

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession

Philip Melanchthon

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by Philip Melanchthon

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The Apology of the Augsburg Confession

by Philip Melancthon

Translated by F. Bente and W. H. T. Dau

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The Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531)

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INTRODUCTION

THE APOLOGY OF THE CONFESSION.

Philip Melancthon Presents His Greeting to the Reader. Wherefore we believe that troubles and dangers for the glory of Christ and the good of the Church should be endured, and we are confident that this our fidelity to duty is approved of God, and we hope that the judgment of posterity concerning us will be more just.

For it is undeniable that many topics of Christian doctrine whose existence in the Church is of the greatest moment have been brought to view by our theologians and explained; in reference to which we are not disposed here to recount under what sort of opinions, and how dangerous, they formerly lay covered in the writings of the monks, canonists, and sophistical theologians. [This may have to be done later.]

We have the public testimonials of many good men, who give God thanks for this greatest blessing, namely, that concerning many necessary topics it has taught better things than are read everywhere in the books of our adversaries.

We shall commend our cause, therefore, to Christ, who some time will judge these controversies, and we beseech Him to look upon the afflicted and scattered churches, and to bring them back to godly and perpetual concord. [Therefore, if the known and clear truth is trodden under foot, we will resign this cause to God and Christ in heaven, who is the Father of orphans and the Judge of widows and of all the forsaken, who (as we certainly know) will judge and pass sentence upon this cause aright. Lord Jesus Christ, it is Thy holy Gospel, it is Thy cause; look Thou upon the many troubled hearts and consciences, and maintain and strengthen in Thy truth Thy churches and little flocks, who suffer anxiety and distress from the devil. Confound all hypocrisy and lies, and grant peace and unity, so that Thy glory may advance, and Thy kingdom, strong against all the gates of hell, may continually grow and increase.]

Part 1

Article I: Of God.

The First Article of our Confession our adversaries approve, in which we declare that we believe and teach that there is one divine essence, undivided, etc., and yet, that there are three distinct persons, of the same divine essence, and coeternal, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This article we have always taught and defended, and we believe that it has, in Holy Scripture, sure and firm testimonies that cannot be overthrown. And we constantly affirm that those thinking otherwise

are outside of the Church of Christ, and are idolaters, and insult God.

Article II (I): _Of Original Sin._

The Second Article, Of Original Sin, the adversaries approve, but in such a way that they, nevertheless, censure the definition of original sin, which we incidentally gave. Here, immediately at the very threshold, His Imperial Majesty will discover that the writers of the _Confutation_ were deficient not only in judgment, but also in candor. For whereas we, with a simple mind, desired, in passing, to recount those things which original sin embraces, these men, by framing an invidious interpretation, artfully distort a proposition that has in it nothing which of itself is wrong. Thus they say: "To be without the fear of God, to be without faith, is actual guilt"; and therefore they deny that it is original guilt.

It is quite evident that such subtleties have originated in the schools, not in the council of the Emperor. But although this sophistry can be very easily refuted; yet, in order that all good men may understand that we teach in this matter nothing that is absurd, we ask first of all that the German Confession be examined. This will free us from the suspicion of novelty. For there it is written: _Weiter wird gelehrt, dass nach dem Fall Adams alle Menschen, so natuerlich geboren werden, in Suenden empfangen und geboren werdenen, das ist, dass sie alle von Mutterleibe an voll boeser Lueste und Neigung sind, keine wahre Gottesfurcht, keinen wahren Glauben an Gott von Natur haben koennen._ [It is further taught that since the Fall of Adam all men who are naturally born are conceived and born in sin, i.e., that they all, from their mother's womb, are full of evil desire and inclination, and can have by nature no true fear of God, no true faith in God.] This passage testifies that we deny to those propagated according to carnal nature not only the acts, but also the power or gifts of producing fear and trust in God. For we say that those thus born have concupiscence, and cannot produce true fear and trust in God. What is there here with which fault can be found? To good men, we think, indeed, that we have exculpated ourselves sufficiently. For in this sense the Latin description denies to nature [even to innocent infants] the power, i.e., it denies the gifts and energy by which to produce fear and trust in God, and, in adults [over and above this innate evil disposition of the heart, also] the acts, so that, when we mention concupiscence, we understand not only the acts or fruits, but the constant inclination of the nature [the evil inclination within, which does not cease as long as we are not born anew through the Spirit and faith].

But hereafter we will show more fully that our description agrees with the usual and ancient definition. For we must first show our design in preferring to employ these words in this place. In their schools the adversaries confess that "the material," as they call it, "of original sin is concupiscence." Wherefore, in framing the definition, this should not have been passed by, especially at this time, when some are philosophizing concerning it in a manner unbecoming teachers of religion [are speaking concerning this innate, wicked desire more after the manner of heathen from philosophy than according to God's Word, or Holy Scripture].

