such a being; that form is soul and life. But a lifeless body lacks that form by which it was living and exists under a non-form (so also Dio Cassius says ἡμῶρλαν and Νώξιν; Thucydides says ἐκ ἔξοσιαν; and the author of 2 Maccabees 4:13 says ἀρχιέρεια), as its destruction and decay show. Moreover, it lacks an end; for no function remains either of the whole or of its parts. Furthermore, living and non-living differ in genus and are under the same—but only a remote—genus, namely “body.” If this is applied to dead faith, it will abundantly be established that it is by no means true, useful, or pleasing to God faith. Finally, learned men wisely observe that here the Apostle does not precisely signify by σῶμα a corporeal mass whose parts are outside parts, but rather a human or animal which is understood to be alive if it still breathes; otherwise, it is considered dead. Indeed, this word is commonly used in this way both among secular and sacred authors.

XIX. The Apostle now continues and, through a notable prosopopoeia, sets a certain pious man—endowed with true faith and accustomed to right action—against the hypocrite, in verse 18: “But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works. Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.’”

The particle ἀλλὰ is adversative in such a way as also to continue the argument—as if to say, “I will convince you of the necessity of faith by another means.” Let some devout person come forward, furnished with a living, true, and saving faith. He, O foolish man, will call you to account for your faith. For he may thus challenge you: “You have faith,” or “you say you have faith,” “you imagine you have it.” And yet it is established that living faith is a certain force and efficacy—active, busy, heavenly regeneration, and a divine seed. Wherever, therefore, there is faith, there also are the fruits of faith: the surest proofs and indications of divine nature—that is, trust in God, holiness, and righteousness. I ask, therefore: Can the faith you boast of endure being tested by this touchstone? As for me, I can perform what I demand of you, and so by suitable works give credibility and proof to my faith. Do you likewise. Finally, what need is there for words? Let us be judged by our actions.

The argument is of this kind: True faith is not idle; it cannot lie hidden; it can be demonstrated to every conscience; nor can it be otherwise than by good works; and when called to account, it cannot be put to shame. For faith, as St. Augustine excellently says in *On the Trinity*, Book XIII, Chapter 2, “is in our innermost being: no one sees it in another, but each one in himself; moreover, it can be feigned by hypocrisy and thought to be present where it is not.” Therefore, each one sees his own faith within himself. But true and solid faith requires demonstration through works of unfeigned love.

But the faith you boast of is idle; it cannot be demonstrated; hence, whenever it is called to account, it puts hypocrites to shame by stripping off their mask. Therefore, it is not true, useful, or saving.

Instead of the words “Show me your faith apart from your works,” the Vulgate has: “Show me your faith without works.” So also the Syriac interpreter: “Show me your faith without works.” And likewise the Ethiopic. Moreover, an ancient Greek codex noted in Robert Estienne’s folio edition—which Colinaeus seems to have followed in his Greek New Testament edition (Paris, 1574)—reads χωρὶς ἔργων, “without works.” Calvin also adopts this reading. Nevertheless, the sense comes to the same thing. For that pious man introduced to confront the hypocrite would say: “Show me, if you can, faith without works.” But you cannot do so except through works.

Whatever may be said about that, the rashness of Louis Cappel is not to be tolerated—who, without any manuscript authority, first wrote ἐξω τῶν ἔργων, using a Hebrew phrase in which γῇ נ means “besides,” “except,” “without.” So prone is this critic to impose readings at his pleasure and to change square things into round.

XX. The hypocrite boasts that he certainly believes there is one God and that God is one, and thus in this way he is sufficiently set apart from the Gentiles, as if he were God’s special possession. “You do well,” says either that pious and truly faithful person or the Apostle (v. 19). Yet he immediately shows that the hypocrite does not escape in this way with these words: “Even the demons believe—and shudder.” The argument comes down to this: The faith which the shuddering demons have is not true and saving. For the demons do not hope for salvation but despair, and they even expect more severe torments daily with fear. Such, however, is the faith by which it is believed that God is one, a faith which is not accompanied by pious movements of the will and works of love. There is indeed knowledge in faith, but not knowledge alone. For those who truly know the one God, having been not only illuminated but also kindled by the rays of eternal light, become new men. They cling to God as the highest good, they love Him as a most loving Father; they are struck with awe at His rebuke and fear, but they do not despair.

Bellarmino admits that faith devoid of works agrees with the faith of demons to this extent: that both are true with respect to the object, yet unfruitful. However, he contends

that they differ in that the faith of demons is coerced, whereas the faith of those men is free, with a pious will taking the intellect captive into obedience to Christ. Certainly, it can differ to this extent: that the dead faith of men sometimes has as a companion a temporary joy, which does not befall demons. But we do not acknowledge the sophist's fictitious distinction. For whence do those profane men, who boast of an idle faith, have a pious will? Whence comes the captivity of the intellect into obedience to Christ? These would be indications not of dead faith, but of true, living, saving faith; not of vain and profane men, but of regenerated ones.

XXI. That pious Teacher, whom we said is introduced through a prosopopoeia, continues and convicts the hypocrite with examples—the most effective method of teaching. "Do you want to know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" he says in verse 20. He then immediately demonstrates this with examples. Moreover, he calls that hypocrite a "vain man," not to insult him, but to expose his foolishness. The Syriac renders it as "a weak man," namely in judgment; the Arabic as "vain." Elsewhere, the Syriac and Hebrew simply call a "vain man" empty. "Raka," which is in Matthew 5:22, Hesychius explains: "Raka—empty." And it is customary for the Hebrews to call a fool "empty of brain." Furthermore, with remarkable grace, that hypocrite is called an "empty man." For just as empty vessels, when rolled and shaken, rattle more the emptier they are, so men empty of true faith and righteousness chatter much about God and His righteousness—indeed, with their loquacity they surpass constant, solid men full of God. Oecumenius also aptly opposes to that emptiness the "substance" which the Apostle everywhere attributes to faith.

Moreover, the state of the question in those words must be carefully observed. For not every dispute about the causes of justification is undertaken, but about the quality, so to speak, of the cause—namely justifying faith—that it cannot be devoid of works, and therefore a profession of faith without works deserves to be considered as having no place or number among faith. The following proofs are to be referred to this opinion alone. They are adduced from a twofold example: namely Abraham and Rahab. He chose these examples deliberately, so that in Abraham he might set forth an example of the justification of the Jews; in Rahab, an example of the justification of foreigners; and in both, an example of the justification of believers.

XXII. First, therefore, the example of Abraham is urged. He comes by the name "the faithful" par excellence (Galatians 3:9) and "the father of those who believe" (Romans 4:11). About him Prudentius beautifully sings in the Preface of the Psychomachia: "The faithful old man is the first way of believing, Abram, the wild father of blessed seed." Therefore, according to the standard of that faith, it could not be doubted that faith alone was true, living, and saving.

Thus he describes the faith of Abraham in verse 21: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar?" Certainly, the Spirit of God records many splendid deeds of Abraham. Among them, however, that obedience by which he is said to have offered his son easily stands out—not indeed in an external and completed act, but in a ready will girded for the work and in the performance of the heart, as we previously cited Salvian speaking. For thus the pious are said to do or perform even the will of God when they assent to the Divine will from the heart and diligently gird themselves to carry it out.

Therefore, it most clearly follows that the faith with which that Abraham was endowed—to which even the Apostle in Hebrews 11:17 attributes his acceptable obedience—was not idle, not empty of works, but active and effective in illustrious deeds; and thus the faith without works of hypocrites is by no means true and saving.

XXIII. But truly, you might say, by this example of Abraham it is clearly proven that faith without works is not salvific, but rather dead, which was the point in question. But what relevance does this have to the proposition, or what is the logical connection: Abraham was justified by works; therefore, faith without works is dead? For this is what the Apostle had set out to demonstrate. However, the answer is straightforward. The Apostle's clear question was: Can the faith that someone claims to have, if it lacks works, save them? This is evident from verse 14. That such faith cannot save is proven, among other things, by this argument: because it is dead. Furthermore, he demonstrates that it is dead because it cannot justify. And he argues that it cannot justify by the example of Abraham, who was justified not by faith alone but also by works. Therefore, the proof is of this kind: Idle faith cannot justify; therefore, it cannot save either. The consequence is clear because justification and salvation flow from and depend on faith as antecedent and consequent. The Apostle proves the antecedent with the examples of Abraham and Rahab.

XXIV. Now, since James here asserts that Abraham, the father of believers, was justified by works, and likewise that all believers are justified in the same way, he seems to oppose the Teacher of the Gentiles, who maintains that we are justified by faith alone. This must now be examined briefly as the principal point of contention. And first, let us briefly set forth the interpretations of both ancient and more recent commentators. Primasius, commenting on Paul's words in Romans 3, thinks that James is speaking of works that prove a person to be faithful, while Paul is speaking of works of the law. A person is justified not by the latter but by the former. This explanation, based on a diversity of works while retaining the same meaning of justification in both cases, wrongly attempts a reconciliation. For Paul in Romans 3:20 denies that any flesh is justified before God by works—not even the faithful works of Abraham himself, which prove the sincerity of his faith after he had received it, as he seriously demonstrates in Romans 4:1–2, etc. Therefore, according to Primasius, since James deals with works that

prove a person to be faithful, he ought to have been reconciled with Paul on this point. For what James affirms, Paul denies.

Before Primasius, St. Augustine attempted to reconcile both in this way: he said that Paul's meaning is that a person is justified by faith alone in such a way that no merits of works done before being justified by faith contribute to it; whereas James means that a person is justified by works because, having already been justified, they perform works of charity. The very learned Johann Vorstius, following Horneius, shows in his "Concise Reconciliation of Paul and James," Chapter 4, that this is the opinion which that holy bishop more fully discusses in the Preface to Psalm 31 and in his book of questions, question 76. In the latter place, Augustine briefly teaches that Paul speaks of works preceding faith, while James speaks of works following faith. For good works follow the justified person; they do not precede the one to be justified, as he says in the same chapter on faith and works. I freely admit that this matter is in accordance with the analogy of faith and piety. But I am not equally convinced that this method of reconciliation is suitable. For if Paul's meaning is that a person can be justified by faith alone even if no good works have preceded (although he does not say that a person can be justified by faith even if no good works have been done beforehand, but rather he means that no one can be justified by works done or performed—neither Jew, nor Gentile, nor Christian—by works however excellent done according to the law), it still remains to be explained how James does not contradict him, since James asserts and argues by reasoning that Abraham and indeed all believers were justified by excellent works that certainly preceded.

I now pass over the interpretations of other Fathers which Oecumenius cites in his commentary on this passage—for instance, when he himself employs a distinction regarding faith, asserting that James by the name of faith understands simple assent, while Paul means a conviction proceeding from disposition with firm assent. He adds that some Fathers reconcile them by distinguishing times before and after baptism: before baptism, the one who believes is justified by confession alone, provided they immediately depart from an evil life; but after baptism, the demonstration of good works is required. How little this applies to the matter at hand, no one fails to see. Nor are the opposing views that follow there any more relevant.

XXV. The Areopagites of Trent, Session VI, chapters 8 and 10, adopt this method of reconciliation by saying that faith justifies because it is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and root of all justification; but works, because through this beginning those justified become friends of God, go from virtue to virtue, grow in good works, and are further justified. Others express it thus, saying that Abraham and all the faithful are justified by faith inchoately, but by works perfectly: the former is the first justification, the latter the second, as if saving faith were to lose the force and efficacy which it possesses at the beginning of justification in its progress.

However, it is pleasing to rebuke that grave error of the Sophists with the most effective words of our great Bullinger. Now, therefore, he says on this passage: "That some infer from this that the beginning of justification is of faith, that is, of grace and God, but its completion is of works, that is, of our merits—there is no one who does not see how foreign this is to the purpose of the Apostle, who aims only at this: not to teach that justification is completed by our strength and works, but to refute the opinion and security of those who had faith continually on their lips, but in their life and conduct had perfidy, wantonness, wickedness, avarice, envy. Indeed, it is a diabolical blasphemy to assert that the beginning of our justification is God's, but its perfection is of our works. For this is to adore the work of our hands. This is to ascribe the glory of the Creator to the creature and to worship the creature more than the Creator—nay, to attribute only the beginning to Him, but to ourselves what is more perfect, the completion of justification. Satan desires divine honor to be paid to him. Divine honor is to believe that justifying the impious is the work of God alone. Therefore, whoever ascribes the completion of justification to his own works—does he not blaspheme his Creator with Satanic impiety? The true children of God believe and confess that the beginning of faith and justification, but especially the completion of justification, is of divine grace alone, and that truly good works themselves—not preceding faith but following it—are from God alone, namely, the free gifts of God. Hence with the prophet they cry out: 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.'"

26. Moreover, it will be useful to add this one point, among many other very certain arguments by which the absurd fiction of the first and second, or inchoate and perfective, justification is elsewhere refuted and overthrown: that this reconciliation strongly conflicts both with Paul and with James himself, and therefore ought to be simply rejected.

And indeed, it is clear that it conflicts with Paul, both because he maintains that we are justified by faith alone, excluding any works—indeed, even works opposed to faith—and because he asserts that we are justified freely and by the grace of Christ alone. Also, in Romans 1:17, he teaches that the righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel “from faith to faith,” so that faith is the foundation. Moreover, in Galatians 3:12, he affirms that the law cannot justify because it is not “of faith” but of works, since “the one who does them shall live by them”—an argument that would be ridiculous if we were justified partly by faith and partly by works. Again, in Ephesians 2:8–10, he teaches that we are saved—much less justified—not by works, lest anyone should boast, but “by grace through faith,” and this indeed for the purpose that we should walk in good works. Finally, because when Paul gives examples of justification, he brings forward not only the ungodly but also the godly who have fallen, such as David in Romans 4:6.

Furthermore, it is evident that this reconciliation also conflicts with James: first, because James does speak about justification but says nothing about its increase; second, because

he describes a dead faith—one who has it is spiritually dead, and one who is spiritually dead cannot in any way be said to be justified, nor can he be said to increase by works a righteousness which he does not possess; third, because in verse 23 he cites Scripture, which says that “faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness” and then was fulfilled when he was justified by works—from which it would follow, if the Papists’ reconciliation were valid, that Abraham was justified in both ways at one and the same time, which even they judge absurd, because in that case works of faith would precede both justifications; fourth, because he does not make works the cause of justification but the demonstration of justifying faith (v. 18); and finally, because he attributes justification solidly to works—not with respect to its beginning (if you will), but with respect to its perfection and increase.