For some contend that original sin is not a depravity or corruption

in the nature of man, but only servitude, or a condition of mortality [not an innate evil nature, but only a blemish or imposed load, or burden], which those propagated from Adam bear because of the guilt of another [namely, Adam's sin], and without any depravity of their own. Besides, they add that no one is condemned to eternal death on account of original sin, just as those who are born of a bond-woman are slaves, and bear this condition without any natural blemish, but because of the calamity of their mother [while, of themselves, they are born without fault, like other men: thus original sin is not an innate evil but a defect and burden which we bear since Adam, but we are not on that account personally in sin and inherited disgrace]. To show that this impious opinion is displeasing to us, we made mention of "concupiscence," and, with the best intention, have termed and explained it as "diseases," that "the nature of men is born corrupt and full of faults" [not a part of man, but the entire person with its entire nature is born in sin as with a hereditary disease].

Nor, indeed, have we only made use of the term concupiscence, but we have also said that "the fear of God and faith are wanting." This we have added with the following design: The scholastic teachers also, not sufficiently understanding the definition of original sin, which they have received from the Fathers, extenuate the sin of origin. They contend concerning the fomes [or evil inclination] that it is a quality of [blemish in the] body, and, with their usual folly, ask whether this quality be derived from the contagion of the apple or from the breath of the serpent, and whether it be increased by remedies. With such questions they have suppressed the main point. Therefore, when they speak of the sin of origin, they do not mention the more serious faults of human nature, to wit, ignorance of God, contempt for God, being destitute of fear and confidence in God, hatred of God's judgment, flight from God [as from a tyrant] when He judges, anger toward God, despair of grace, putting one's trust in present things [money, property, friends], etc. These diseases, which are in the highest degree contrary to the Law of God, the scholastics do not notice; yea, to human nature they meanwhile ascribe unimpaired strength for loving God above all things, and for fulfilling God's commandments according to the substance of the acts; nor do they see that they are saying things that are contradictory to one another. For what else is the being able in one's own strength to love God above all things, and to fulfil His commandments, than to have original righteousness [to be a new creature in Paradise, entirely pure and holy]? But if human nature have such strength as to be able of itself to love God above all things, as the scholastics confidently affirm, what will original sin be? For what will there be need of the grace of Christ if we can be justified by our own righteousness [powers]? For what will there be need of the Holy Ghost if human strength can by itself love God above all things, and fulfil God's commandments? Who does not see what preposterous thoughts our adversaries entertain? The lighter diseases in the nature of man they acknowledge, the more severe they do not acknowledge; and yet of these, Scripture everywhere admonishes us, and the prophets constantly complain [as the 13th Psalm, and some other psalms say Ps. 14, 1-3; 5, 9; 140, 3; 36, 1], namely, of carnal security, of the contempt of God, of hatred toward God, and of similar faults born with us. [For Scripture clearly says that all these things are not blown at us, but born with us.] But after the scholastics mingled with Christian doctrine philosophy concerning the perfection of nature [light of reason], and ascribed to the free will and the acts springing therefrom more than was sufficient, and taught

that men are justified before God by philosophic or civil righteousness (which we also confess to be subject to reason, and in a measure, within our power), they could not see the inner uncleanness of the nature of men. For this cannot be judged except from the Word of God, of which the scholastics, in their discussions, do not frequently treat.

These were the reasons why, in the description of original sin, we made mention of concupiscence also, and denied to man's natural strength the fear of God and trust in Him. For we wished to indicate that original sin contains also these diseases, namely, ignorance of God, contempt for God, the being destitute of the fear of God and trust in Him, inability to love God. These are the chief faults of human nature, conflicting especially with the first table of the Decalog.

Neither have we said anything new. The ancient definition understood aright expresses precisely the same thing when it says: "Original sin is the absence of original righteousness" [a lack of the first purity and righteousness in Paradise]. But what is righteousness? Here the scholastics wrangle about dialectic questions, they do not explain what original righteousness is. Now, in the Scriptures, righteousness comprises not only the second table of the Decalog [regarding good works in serving our fellow-man], but the first also, which teaches concerning the fear of God, concerning faith, concerning the love of God. Therefore original righteousness was to embrace not only an even temperament of the bodily qualities [perfect health and, in all respects, pure blood, unimpaired powers of the body, as they contend], but also these gifts, namely, a quite certain knowledge of God, fear of God, confidence in God, or certainly the rectitude and power to yield these affections [but the greatest feature in that noble first creature was a bright light in the heart to know God and His work, etc.]. And Scripture testifies to this, when it says, Gen. 1, 27, that man was fashioned in the image and likeness of God. What else is this than that there were embodied in man such wisdom and righteousness as apprehended God, and in which God was reflected, i.e., to man there were given the gifts of the knowledge of God, the fear of God, confidence in God, and the like? For thus Irenaeus and Ambrose interpret the likeness to God, the latter of whom not only says many things to this effect, but especially declares: That soul is not, therefore, in the image of God, in which God is not at all times. And Paul shows in the Epistles to the Ephesians, 5, 9, and Colossians, 3, 10, that the image of God is the knowledge of God, righteousness, and truth. Nor does Longobard fear to say that original righteousness is the very likeness to God which God implanted in man. We recount the opinions of the ancients, which in no way interfere with Augustine's interpretation of the image.