Indeed, even Justinian in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 4, rejects this reconciliation, relying especially on two arguments: first, because if Paul is dealing with the first justification of the ungodly, James would necessarily be misusing this testimony to explain the nature of the second justification; second, because what James attributes to it could not rightly be attributed to the second justification—namely, that Abraham is said to have become a friend of God through it, since he had already previously been a friend and righteous.

XXVII. That unfortunate Faustus of Thefibus, in his work on Justification, seeks a reconciliation in the term “works.” He asserts that Paul excludes perfect works of the law from the matter of justification, while James requires for justification works that are possible for a Christian to perform—that is, works which, although not entirely free from every lapse, nevertheless involve putting off the habit of all vices and acquiring all Christian virtues. This is how Volkelius interprets his meaning in Book IV of “On True Religion,” Chapter 3. Similarly, Osterodus and Voidovius in the “Compendium of Socinianism,” Chapter 7, Sections 5–6, hold the same view. Moreover, Socinus himself, in his notes on the “Dialogue on Justification,” number 31, considers that one who has faith in God and is prepared to do all things for the sake of obtaining the promises, but has not yet done anything, is indeed righteous in some way—but not completely, nor as much as if he had actually shown himself obedient. For, he says, many things can happen between the cup and the lip. This was evident in Abraham himself, who was not declared entirely righteous by God until—besides other proofs of his trust in God and obedience to His commands—he finally did not refuse to sacrifice his only son when so commanded. For God Himself said that only then did He know that Abraham feared Him; and the Apostle James says that then the Scripture was fulfilled, etc. He concludes that God indeed looks chiefly at the mind and heart of a person, but that nothing can be firmly decided about that mind until the matter has come to the test.

Thus, the unfortunate conclusion of that unfortunate critic amounts to this: Abraham was justified, and so is any person justified by faith—that is, not by works of the law, nor

even solidly, fully, firmly—but by works, that is, by obedience to the commands of faith, fully, solidly, firmly. Paul says the former; James says the latter.

This doctrine, besides explicitly stating (as Osterodus and Voidovius say in the "Compendium," Chapter 7, Section 2) that we are justified without the obedience of Christ credited to the believer through faith—without any compensation or satisfaction, whether ours or Christ's—makes works and inherent righteousness the cause of our righteousness before God, and thereby denies the righteousness of God and makes God's power His own, as the Prophet says. It also contradicts Paul and James in many ways.

Indeed, it contradicts Paul, who excludes from the causes of justification any works whatsoever—both those that have been done and those that can be done—even those of Abraham and David; nor does he anywhere distinguish works of the law (which he opposes to faith) on the basis of legal perfection. For he says in Romans 3:20: "By works of the law," meaning any works at all, not by perfect and complete observance of the law, "no flesh will be justified." And to what purpose would he oppose faith to anything other than perfect works of the law—which, however, clearly exist in no one at all? The same Apostle shows in Romans 5:1–2ff. that those justified by faith have peace with God, access into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God—which hope does not put to shame (v. 5), clearly because the love of God has been poured out in the hearts of believers through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, justification by faith is no less firm, full, or solid.

Nor is that reconciliation in agreement with James. For there is not even a grain of reason to suppose either that James, by the term "works" by which he affirms Abraham was justified, means different works than Paul means; or that James is investigating the cause of justification rather than the quality of justifying faith.

Besides, what an insult to God and injury to Abraham is this? That Abraham's heart and mind—justified by faith—were not fully known to God until he gave that notable proof of his obedience in offering his son; and that only then was he fully and firmly justified. For from the chronology it is clear that Abraham's justification in uncircumcision preceded Isaac's circumcision by about thirty years; while Isaac's sacrifice did not occur before his fifteenth or twentieth year (for even Hebrew chronologists differ, as we have shown in "History of the Patriarchs," Volume II, Exercise IX.2). So then, did Abraham—called in uncircumcision, justified, and covenanted with by the sacrament of circumcision—walk with God for about fifty years like a tightrope walker of salvation? Even though God said of him before the sacrifice—indeed before Isaac's birth—in Genesis 18:19: "I have known him; therefore he will command his children..." So then, that father of believers had a deceitful, supplanting heart—and God was such a slow searcher of hearts! I shudder to relate it.

XXVIII. Hugo Grotius speaks perplexedly in his commentary on this passage. First, concerning Paul, he denies that Paul opposes faith to works that proceed from faith. He asserts that even under the name of faith, in a somewhat broader sense, works are included. And he opposes only those works which, without faith, can be performed by man's natural powers and merely human institution. Such are all ritual observances, then also abstention from evil actions for the sake of avoiding punishment, and furthermore certain other things which are usually done for the sake of advantage or honor. In this he holds a view common to the Papists and Socinians. Their wishes conspire to this end: that the obedience and righteousness of Christ might be excluded from the justification of a sinner, and that works performed after faith—which are required and remain according to the inexpressible divine law, like a menstruous cloth—might be substituted in its place.

He then adds: Δικαῖον sometimes signifies to be made righteous, sometimes to be treated as righteous and loved. In James, it is taken in the latter sense, and indeed in such a way that both Abraham and Rahab are understood to be treated by God as those who are righteous are usually treated by God, not only with regard to their faith but also on account of the works professed from faith. But first, that latter meaning of the word Δικαῖον ought to have been clearly proven. Secondly, it is an impious assertion that believers are treated by God as friends and righteous not on account of faith in Christ, but on account of works performed through faith. For God has made us accepted in the Beloved, has held us as grateful friends in that beloved one, in Christ our own through faith (Ephesians 1:6; Galatians 2:20). The foundation of divine friendship is not our works, but the obedience of Christ, which both establishes and preserves friendship. And, I ask, did God disdain to hold Abraham—already justified by faith—in His friendship for an interval of fifty years? With whom He struck such a great covenant, embracing all the evangelical promises (Genesis 17:7)!

XXIX. But let us dismiss those blind teachers who, fascinated by the prejudice of their errors, refuse to submit to the righteousness of God. All the orthodox agree unanimously thus far: that the cause of justification is none other than the righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith. However, concerning the manner of reconciling the Apostles, there is not equal agreement among all.

For some think that Abraham and believers are said to be justified ἐκ ἔργων (from works), that is, ἐκ πίστεως ἐργαζομένης (from working faith), or ἐν πίστει δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένης (in faith working through love)—that is, not by that empty specter of faith which James battles, but by a living and effective faith, and one manifesting itself through works, by faith effective through love (Galatians 5:6)—so that it is a metonymy of effect for cause. They point out, namely, that in this whole legitimate act by which the justified are perfected, there are two parts with respect to man: the prior and principal part is faith; the other, its perpetual companion, is a holy life. Again, holy works have true faith as their mother. Through faith we are once justified in the divine forum; through

works we are approved as righteous in the rest of our life. Accordingly, they rightly consider Gregory of Nyssa and Chrysostom as two heads of universal piety: τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἐξ ἡθὸς κατόρθωσιν (faith and moral rectitude). So think Piscator, Jacobus Capellus, Pareus, and quite a number of other followers.

I do not deny, indeed, that this interpretation agrees well enough with the Apostle's purpose, whose intention in this place is not to dispute how we are justified, but what kind and what character that faith is by which we are justified. However, because this metonymy can seem harsh and unusual, and also not consistent with the circumstances of the text—which in verse 22 distinctly distinguishes faith and works—others have thought to take an easier way of reconciliation if it were established that Paul speaks of justification before God, but James of its declaration and demonstration before men.

Although this latter exposition is very close to the truth, yet if the whole matter is weighed without bias, it will become clear from what we will say below that something more is implied.

XXX. Recently, the distinguished gentleman Johannes Vorstius, whom all good men rightly esteem for his singular erudition and wide knowledge, in a particular book on this subject, Chapter 3, sets forth a new way of reconciliation. Namely, he first acknowledges that the word δικαῖωσαι (to justify) signifies equally for St. James and St. Paul "to be accounted righteous, to be considered just." Then, he asserts that for the words of James as well as for the words of Paul, one must understand εἴτε θεῷ, ἢ Deo (whether by God): so that the meaning of James is that a man is accounted righteous by God himself on account of works; whereas Paul intends that a man is by no means accounted righteous by God on account of works. Furthermore, just as the names δίκαιος (righteous) and δικαιοσύνη (righteousness) are taken in a twofold sense in the Holy Scriptures, and sometimes signify and imply a greater and perfect righteousness, other times a lesser and imperfect one: so plainly also concerning the verb δικαῖωσαι (to justify), or to be accounted righteous, it must be held. Therefore, for St. Paul, δικαῖωσαι is to be accounted perfectly righteous; but for St. James the same verb signifies to be accounted righteous in a certain manner, that is, to be considered pious and upright, and truly Christian. By faith alone in Christ, a sinful man is perfectly righteous before God; but by faith together with works, a man already justified by faith is accounted righteous before God in his own manner and imperfectly, that is, considered upright, pious, and Christian. Certainly, this is a pious and faith-analogous reconciliation. It would also be entirely easy and straightforward, provided that the latter meaning of the word δικαῖωσαι can be proven from the sacred Scriptures. For I do not think it sufficient that the terms δίκαιος and δικαιοσύνη are sometimes used concerning the affected righteousness of a Christian man. Indeed, not analogy, but authority and usage, which grammarians teach holds the decision, force, and more certain norm of speaking, ought also to be considered here. Otherwise, what would prevent us from saying that for James δικαῖωσθαι is to be made

righteous, not to be accounted or considered so? This latter meaning would indeed be more precise if analogy were to apply here. For works make one righteous in their own manner (δικαιὸν πῶς), and those who diligently devote themselves to them can be said to be made righteous and more righteous and holier day by day. Less accurately, however, those who are thus made righteous are said to be accounted or considered righteous by the force of that word alone. For indeed, by the perfect righteousness of Christ we are accounted righteous, because that righteousness being given to us and apprehended by faith, we are reckoned before God as if we had fulfilled all righteousness. Something similar cannot so conveniently be said about inherent and imperfect righteousness, unless those relative words are added: ἐνώπιον (in the sight of), or παρὰ Θεῶ (with God), which indeed are found in St. Paul, but not in St. James. Therefore, δικαιῶσθαι ἐνώπιον Θεῶ is to be justified, or perfectly accounted righteous before God. Moreover, δικαιῶσθαι placed absolutely, if the discourse is about perfect and consummate righteousness, can signify the same, because such righteousness can only be called ours by imputation. But δικαιῶσθαι placed absolutely, and indeed in such a way that interior or inherent righteousness is understood—how it can sustain the same signification certainly requires a fuller explanation.

XXXI. Therefore, to finally unfold the implicit notion of our mind, we entirely judge that the same notion of the word δικαιῶσθαι (to justify) holds for both holy Apostles. In both places it signifies to be perfectly accounted righteous, considered, declared righteous. In both places works are distinguished from faith. St. Paul asserts that Abraham and all who are justified are justified by faith alone without works; St. James asserts that the same are justified by works alone, distinct from faith. Yet there is no conflict between the two, but the highest agreement—if not of words, certainly of things—intervenes. For St. Paul deals with the justification of a sinner before the tribunal of God; St. James with the justification of a righteous person before God, the conscience of the justified, and men. The former deals with justification from the prior, from causes; the latter with justification from the posterior, from signs and evident effects. The former descends from cause to effects; the latter ascends from effects to cause. The former deals with justification opposed to the accusation of Satan concerning violation of the law of works through sin; the latter deals with justification opposed to another accusation of the same Satan concerning violation of the condition of the Gospel through hypocrisy and unbelief. The former explains the cause of imputation of righteousness; the latter explains the fulfillment of the word concerning justification by faith made, that is, its establishment and confirmation in our hearts. That these may be more fully understood, let us set forth briefly the necessity and nature of each justification.

XXXII. Concerning the justification of the ungodly sinner (that is, those who are justified by faith are said to be justified as ungodly, sinners, enemies—Romans 4:5; 5:6, 8, 10, 11) and his absolution from the guilt of sin, all orthodox theologians agree that it is

accomplished by the virtue and merit of Christ's most perfect righteousness and obedience, apprehended by faith alone—a doctrine which we have elsewhere more fully established and defended as the sole foundation of saving Christian faith.

Moreover, those who are thus justified—that is, absolved from all guilt of sin and counted perfectly righteous through faith in Christ's fulfillment of the law's requirement, received and embraced by sincere trust of heart—must also be justified in the sight of others. That is, they must demonstrate and declare themselves perfectly righteous in God's judgment—and therefore truly justified and freed from the curse of the law—by visible signs, fruits, and joyful evidences of justifying faith, making their faith's reality most certain by its active demonstration.

This is demanded by the necessary connection and indissoluble bond between justification by faith and holiness—partly on account of God's decree, and partly on account of the inherent disposition of faith. God's decree is clearly expressed by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 12:14: "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." And the Savior himself declares in Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Now the inherent disposition of faith is such that it is impossible for a believer, who partakes of the Holy Spirit and freely possesses the love of God the Father and the Son—together with His satisfaction and all His merits—not to be kindled with mutual love and from there with charity toward his neighbor, and not to be inflamed to follow in Christ's footsteps. Hence Saint Peter teaches in Acts 15:9 that faith purifies hearts—namely, from hatred of God, from murmuring and disputing against God's testimony and the commands of repentance, from love of sin, and from the corruption that is in lust.

This truth is also vigorously demonstrated throughout this entire chapter we have been expounding—to say nothing of many other passages reviewed earlier in passing. From these it follows that those who have already been justified by faith from the first perspective—and are therefore counted righteous—must also, from the second perspective, be counted and declared perfectly righteous on the basis of works and fruits of faith, as by evident proofs; that is, they must be justified by works. This, then, is the justification of the righteous from the second perspective—based on signs and effects which testify to received righteousness and to justifying faith.

XXXIII. The same twofold justification is demonstrated from the twofold judgment of God to which man is subject.

For just as man to be saved can be considered under a twofold relation—either as a sinner, or as converted and called in a state of grace—so also a twofold judgment of God is instituted according to that diverse state of men: one strict and exact, of God as Judge

according to the Law; the other milder and more gracious, of the same God as a merciful Father, according to the Gospel. To this double judgment a double justification also corresponds: one of the sinner, the other of the just or of one justified by faith.

The former takes place on account of the one and only obedience of Christ, received by faith. For since in this there is no place for indulgence or condescension, and therefore a full and adequate satisfaction is required, only Christ's most perfect fulfillment of the Law can endure the strict examination of that severe judgment.

The latter, however, comes about from works. Indeed, in this latter judgment it is not asked whether man has satisfied the Law or has been reckoned to have satisfied it (for this is now presupposed to have been done), but rather whether man, being called and having professed the name and faith of Christ, has answered to the profession of the holy Gospel, and has made his hidden faith manifest by visible works of love and in all deeds.