Therefore the ancient definition, when it says that sin is the lack of righteousness, not only denies obedience with respect to man's lower powers [that man is not only corrupt in his body and its meanest and lowest faculties], but also denies the knowledge of God, confidence in God, the fear and love of God, or certainly the power to produce these affections [the light in the heart which creates a love and desire for these matters]. For even the theologians themselves teach in their schools that these are not produced without certain gifts and the aid of grace. In order that the matter may be understood, we term these very gifts the knowledge of God, and fear

and confidence in God. From these facts it appears that the ancient definition says precisely the same thing that we say, denying fear and confidence toward God, to wit, not only the acts, but also the gifts and power to produce these acts [that we have no good heart toward God, which truly loves God, not only that we are unable to do or achieve any perfectly good work].

Of the same import is the definition which occurs in the writings of Augustine, who is accustomed to define original sin as concupiscence [wicked desire]. For he means that when righteousness had been lost, concupiscence came in its place. For inasmuch as diseased nature cannot fear and love God and believe God, it seeks and loves carnal things. God's judgment it either contemns when at ease, or hates, when thoroughly terrified. Thus Augustine includes both the defect and the vicious habit which has come in its place. Nor indeed is concupiscence only a corruption of the qualities of the body, but also, in the higher powers, a vicious turning to carnal things. Nor do those persons see what they say who ascribe to man at the same time concupiscence that is not entirely destroyed by the Holy Ghost, and love to God above all things.

We, therefore, have been right in expressing, in our description of original sin, both namely, these defects: the not being able to believe God, the not being able to fear and love God; and, likewise: the having concupiscence, which seeks carnal things contrary to God's Word, i.e., seeks not only the pleasure of the body, but also carnal wisdom and righteousness, and, contemning God, trusts in these as god things. Nor only the ancients [like Augustine and others], but also the more recent [teachers and scholastics], at least the wiser ones among them, teach that original sin is at the same time truly these namely, the defects which I have recounted and concupiscence. For Thomas says thus: Original sin comprehends the loss of original righteousness, and with this an inordinate disposition of the parts of the soul; whence it is not pure loss, but a corrupt habit [something positive]. And Bonaventura: When the question is asked, What is original sin? The correct answer is, that it is immoderate [unchecked] concupiscence. The correct answer is also, that it is want of the righteousness that is due. And in one of these replies the other is included. The same is the opinion of Hugo, when he says that original sin is ignorance in the mind and concupiscence in the flesh. For he thereby indicates that when we are born, we bring with us ignorance of God unbelief, distrust, contempt, and hatred of God. For when he mentions ignorance, he includes these. And these opinions [even of the most recent teachers] also agree with Scripture. For Paul sometimes expressly calls it a defect [a lack of divine light], as 1 Cor. 2, 14: The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. In another place, Rom. 7, 5, he calls it concupiscence working in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. We could cite more passages relating to both parts, but in regard to a manifest fact there is no need of testimonies. And the intelligent reader will readily be able to decide that to be without the fear of God and without faith are more than actual guilt. For they are abiding defects in our unrenewed nature.

In reference to original sin we therefore hold nothing differing either from Scripture or from the Church catholic, but cleanse from corruptions and restore to light most important declarations of Scripture and of the Fathers, that had been covered over by the sophistical controversies of modern theologians. For it is manifest

from the subject itself that modern theologians have not noticed what the Fathers meant when they spake of defect [lack of original righteousness]. But the knowledge of original sin is necessary. For the magnitude of the grace of Christ cannot be understood [no one can heartily long and have a desire for Christ for the inexpressibly great treasure of divine favor and grace which the Gospel offers], unless our diseases be recognized. [As Christ says Matt. 9, 12; Mark 2, 17: They that are whole need not a physician.] The entire righteousness of man is mere hypocrisy [and abomination] before God, unless we acknowledge that our heart is naturally destitute of love, fear, and confidence in God [that we are miserable sinners who are in disgrace with God]. For this reason the prophet Jeremiah, 31, 19, says: After that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh. Likewise Ps. 116, 11: I said in my haste, All men are liars, i.e., not thinking aright concerning God.

Here our adversaries inveigh against Luther also because he wrote that, "Original sin remains after Baptism." They add that this article was justly condemned by Leo X. But His Imperial Majesty will find on this point a manifest slander. For our adversaries know in what sense Luther intended this remark that original sin remains after Baptism. He always wrote thus, namely, that Baptism removes the guilt of original sin, although the material, as they call it, of the sin, i.e., concupiscence, remains. He also added in reference to the material that the Holy Ghost, given through Baptism, begins to mortify the concupiscence, and creates new movements [a new light, a new sense and spirit] in man. In the same manner, Augustine also speaks who says: Sin is remitted in Baptism, not in such a manner that it no longer exists, but so that it is not imputed. Here he confesses openly that sin exists, i.e., that it remains although it is not imputed. And this judgment was so agreeable to those who succeeded him that it was recited also in the decrees. Also against Julian, Augustine says: The Law, which is in the members, has been annulled by spiritual regeneration, and remains in the mortal flesh. It has been annulled because the guilt has been remitted in the Sacrament, by which believers are born again; but it remains, because it produces desires against which believers contend. Our adversaries know that Luther believes and teaches thus, and while they cannot reject the matter, they nevertheless pervert his words, in order by this artifice to crush an innocent man.