But if this latter has not been performed, he is condemned according to the law of the Gospel as a pseudo-Christian and hypocrite, who denies in his deeds the form of godliness he has put on, and so, by separating what God willed to be most closely joined, has lied to God Himself. He is absolved, however, and justified if he has performed in good faith what God here requires.

The former justification is opposed to the general condemnation of the sinner; the latter to the special condemnation of the hypocrite. The former is justification properly so called; the latter is the declaration, showing, and demonstration of justification or of the imputed righteousness of Christ.

XXXIV. That justification is opposed to accusation is well known, as the Apostle also testifies in Romans 8:33. Moreover, we are burdened by two accusations in the divine court.

First, we are accused because we are sinners, and therefore guilty of violating the condition of the covenant of works, which threatens perfect life to the righteous but death to the sinner. Secondly, we are accused because we are unbelievers, and so have not fulfilled the condition of the covenant of grace, which is faith.

To this double accusation a double justification is opposed. The first is the justification of the sinner, by which we who believe in Christ—and so lay hold of His righteousness as our own—enter into peace with God and are wholly absolved from the curse of the Law. The second is the justification of the just, by which we who are already converted and justified are absolved from the penalty of unfaithfulness and hypocrisy on account of the demonstrated evidence of faith through works, and so the reproach of hypocrisy is refuted.

The former takes place by faith alone; the latter by works alone. If therefore Satan, that most malicious accuser, attempts to prosecute us as guilty of death on account of sin committed, what shield shall we oppose to him? Truly, faith alone in Christ, who endured in our place the death threatened by the Law. But if Satan, stripped of this defense and armed with decisive arguments, calls into question the possession of faith by believers and charges them with a feigned profession of faith, by what means shall we answer this accusation? Surely by works alone, which prove the sincerity of faith and manifest it to every conscience.

XXXV. But if the question is now raised concerning the tribunal of each justification, it can be resolved by us without difficulty. Indeed, all agree that the tribunal of that justification by which a sinner is absolved is none other than the Divine one. However, the tribunal for the justification of the righteous is twofold: one is immediately Divine and public, the other is the conscience, immediately Divine and private.

The immediately Divine tribunal is established either in this age, at the hour of severe temptation accelerated by God's will, or at the final universal judgment to come at the consummation of the age. Thus in this age, Abraham was justified by works, concerning whom, after he gave a shining example of obedience in the hour of temptation, God Himself declared in Genesis 22:12: "Now I know that you fear God." By this statement, Saint James indicates that the father of believers was justified. Moreover, God says, "Now I have known," by way of anthropopathy, because in this manner He sought a test (as Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians 13:5) — He sought and drew out the proof of Abraham's hidden faith, and thus testified that He was fully pleased with him, and that Abraham himself had made his faith and piety evident before God and men. For although God does not need testing, it is for humans to offer proof of themselves to God. Hence Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:9: "We are ambitious, so that whether present or absent we may be pleasing to Him." And David in Psalm 26:2: "Lord, test me and try me; examine my heart and my mind."

Moreover, Saint James clearly explains in chapter 1, verse 12: "Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life." There those words, "when he has been approved," sound just as if it had been said "when he has been justified," as Camerarius observes. For whoever is approved in judgment is absolved as upright and so is justified.

The other and indeed more solemn Divine tribunal will take place at the final and universal judgment. A vivid description of this exists in Matthew 25:31–32, etc., where especially the judgment of Christians and the called is dealt with, as Saint Augustine acknowledges in Sermon 38 on the Saints and lucidly proves — whom I name with an honorific preface — and the learned Francis Turretin in *On the Concord of Paul and James*, section 32. At least concerning that tribunal and judgment, Matthew 7:21–23

deals with it, where on one side those prophesying in Christ's name and casting out demons are introduced for judgment, and on the other side those doing the will of the Father in heaven — this is evident.

XXXVI. We said the latter tribunal is that of conscience, innately Divine and private. Concerning this, Saint John speaks in his first epistle, 3:18–21: “My little children, let us not love in word or speech only, but in deed and truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.” It is clear, therefore, that a person's heart or conscience is made secure and has confidence before God if he loves not in word but in deed and truth; otherwise, it is self-condemned.

But also Saint Paul expresses the same sense in 2 Corinthians 13:5: “Test yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith; examine yourselves. Or do you not recognize yourselves — that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless indeed you are disqualified.” Therefore, the conscience of a person taking proof of his faith in Christ — certainly from no other source than from works (since works demonstrate faith) — stands or falls with itself as judge, and so is held either approved or unapproved; either justified and absolved, or condemned.

And since conscience is nothing other than God Himself speaking in the heart, absolving or convicting, hence this tribunal is likewise considered Divine, but private and dwelling in the inner recesses of the heart.

Therefore, just as a judge justifies when he decides within himself that someone is innocent or worthy of reward, and then again justifies when he intimates and makes known what he has decided in his mind to the one whom he justifies, so that the latter may rejoice, glory, and exult in that judgment — so also GOD who justifies is said to justify first when He regards a sinner as righteous in Christ and absolves him from all guilt; then again when to the one already regarded as righteous He intimates and pours into the heart and conscience of the justified the sense of the gift of righteousness received through the Holy Spirit — who is given to them and who also speaks through their desires and groans and intercedes before God — so that he may thus rejoice, delight, and glory in God with a serene mind.

The former happens by faith alone; the latter by works alone and by the proving of faith — by the fruits of a non-dead faith that convey the sense of faith.

XXXVII. There are those who invent a third tribunal—namely, a human one—so that they may be said to be justified by works, inasmuch as they are regarded and declared righteous by men on account of visible works. But it must be held that the case of both sinners and believers is tried not in the court of men, but before the tribunal of God alone.

Meanwhile, nothing prevents those who are declared and reckoned righteous—not so much by a human judicial sentence as by a testimony for the glorification of divine grace—from also being said to be justified. For all believers are bound to shine as lights in the world (Philippians 2:15), and indeed to shine as light before men, so that they may see their good works and glorify their Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). Therefore, there is a beautiful summing up in the word “justify,” since, according to the different purpose of the speakers, it sometimes signifies the absolution of a sinner, sometimes that of a righteous or justified person; sometimes the gift of Christ’s righteousness, sometimes the declaration and manifold demonstration of that same gift.

XXXVIII. Nor should that manner of speaking appear insolent to anyone. For first, we have already mentioned above that the word “justify” has the same meaning in both apostles. For both teach that a man is justified—that is, reckoned perfectly righteous—but the one does so in a shameful sense, the other in a declarative sense: the one explains from what cause, the other by what signs we are so regarded. Second, the Savior himself sets forth this twofold justification in Revelation 22:11: “Let the righteous be justified still”—that is, let him who has once been justified from sin strive, through the exercise of faith and the testimony of works, to have a consolation concerning righteousness increasingly abounding day by day. Third, Saint Paul himself supports this notion in Romans 4:2: “For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.” He concedes that Abraham was justified by works. He concedes that he thereby has a boast. He only denies that he thereby has a boast before God. For that someone should be justified by works so as to have boasting before God—that is, so that being justified in Christ and sealed by his Spirit, he may say with joy that God is his Father—is not contrary to faith; rather, it is joined with justification by faith. See Isaiah 45:25; 65:16; Jeremiah 9:23; Deuteronomy 16:13–18; Romans 5:2–3, 11; 1 Peter 3:18. But if you are justified by works so as to have boasting before God and say that you have done what is owed, and so are righteous by your own work—this indeed is diametrically opposed to justification by works. For such boasting belongs to the Son of God alone. The apostle concedes that Abraham was justified by works in the former sense, but denies it in the latter. For the particle “if” is concessive and ought to be taken as “even if,” just as in Romans 11:17 and 1 Corinthians 4:15. Nor is the apostle’s axiom hypothetical, as many learned men seem to take it, but rather disjunctive. Otherwise, the statement would be false. For if Abraham had been justified by works as the cause, he would certainly have boasting before God, as is clear both from Romans 3:27, where the apostle denies that boasting before God is excluded by the law of works (that is, when fulfilled), and from Ephesians 2:8, where the same apostle says, “Not by works, so that no one may boast.” He sufficiently implies that one who is saved and justified by works can indeed boast before God. For he can say, “I have done what I ought” (Luke 17:10), and so eternal life is laid up for me as a reward due by merit and obligation (Romans 4:4). Fourth, the common rule of theologians fits here: A thing is said to be or to be done

when it is understood or declared to be so. Thus in Leviticus 13:3, concerning the priest inspecting a leper, it is said, “He shall pronounce him unclean”—that is, he shall declare him unclean; and in verse 13, “He shall cleanse him”—that is, he shall declare him clean, pronounce him clean. Compare Acts 10:15. And lest we stray too far from our subject, the very word “justify” is not infrequently taken in this way, as in Luke 7:29: “All the people who heard, and the tax collectors, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John”—that is, they ascribed to God praise for his goodness and righteousness. And verse 35: “Wisdom is justified by her children”—that is, acknowledged, celebrated, declared just. Compare Romans 3:4. Christ himself is said in 1 Timothy 3:16 to have been “justified in the Spirit”—that is, according to the apostle’s own interpretation in Romans 1:4, “declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.” So also the Septuagint translators in Ezekiel 21:13 render the word for “proved,” “tested,” as “has been justified.”

39. Meanwhile, we have no agreement here with the Papists, who impose upon us the fiction of a first and second justification. For it is known from Bellarmine (Book II on Justification, Chapter 7) and others that they explain their distinction in such a way that they make both justifications inherent, differing only in degree and progress; they dream that both occur by a certain physical motion, and indeed through merit; and finally, they claim that both render us pleasing to God and fit and suitable for obtaining forgiveness. By the first justification, they assert, the habit of inherent righteousness is infused; by the latter, it is increased. Through the former, they maintain, a person becomes inherently righteous from being unrighteous; through the latter, from being righteous, they become more righteous and holier. They grant that neither occurs by faith alone, nor by the merit of Christ’s righteousness imputed to the believer.

But for us, both are founded solely on the merit of Christ. The first is accomplished through the imputation of Christ’s righteousness apprehended by faith; the latter, through works, for which God’s grace has prepared us so that we might walk in them—not to merit the forgiveness of sins, but to demonstrate faith and the righteousness freely received.

Nevertheless, we judge it safer to abstain from the terminology of first and second justification, even when explained in an orthodox sense, lest we seem to be wrangling like the Cretans, or be accused by those who are weak and troubled by superstition over words, or by the stubborn and obstinate who love to stir up waves in a calm sea.

XL. Let us now return from a long digression—in which we have explained the nature and character of both kinds of justification, so that we might better understand the mind of the Apostle—to the path. Therefore, Saint James says, or rather that devout teacher whom he introduces, that Abraham was justified by works, and likewise in verse 24, that any faithful person is justified by works. From what we have said, it is abundantly clear

that here justification is understood in the posterior sense—of the just person showing forth, declaring, and demonstrating the cause of his signs and effects. Nevertheless, you demand that I confirm this same point with clear arguments drawn from the ancient texts themselves.

First, let us observe that excellent statement of Hilary: "The understanding of what is said must be taken from the causes of the speakers." That is, the intention, purpose, and reasons of the speakers must be thoroughly and carefully weighed. Moreover, we have shown above that James is dealing with those who were already counted among the faithful, who professed the doctrine of the Gospel but did not adorn their holy profession as they ought. In this chapter especially, he demonstrates among other things that faith without works is not salvific, also by this argument: because such faith does not justify. It is therefore manifest that he is not speaking of the cause by which a sinner is justified before the tribunal of God, but both about the quality of that faith which justifies and saves, and about the quality of the one who has been justified—and thus about the signs, fruits, and effects of saving faith and of the righteousness of Christ received through faith.

Second, this same point is clearly gathered from verse 18, where that devout teacher asks that faith be shown to him by works. Therefore, works are and ought to be—by their merit—demonstrative of faith, so to speak, and of the righteousness received through faith.

Third, the order and connection of causes and effects leads to the same conclusion. For in Genesis 15:5 and Romans 4:3, Abraham is declared to be justified by faith. This justification preceded the offering of Isaac by almost fifty years. Throughout that entire interval, who doubts that he was absolved from the guilt of sin and stood in the most fervent grace of God? If nothing else, certainly the very ample covenant made with Abraham in Genesis 17:1–2, etc., in which God was not ashamed to be called "the God of Abraham and of his seed," from which Christ Himself in Matthew 22:32 proves the resurrection of Abraham to glory, gives clear testimony of this fact. I pass over that in the meantime he was also made a partaker of the seal of the righteousness of faith (Romans 4:11). Therefore, he cannot be said to have been justified only after some notable work, as by a meritorious cause. And how, I ask, could he be said to have been justified by that work as a cause, when it followed his justification by faith after the lapse of half a century? Consequently, it remains that this so highly praised obedience was a sign, effect, and testimony of the prior justification—and thus a demonstration from what follows.

Fourth, the Apostle teaches in verse 23 that the prior justification was fulfilled when he was justified by works. Namely, because faith proved itself through works, and by that evidence and argument shone forth clearly—so that Scripture says Abraham believed God—and in no way deceived God (as hypocrites are wont to do), the prior justification

was then fulfilled. If the discussion were about justification as a cause and a priori, nothing could be more absurd than that expression.

Fifth, the words of God to Abraham—as he strenuously carried out the task enjoined upon him in Genesis 21:12: "Now I know that you fear God," etc.—point to the same conclusion. Therefore, this work did not serve to make the doer righteous, but rather by this trial it became clearly evident that he seriously and without hypocrisy feared God, and that faith was truly imputed to him for righteousness.

Sixth, Abraham is said to have been justified by that illustrious work by being "called a friend of God" in verse 23—that is, declared, publicly before all, and even solemnly manifested in a special way to the conscience of the justified person himself. For before this he was both a friend and a covenant partner of God, and fortified with the seal of the covenant. Only now did the solemn publication follow. Therefore, it is not said "he became a friend," but "he was called." The reasoning concerning friendship is the same as that concerning justification.

Seventh and finally, the works by which the Apostle attributes justification in verse 26 are compared with "the spirit"—that is, as we have already shown, with "breath" and "motion." Just as breath is an effect and sign of a living body, so also the works of justifying faith—and indeed even the evidences, signs, and effects of justification itself—manifestly follow.

This opinion has also been approved by celebrated doctors even within Papism. Thomas Aquinas, in his Commentary on Galatians chapter 3, lecture 1–4, seeking to reconcile James with Paul, says: "Works are not the cause that someone is just before God, but the executions and manifestations of righteousness." So also Hugo Cardinalis and Dionysius Carthusianus. The Ordinary Gloss says: "Abraham was not made just by the works which he did, but by faith alone. But his offering is a work and testimony of faith and righteousness."