But they contend that concupiscence is a penalty, and not a sin [a burden and imposed penalty, and is not such a sin as is subject to death and condemnation]. Luther maintains that it is a sin. It has been said above that Augustine defines original sin as concupiscence. If there be anything disadvantageous in this opinion, let them quarrel with Augustine. Besides Paul says, Rom. 7, 7. 23: I had not known lust (concupiscence), except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet. Likewise: I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. These testimonies can be overthrown by no sophistry. [All devils, all men cannot overthrow them.] For they clearly call concupiscence sin, which, nevertheless, is not imputed to those who are in Christ although by nature it is a matter worthy of death where it is not forgiven. Thus, beyond all controversy, the Fathers believe. For Augustine, in a long discussion refutes the opinion of those who thought that concupiscence in man is not a fault but an adiaphoron, as color of the body or ill health is said to be an adiaphoron [as to have a black or a white body is neither good nor

evil].

But if the adversaries will contend that the fomes [or evil inclination] is an adiaphoron, not only many passages of Scripture but simply the entire Church [and all the Fathers] will contradict them. For [even if not entire consent, but only the inclination and desire be there] who ever dared to say that these matters, even though perfect agreement could not be attained, were adiaphora, namely, to doubt concerning God's wrath, concerning God's grace, concerning God's Word, to be angry at the judgments of God, to be provoked because God does not at once deliver one from afflictions, to murmur because the wicked enjoy a better fortune than the good, to be urged on by wrath, lust, the desire for glory, wealth, etc.? And yet godly men acknowledge these in themselves, as appears in the Psalms and the prophets. [For all tried, Christian hearts know, alas! that these evils are wrapped up in man's skin, namely to esteem money, goods, and all other matters more highly than God, and to spend our lives in security; again, that after the manner of our carnal security we always imagine that God's wrath against sin is not as serious and great as it verily is. Again, that we murmur against the doing and will of God, when He does not succor us speedily in our tribulations, and arranges our affairs to please us. Again, we experience every day that it hurts us to see wicked people in good fortune in this world, as David and all the saints have complained. Over and above this, all men feel that their hearts are easily inflamed, now with ambition, now with anger and wrath, now with lewdness.] But in the schools they transferred hither from philosophy notions entirely different, that, because of passions, we are neither good nor evil, we are neither deserving of praise nor blame. Likewise, that nothing is sin, unless it be voluntary [inner desires and thoughts are not sins, if I do not altogether consent thereto]. These notions were expressed among philosophers with respect to civil righteousness, and not with respect to God's judgment. [For there it is true, as the jurists say, *L. cogitationis*, thoughts are exempt from custom and punishment. But God searches the hearts; in God's court and judgment it is different.] With no greater prudence they add also other notions, such as, that [God's creature and] nature is not [cannot in itself be] evil. In its proper place we do not censure this; but it is not right to twist it into an extenuation of original sin. And, nevertheless, these notions are read in the works of scholastics, who inappropriately mingle philosophy or civil doctrine concerning ethics with the Gospel. Nor were these matters only disputed in the schools, but, as is usually the case, were carried from the schools to the people. And these persuasions [godless, erroneous, dangerous, harmful teachings] prevailed, and nourished confidence in human strength, and suppressed the knowledge of Christ's grace. Therefore, Luther wishing to declare the magnitude of original sin and of human infirmity [what a grievous mortal guilt original sin is in the sight of God], taught that these remnants of original sin [after Baptism] are not, by their own nature, adiaphora in man, but that, for their non-imputation, they need the grace of Christ and, likewise for their mortification, the Holy Ghost.

Although the scholastics extenuate both sin and punishment when they teach that man by his own strength, can fulfil the commandments of God; in Genesis the punishment, imposed on account of original sin, is described otherwise. For there human nature is subjected not only to death and other bodily evils, but also to the kingdom of the devil. For there, Gen. 3, 16, this fearful sentence is proclaimed: I will

put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. The defects and the concupiscence are punishments and sins. Death and other bodily evils and the dominion of the devil, are properly punishments. For human nature has been delivered into slavery, and is held captive by the devil, who infatuates it with wicked opinions and errors, and impels it to sins of every kind. But just as the devil cannot be conquered except by the aid of Christ, so by our own strength we cannot free ourselves from this slavery. Even the history of the world shows how great is the power of the devil's kingdom. The world is full of blasphemies against God and of wicked opinions, and the devil keeps entangled in these bands those who are wise and righteous [many hypocrites who appear holy] in the sight of the world. In other persons grosser vices manifest themselves. But since Christ was given to us to remove both these sins and these punishments, and to destroy the kingdom of the devil, sin and death, it will not be possible to recognize the benefits of Christ unless we understand our evils. For this reason our preachers have diligently taught concerning these subjects, and have delivered nothing that is new but have set forth Holy Scripture and the judgments of the holy Fathers.

We think that this will satisfy His Imperial Majesty concerning the puerile and trivial sophistry with which the adversaries have perverted our article. For we know that we believe aright and in harmony with the Church catholic of Christ. But if the adversaries will renew this controversy, there will be no want among us of those who will reply and defend the truth. For in this case our adversaries, to a great extent, do not understand what they say. They often speak what is contradictory, and neither explain correctly and logically that which is essential to [i.e., that which is or is not properly of the essence of] original sin, nor what they call defects. But we have been unwilling at this place to examine their contests with any very great subtlety. We have thought it worth while only to recite, in customary and well-known words, the belief of the holy Fathers, which we also follow.

PART 2

Article III: Of Christ.

The Third Article the adversaries approve, in which we confess that there are in Christ two natures, namely, a human nature, assumed by the Word into the unity of His person; and that the same Christ suffered and died to reconcile the Father to us; and that He was raised again to reign, and to justify and sanctify believers, etc., according to the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

Article IV (II): Of Justification.

In the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and, below, in the Twentieth Article, they condemn us, for teaching that men obtain remission of sins, not because of their own merits, but freely for Christ's sake, through faith in Christ. [They reject quite stubbornly both these statements.] For they condemn us both for denying that men obtain remission of

sins because of their own merits, and for affirming that, through faith, men obtain remission of sins, and through faith in Christ are justified. But since in this controversy the chief topic of Christian doctrine is treated, which, understood aright, illumines and amplifies the honor of Christ [which is of especial service for the clear, correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, and alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure and right knowledge of Christ, and alone opens the door to the entire Bible], and brings necessary and most abundant consolation to devout consciences, we ask His Imperial Majesty to hear us with forbearance in regard to matters of such importance. For since the adversaries understand neither what the remission of sins, nor what faith, nor what grace, nor what righteousness is, they sadly corrupt this topic, and obscure the glory and benefits of Christ and rob devout consciences of the consolations offered in Christ. But that we may strengthen the position of our Confession, and also remove the charges which the adversaries advance against us, certain things are to be premised in the beginning, in order that the sources of both kinds of doctrine, i. e., both that of our adversaries and our own, may be known.

All Scripture ought to be distributed into these two principal topics, the Law and the promises. For in some places it presents the Law, and in others the promise concerning Christ, namely, either when [in the Old Testament] it promises that Christ will come, and offers, for His sake, the remission of sins justification, and life eternal, or when, in the Gospel [in the New Testament], Christ Himself, since He has appeared, promises the remission of sins, justification, and life eternal. Moreover, in this discussion, by Law we designate the Ten Commandments, wherever they are read in the Scriptures. Of the ceremonies and judicial laws of Moses we say nothing at present.

Of these two parts the adversaries select the Law, because human reason naturally understands, in some way, the Law (for it has the same judgment divinely written in the mind); [the natural law agrees with the law of Moses, or the Ten Commandments] and by the Law they seek the remission of sins and justification. Now, the Decalog requires not only outward civil works, which reason can in some way produce, but it also requires other things placed far above reason,

namely, truly to fear God, truly to love God, truly to call upon God, truly to be convinced that God hears us, and to expect the aid of God in death and in all afflictions; finally, it requires obedience to God, in death and all afflictions, so that we may not flee from these, or refuse them when God imposes them.

Here the scholastics, having followed the philosophers, teach only a righteousness of reason, namely, civil works, and fabricate besides that without the Holy Ghost reason can love God above all things. For, as long as the human mind is at ease, and does not feel the wrath or judgment of God, it can imagine that it wishes to love God, that it wishes to do good for God's sake. [But it is sheer hypocrisy.] In this manner they teach that men merit the remission of sins by doing what is in them, i. e., if reason, grieving over sin, elicit an act of love to God, or for God's sake be active in that which is good. And because this opinion naturally flatters men, it has brought forth and multiplied in the Church many services, monastic vows, abuses of the mass; and, with this opinion the one has, in the course of time, devised this act of worship and observances, the other that. And in order that they might nourish and increase confidence in such

works, they have affirmed that God necessarily gives grace to one thus working, by the necessity not of constraint, but of immutability [not that He is constrained, but that this is the order which God will not transgress or alter].