XLI. From the example of Abraham justified by works, there follows an address to that hypocrite with whom the pious teacher had to deal. "You see," he says, "that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect" (v. 22–23). Here two characteristics of living Abrahamic faith are deduced.

First, that Abraham's faith συνήγει τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ—cooperated with his works. So the Vulgate renders it. But Beza: "was a minister to his works." Others: "supplied his works," or "into works," as their efficient cause, and therefore superior to them. Thus, συνεργεῖν here means to supply—according to the authority of the old glossary ascribed to Cyril, never sufficiently praised. Just as the root supplies what is necessary both for preserving the plant and for producing fruit, so faith supplies all necessary things to

works, as their cause. This explanation would be easy and straightforward, and would remove all doubt.

The Oriental interpreters—Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic—have that faith was like a beast of burden to works. Nor is theirs to be scorned who observe that James delights in compound words, which, when resolved, render the sense more clear. So in this chapter, v. 6: “The rich καταδυναστεύουσιν ὑμῶν”—that is, “the rich oppress you.” And v. 7: “κατασυκοφαντοῦσιν ὑμᾶς κρίσεως”—that is, “they defraud you by judgment.” Chap. IV, v. 11: “Μὴ καταλαλεῖτε ἀλλήλων”—that is, “Do not speak evil of one another.” So plainly here he says: συνήργει τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ—that is, “it was cooperating with his works unto justification.”

But let it be granted that faith is said to cooperate—how then? Unto justification? And in such a way that by it and its works together the soul is justified? So it seems to Bellarmine, and likewise to Hugo Grotius, who thence concludes that both faith and the works of faith can be called the instrumental cause of justification, and so also of salvation. But these things are utterly incongruous. For nowhere does Scripture make works a cause of justification. And good works—even that obedience of Abraham so highly praised before—Paul in Hebrews XI attributes to faith as the cause.

But why say more? James himself concedes that Abraham was justified by faith alone before works. Therefore works did not concur as a cause. But faith is rightly said to cooperate with works: first, because it is not idle, devoid of works and of working people, but rather effective through love—which was the very point James undertook to prove; second, because works, as fruits of faith, have their goodness from faith—so much so that without faith they are unclean and sinful (Rom. XIV:23); and finally, because the works of believers are performed for the manifestation and demonstration of the faith hidden within and of the righteousness of Christ received through faith.

We must not neglect the principal scope of the Apostle, which turns on this: that if faith does not have works, it is of no avail for salvation. Among other things, he proves this because it is dead. It is dead because it could not justify Abraham without works. Whence he concludes: “You see, therefore, that Abraham’s faith συνήργει τοῖς ἔργοις”—and so had works joined with it.

But if faith had works joined with it as its fruits, does it follow that faith and works were co-causes of justification? Surely if things are joined and work together, they must necessarily be ordered to produce the same effect—which everyone sees is absurd.

Now the reason why the Apostle said συνεργεῖν, not simply ἐνεργεῖν, is readily apparent. He was dealing with hypocrites who thought that the one work of faith was merely to believe. But he requires that it be exercised not only in believing but also in working. Therefore he did not say simply ἐνεργεῖν, but συνεργεῖν.

XLII. The possession of living Abrahamic faith is established in this: that faith was perfected by works—that is, it was shown to be true, living, and genuine, having the substance of the term, not merely the word. Thus, in 2 Corinthians 12:9, the power of God is said to be made perfect in our weakness—that is, to be demonstrated as complete and to exert its strength in it. For indeed, the virtue of God is neither increased nor diminished in itself, but it is then most fully perfected when it accomplishes what in human judgment is the highest: when, placed in the greatest straits and in death itself, we live and breathe, and so the power of God declares that it exerts its highest force. In this way, a building is said to be perfected by its ornaments, a bride by her adornment, an architect by his work, a tree by its fruit, any cause by its effect, a habit or power by its act—that is, to be declared perfect. For indeed, we judge a cause by its effects; the force and perfection of the cause itself seem in some way to be diminished or increased by the proportion of the effects. In the same sense, James 3:2 calls a man perfect who does not stumble in speech—for this is rightly held to be an undoubted mark of perfection and completion. Among the Greeks, "perfect strength" refers to outstanding, just, generous, and splendid sacrifices. Accordingly, by the same token, "to be made perfect" means to be rendered outstanding and splendid. For thus works make faith outstanding and splendid. We bid the sophists keep their opinions to themselves, who hold that faith is perfected in itself and essentially by works. For faith has its essential perfection from its internal form, not from elsewhere, and indeed does not borrow it from its effects.

XLIII. That Abraham was justified by works, that pious teacher had said a little before. But lest anyone should think Scripture—which clearly asserts he was justified by faith—to be contradictory, he now adds that justification by works does not nullify justification by faith but rather establishes and confirms it. For thus he adds in verse 23: "And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,' and he was called a friend of God." How then was it fulfilled? Namely, because by giving a great and illustrious proof, it appeared that his faith—by which he was justified—was true and living. Just as the fulfillment of the declaration concerning justification by faith occurs in glorification, so also it occurs in ongoing sanctification, which leads to glory. In both cases, the justification of faith is fulfilled as a cause in its necessary consequent effect, undoubtingly flowing from it. That he is called a friend of God seems to be explained from the sworn covenant that God made with Abraham immediately after testing his obedience, as read in Genesis 22:16. From this, it is abundantly clear from 2 Chronicles 20:7 and Isaiah 41:8 that the name "friend" became fixed upon him. Certainly, Abraham had already been a friend and ally of God before this. But only now did that friendship, thoroughly tested, begin to be seen by all publicly.

XLIV. Finally, the example of Abraham's faith is concluded with a statement directed not only to the hypocrite but to all, and brought from hypothesis to thesis, verse 24: "You see then that a person is justified by works, and not by faith alone." Here again, the

Sophists make works and faith joint causes of justification. And Grotius notes that “by faith alone” is the same as “by faith only,” and the meaning is that for someone to have God as a supporter and friend as though righteous, faith alone does not suffice, but works are also required—if indeed time and opportunity for performing them are given.

However, it must be firmly maintained that by the name “faith” in this place is understood either that which the holy Apostle opposes—namely, dead faith, devoid of works—or that faith which is imputed to the believer for righteousness, which the Apostle also taught was imputed to the believing Abraham for righteousness. If the former, with what audacity would they dare to make such dead faith—a mere mask of true faith—a joint cause of justification? If the latter, as the reference to Abraham’s faith just described certainly seems to indicate, it is clear that a false and justifying faith is understood; not as joint causes of the same justification, but as different justifications—one from a cause, the other distinguished by signs and effects.

For just as faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness—not as a half or partial cause, but as the solid, full, and perfect cause of his justification, by which he was justified before the tribunal of God (that is, absolved from the guilt of sin)—so also the faith which is imputed to all believers for righteousness is the sole, full, and solid cause of that justification by which they are justified before the tribunal of God and absolved from the guilt of sin. Nor can faith and works be joint causes of one and the same justification. The nature of each is very different, and we are said to be justified in quite different ways “by faith” and “by works.”

To be justified by faith signifies “faith counted as righteousness.” But to be justified by works does not mean, according to the Apostle, “works counted as righteousness,” but rather “the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Faith was imputed to him for righteousness.’” If works had been imputed to Abraham for righteousness, Scripture would not have been fulfilled but overturned when it said that faith was reckoned as righteousness.