In this opinion there are many great and pernicious errors, which it would be tedious to enumerate. Let the discreet reader think only of this: If this be Christian righteousness, what difference is there between philosophy and the doctrine of Christ? If we merit the remission of sins by these elicited acts [that spring from our mind], of what benefit is Christ? If we can be justified by reason and the works of reason, wherefore is there need of Christ or regeneration [as Peter declares, 1 Pet. 1, 18 ff.]? And from these opinions the matter has now come to such a pass that many ridicule us because we teach that an other than the philosophic righteousness must be sought after. [Alas! it has come to this, that even great theologians at Louvain, Paris, etc., have known nothing of any other godliness or righteousness (although every letter and syllable in Paul teaches otherwise) than the godliness which philosophers teach. And although we ought to regard this as a strange teaching, and ought to ridicule it, they rather ridicule us, yea, make a jest of Paul himself.] We have heard that some, after setting aside the Gospel, have, instead of a sermon, explained the ethics of Aristotle. [I myself have heard a great preacher who did not mention Christ and the Gospel, and preached the ethics of Aristotle. Is this not a childish, foolish way to preach to Christians?] Nor did such men err if those things are true which the adversaries defend [if the doctrine of the adversaries be true, the Ethics is a precious book of sermons, and a fine new Bible]. For Aristotle wrote concerning civil morals so learnedly that nothing further concerning this need be demanded. We see books extant in which certain sayings of Christ are compared with the sayings of Socrates, Zeno, and others, as though Christ had come for the purpose of delivering certain laws through which we might merit the remission of sins, as though we did not receive this gratuitously, because of His merits. Therefore, if we here receive the doctrine of the adversaries, that by the works of reason we merit the remission of sins and justification, there will be no difference between philosophic, or certainly pharisaic, and Christian righteousness.

Although the adversaries, not to pass by Christ altogether, require a knowledge of the history concerning Christ, and ascribe to Him that it is His merit that a habit is given us, or, as they say, *prima gratia*, "first grace," which they understand as a habit, inclining us the more readily to love God; yet what they ascribe to this habit is of little importance [is a feeble, paltry, small, poor operation, that would be ascribed to Christ], because they imagine that the acts of the will are of the same kind before and after this habit. They imagine that the will can love God; but nevertheless this habit stimulates it to do the same the more cheerfully. And they bid us first merit this habit by preceding merits; then they bid us merit by the works of the Law an increase of this habit and life eternal. Thus they bury Christ, so that men may not avail themselves of Him as a Mediator, and believe that for His sake they freely receive remission of sins and reconciliation, but may dream that by their own fulfilment of the Law they merit the remission of sins, and that by their own fulfilment of the Law they are accounted righteous before God; while, nevertheless, the Law is never satisfied, since reason does nothing except certain civil works, and, in the mean time

neither [in the heart] fears God, nor truly believes that God cares for it. And although they speak of this habit, yet, without the righteousness of faith, neither the love of God can exist in man, nor can it be understood what the love of God is.

Their feigning a distinction between *_meritum congrui_* and *_meritum condigni_* [due merit and true, complete merit] is only an artifice in order not to appear openly to Pelagianize. For, if God necessarily gives grace for the *_meritum congrui_* [due merit], it is no longer *_meritum congrui_*, but *_meritum condigni_* [a true duty and complete merit]. But they do not know what they are saying. After this habit of love [is there], they imagine that man can acquire *_merit de condigno_*. And yet they bid us doubt whether there be a habit present. How, therefore, do they know whether they acquire merit *_de congruo_* or *_de condigno_* [in full, or half]? But this whole matter was fabricated by idle men [But, good God! these are mere inane ideas and dreams of idle, wretched, inexperienced men who do not much reduce the Bible to practise], who did not know how the remission of sins occurs, and how, in the judgment of God and terrors of conscience, trust in works is driven out of us. Secure hypocrites always judge that they acquire *_merit de condigno_*, whether the habit be present or be not present, because men naturally trust in their own righteousness, but terrified consciences waver and hesitate, and then seek and accumulate other works in order to find rest. Such consciences never think that they acquire merit *_de condigno_*, and they rush into despair unless they hear, in addition to the doctrine of the Law, the Gospel concerning the gratuitous remission of sins and the righteousness of faith. [Thus some stories are told that when the Barefooted monks had in vain praised their order and good works to some good consciences in the hour of death, they at last had to be silent concerning their order and St. Franciscus, and to say: "Dear man, Christ has died for you." This revived and refreshed in trouble, and alone gave peace and comfort.]

Thus the adversaries teach nothing but the righteousness of reason, or certainly of the Law, upon which they look just as the Jews upon the veiled face of Moses, and, in secure hypocrites who think that they satisfy the Law, they excite presumption and empty confidence in works [they place men on a sand foundation, their own works] and contempt of the grace of Christ. On the contrary, they drive timid consciences to despair, which, laboring with doubt, never can experience what faith is, and how efficacious it is; thus, at last they utterly despair.

Now, we think concerning the righteousness of reason thus, namely, that God requires it, and that, because of God's commandment, the honorable works which the Decalog commands must necessarily be performed, according to the passage Gal. 3, 24: The Law was our schoolmaster; likewise 1 Tim. 1, 9: The Law is made for the ungodly. For God wishes those who are carnal [gross sinners] to be restrained by civil discipline, and to maintain this, He has given laws, letters, doctrine, magistrates, penalties. And this righteousness reason, by its own strength, can, to a certain extent, work, although it is often overcome by natural weakness, and by the devil impelling it to manifest crimes. Now, although we cheerfully assign this righteousness of reason the praises that are due it (for this corrupt nature has no greater good [in this life and in a worldly nature, nothing is ever better than uprightness and virtue], and Aristotle says aright: Neither the evening star nor the morning star is more

beautiful than righteousness, and God also honors it with bodily rewards), yet it ought not to be praised with reproach to Christ.

For it is false [I thus conclude, and am certain that it is a fiction, and not true] that we merit the remission of sins by our works.

False also is this, that men are accounted righteous before God because of the righteousness of reason [works and external piety].

False also is this that reason, by its own strength, is able to love God above all things, and to fulfil God's Law, namely, truly to fear God to be truly confident that God hears prayer, to be willing to obey God in death and other dispensations of God, not to covet what belongs to others, etc.; although reason can work civil works.

False also and dishonoring Christ is this, that men do not sin who, without grace, do the commandments of God [who keep the commandments of God merely in an external manner, without the Spirit and grace in their hearts]. We have testimonies for this our belief, not only from the Scriptures, but also from the Fathers. For in opposition to the Pelagians, Augustine contends at great length that grace is not given because of our merits. And in *_De Natura et Gratia_* he says: If natural ability, through the free will, suffice both for learning to know how one ought to live and for living aright, then Christ has died in vain, then the offense of the Cross is made void. Why may I not also here cry out? Yea I will cry out, and, with Christian grief, will chide them: Christ has become of no effect unto you whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace. Gal. 5, 4; cf. 2, 21. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Rom. 10 3. 4. And John 8, 36: If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. Therefore by reason we cannot be freed from sins and merit the remission of sins. And in John 3, 5 it is written: Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But if it is necessary to be born again of the Holy Ghost the righteousness of reason does not justify us before God, and does not fulfil the Law, Rom. 3, 23: All have come short of the glory of God, i.e., are destitute of the wisdom and righteousness of God, which acknowledges and glorifies God. Likewise Rom. 8, 7. 8: The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. These testimonies are so manifest that, to use the words of Augustine which he employed in this case, they do not need an acute understanding, but only an attentive hearer. If the carnal mind is enmity against God, the flesh certainly does not love God; if it cannot be subject to the Law of God, it cannot love God. If the carnal mind is enmity against God, the flesh sins even when we do external civil works. If it cannot be subject to the Law of God, it certainly sins even when, according to human judgment, it possesses deeds that are excellent and worthy of praise. The adversaries consider only the precepts of the Second Table which contain civil righteousness that reason understands. Content with this, they think that they satisfy the Law of God. In the mean time they do not see the First Table which commands that we love God, that we declare as certain that God is angry with sin, that we truly fear God, that we declare as certain that God hears prayer. But the human heart without the Holy Ghost either in security despises God's

judgment, or in punishment flees from, and hates, God when He judges. Therefore it does not obey the First Table. Since, therefore, contempt of God, and doubt concerning the Word of God and concerning the threats and promises, inhere in human nature, men truly sin, even when, without the Holy Ghost, they do virtuous works, because they do them with a wicked heart, according to Rom. 14, 23: Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. For such persons perform their works with contempt of God, just as Epicurus does not believe that God cares for him, or that he is regarded or heard by God. This contempt vitiates works seemingly virtuous, because God judges the heart.

Lastly, it was very foolish for the adversaries to write that men who are under eternal wrath merit the remission of sins by an act of love, which springs from their mind, since it is impossible to love God, unless the remission of sins be apprehended first by faith. For the heart, truly feeling that God is angry, cannot love God, unless He be shown to have been reconciled. As long as He terrifies us, and seems to cast us into eternal death, human nature is not able to take courage, so as to love a wrathful, judging, and punishing God [poor, weak nature must lose heart and courage, and must tremble before such great wrath, which so fearfully terrifies and punishes, and can never feel a spark of love before God Himself comforts]. It is easy for idle men to feign such dreams concerning love as, that a person guilty of mortal sin can love God above all things, because they do not feel what the wrath or judgment of God is. But in agony of conscience and in conflicts [with Satan] conscience experiences the emptiness of these philosophical speculations. Paul says, Rom. 4, 15: The Law worketh wrath. He does not say that by the Law men merit the remission of sins. For the Law always accuses and terrifies consciences. Therefore it does not justify, because conscience terrified by the Law flees from the judgment of God. Therefore they err who trust that by the Law, by their own works, they merit the remission of sins. It is sufficient for us to have said these things concerning the righteousness of reason or of the Law, which the adversaries teach. For after a while, when we will declare our belief concerning the righteousness of faith, the subject itself will compel us to adduce more testimonies, which also will be of service in overthrowing the errors of the adversaries which we have thus far reviewed.