What then? The holy Apostle distinguishes a double justification: one of faith as the cause, and one of works as the effect and evidence—as if to say: There is a justification by faith; but it does not stand alone. Rather, justification by works follows it in an unbreakable connection, so that he who is righteous may be justified still further. Therefore, he rightly concludes that a person is justified not by faith alone, but also by works.

XLV. The Apostle has so far used the example of Abraham primarily for the sake of the Jews. Now, for the sake of foreigners and Gentiles, he also brings forward the example of Rahab, a foreign and Gentile woman, in verses 2 and 5, in these words: “Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them

out another way?” There is no need here to recount the history narrated in Joshua 2. It will suffice to observe that both the faith and the work of Rahab are distinctly mentioned there. Her faith is attested by these words: “The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath” (v. 11). To this faith as the cause, the Apostle in Hebrews 11:31 attributes that illustrious work, a true proof of faith, by which she both received those guests and, having first kept them safe from the snares of the enemy, sent them away at last not without danger to herself by a different route. Indeed, before God she was first justified and absolved from the guilt of sin by faith. For this was the first work of the Holy Spirit in her, through whom she was in Christ; and through that faith she assented to God’s covenant of grace. She believed that the Creator of heaven and earth had promised to Israel that He would be their God, and so she believed in gratuitous justification. At the very least, she desired to learn the means of justification; nor was she ignorant of those things which had been handed down from the fathers of Israel concerning the seed. Better is the faith of one who thirsts for righteousness and desires to be taught its cause, than of one who, satisfied and full of his own knowledge, rests content. And whatever else may be said, the Apostle attributes faith to Rahab—he who throughout that whole chapter preaches no other faith than that which leans upon Christ. And, having already been justified before God by that faith, she gave a clear demonstration of her justification and living faith when she risked her life for the Israelites, successfully preparing the way for the messengers of salvation. In this way, the holy Apostle asserts that she was justified by works.

Now let those who assert that a sinner is justified before God by his works as by a meritorious cause declare whether they think the harlot (for the Apostle himself teaches us that “Rahab” means “harlot,” not merely “innkeeper,” as Onkelos renders it—evidently derived from רחב, not from רחב) was absolved before God from the guilt of her preceding sins, to which she had been devoted even to infamy, by this one work? Yet the perfect law, consummated in every part of righteousness, promises justification of this kind, and most clearly teaches that the wages of any sin is death. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that justification by faith and the imputation of it unto perfect righteousness must come first; and then immediately follows justification by works—that is, the undeniable demonstration and evidence of that already accepted perfect righteousness by works.

XLVI. Finally, to prove further that faith without works is dead, the Apostle adds a most beautiful saying, adorned with an elegant simile in verse 26: “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” We have already discussed this very fitting parable above in chapter 15.

XLVII. Now the consolations of the Holy Apostles and their harmonious agreement throughout concerning the doctrine of faith and justification can be precisely determined. To compare them briefly:

First, St. James denies that faith devoid of works has any benefit or can save. He calls it dead and, without works, its fruit unfruitful—as Salvian says, he asserts. Therefore, he requires a living faith, productive of good works.

The same is the constant doctrine of St. Paul, who by the name of that faith to which he attributes justification, certainly does not mean an idle and barren one, but one active, shining forth through deeds acceptable to God, etc., as he himself says in Galatians 5:6, "working through love" everywhere understood.

Hence, in the entire eleventh chapter of Hebrews, he pathetically describes the closest and indivisible bond of faith and charity or good works, setting forth the examples of the holy Fathers. And in 1 Corinthians 13:2, etc., he denies that "with all faith," namely of miracles, which apprehends the power of God in performing wonders, without the addition of charity, profits anything—using the same phrase as St. James, "What profit?"

Second, St. James both asserts and proves in verse 21–23 that Abraham was justified by works. St. Paul is clearly of the same mind, who says the same thing in Romans 4:2 and affirms it in almost the same words we have explained above.

Third, St. James asserts in verse 23 that the same Abraham was so justified by faith that faith was imputed to him for righteousness. St. Paul states the same in Romans 4:2 in explicit words and explains it a little more fully.

Fourth, St. James infers in verse 24 that a man, namely a sinner, is justified by faith. But this very thing is easily the chief and outstanding doctrine of St. Paul, both in both Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, and elsewhere as well.

Fifth, St. James establishes there that a man is justified not by faith only, but also by works. Now, to be justified by works means to him the same as to be reckoned righteous by works as the fruits, signs, and effects of faith and accepted righteousness—as we have clearly shown above.

That St. Paul is of the same mind is gravely demonstrated and confirmed both from the fact that he concedes Abraham was justified by works in Romans 4:2, and from the fact that he teaches elsewhere that those justified ought not to remain in sin, but to walk in newness of life with Christ (Romans 6:1–2, etc.), not to mention that he most earnestly and incessantly inculcates the pursuit of holiness and good works.

Sixth, St. James concludes from the example of Abraham in verse 22 that faith "works together with works," that is, it operates conjointly with works, not without them; that it is the cause of good works and imparts goodness to them; and that both operate—faith justifying the sinner, works justifying the righteous.

St. Paul taught no differently: he nowhere separates saving faith from works but everywhere joins them, declares that works done in faith are sins no longer, and establishes justification for both faith and works.

The same St. James teaches that faith is "made perfect" by works, that is, shown and declared to be perfect. St. Paul also, everywhere joining works and charity with living faith, not obscurely affirms that the perfection of faith consists in works; indeed, he denies that idle faith profits anything (1 Corinthians 13:3).

Who, therefore, would dare to doubt even a little about the most sweet harmony of the eminent Apostles? Each, according to the wisdom and understanding given him, sailed excellently toward his own goal. And St. James indeed, both following the guidance of the Holy Spirit and mindful of the right hand of fellowship extended to St. Paul (Galatians 2:9), correcting those who had misunderstood St. Paul—as St. Augustine says—acted as a vigorous defender and interpreter of his doctrine, most wickedly twisted by hypocrites.

XLVIII. We are pleased to seal our harmonious confession with the words of the Helvetic Confession, which encompasses all things in a few statements. Therefore, it says in Chapter XV: In this matter we speak not of a feigned faith, nor of an empty, idle, or dead faith, but of a living and life-giving faith. Because of Christ—who is life and gives life, whom this faith embraces—it is called living and shows itself to be alive through living works.

Thus, that James who speaks of an empty and dead faith—which some boasted of having, though they did not possess Christ living in them through faith—does not contradict our doctrine. The same James said that works justify, not contradicting the Apostle (otherwise he would have to be rejected), but showing that Abraham demonstrated his living and justifying faith through works. This is what all the devout do, who nevertheless trust in Christ alone and not in their own works.

For again the Apostle said: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

Moreover, with suppliant prayers we revere God the Father of lights, from whom—as Saint James also reminds us—comes "every good gift and every perfect gift." We pray that He may grant this most excellent and saving doctrine uniquely to our understanding and inscribe it upon our hearts by His Spirit, so that we may express the Gospel teaching not with empty sounds of words but with deeds worthy of Christ. Let us strive to enter into that rest—not as if faith were insufficient from the beginning, but as though purity of life must also be added and great diligence applied in this matter.

Let us consider that faith without works profits nothing—unless it renders us liable to even greater sin, since we have received the talent but have not returned the profit. So gravely speaks Oecumenius toward the end of his commentary on this very chapter.

To the Holy Spirit be honor, glory, and eternal strength forever. Amen.