Because, therefore, men by their own strength cannot fulfil the Law of God, and all are under sin, and subject to eternal wrath and death, on this account we cannot be freed by the Law from sin and be justified but the promise of the remission of sins and of justification has been given us for Christ's sake, who was given for us in order that He might make satisfaction for the sins of the world, and has been appointed as the [only] Mediator and Propitiator. And this promise has not the condition of our merits [it does not read thus: Through Christ you have grace salvation, etc., if you merit it], but freely offers the remission of sins and justification, as Paul says, Rom. 11, 6: If it be of works, then is it no more grace. And in another place, Rom. 3, 21: The righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, i.e., the remission of sins is freely offered. Nor does reconciliation depend upon our merits. Because, if the remission of sins were to depend upon our merits, and reconciliation were from the Law, it would be useless. For, as we do not fulfil the Law, it would also follow that we would never obtain the promise of reconciliation. Thus Paul reasons, Rom. 4, 14: For if they which are of the Law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none

effect. For if the promise would require the condition of our merits and the Law, which we never fulfil, it would follow that the promise would be useless.

But since justification is obtained through the free promise, it follows that we cannot justify ourselves. Otherwise, wherefore would there be need to promise? [And why should Paul so highly extol and praise grace?] For since the promise cannot be received except by faith, the Gospel, which is properly the promise of the remission of sins and of justification for Christ's sake, proclaims the righteousness of faith in Christ, which the Law does not teach. Nor is this the righteousness of the Law. For the Law requires of us our works and our perfection. But the Gospel freely offers, for Christ's sake, to us, who have been vanquished by sin and death, reconciliation, which is received, not by works, but by faith alone. This faith brings to God not confidence in one's own merits, but only confidence in the promise, or the mercy promised in Christ. This special faith, therefore, by which an individual believes that for Christ's sake his sins are remitted him, and that for Christ's sake God is reconciled and propitious, obtains remission of sins and justifies us. And because in repentance, i.e. in terrors, it comforts and encourages hearts it regenerates us, and brings the Holy Ghost that then we may be able to fulfil God's Law, namely, to love God, truly to fear God, truly to be confident that God hears prayer, and to obey God in all afflictions; it mortifies concupiscence, etc. Thus, because faith, which freely receives the remission of sins, sets Christ, the Mediator and Propitiator, against God's wrath, it does not present our merits or our love [which would be tossed aside like a little feather by a hurricane]. This faith is the true knowledge of Christ, and avails itself of the benefits of Christ, and regenerates hearts, and precedes the fulfilling of the Law. And of this faith not a syllable exists in the doctrine of our adversaries. Hence we find fault with the adversaries, equally because they teach only the righteousness of the Law and because they do not teach the righteousness of the Gospel, which proclaims the righteousness of faith in Christ.

Part 3

What Is Justifying Faith?

The adversaries feign that faith is only a knowledge of the history, and therefore teach that it can coexist with mortal sin. Hence they say nothing concerning faith, by which Paul so frequently says that men are justified, because those who are accounted righteous before God do not live in mortal sin. But that faith which justifies is not merely a knowledge of history, [not merely this, that I know the stories of Christ's birth, suffering, etc. (that even the devils know,)] but it is to assent to the promise of God, in which for Christ's sake, the remission of sins and justification are freely offered. [It is the certainty or the certain trust in the heart, when, with my whole heart, I regard the promises of God as certain and true, through which there are offered me, without my merit, the forgiveness of sins, grace, and all salvation, through Christ the Mediator.] And that no one may suppose that it is mere knowledge we will add further:

it is to wish and to receive the offered promise of the remission of sins and of justification. [Faith is that my whole heart takes to itself this treasure. It is not my doing, not my presenting or giving, not my work or preparation, but that a heart comforts itself, and is perfectly confident with respect to this, namely, that God makes a present and gift to us, and not we to Him, that He sheds upon us every treasure of grace in Christ.]

And the difference between this faith and the righteousness of the Law can be easily discerned. Faith is the *_latreia_* [divine service], which receives the benefits offered by God; the righteousness of the Law is the *_latreia_* [divine service] which offers to God our merits. By faith God wishes to be worshiped in this way, that we receive from Him those things which He promises and offers.

Now, that faith signifies, not only a knowledge of the history, but such faith as assents to the promise, Paul plainly testifies when he says, Rom. 4, 16: Therefore it is of faith, to the end the promise might be sure. For he judges that the promise cannot be received unless by faith. Wherefore he puts them together as things that belong to one another, and connects promise and faith. [There Paul fastens and binds together these two, thus: Wherever there is a promise faith is required and conversely, wherever faith is required there must be a promise.] Although it will be easy to decide what faith is if we consider the Creed where this article certainly stands: The forgiveness of sins. Therefore it is not enough to believe that Christ was born, suffered, was raised again, unless we add also this article, which is the purpose of the history: The forgiveness of sins. To this article the rest must be referred, namely, that for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of our merits, forgiveness of sins is given us. For what need was there that Christ was given for our sins if for our sins our merits can make satisfaction?

As often, therefore, as we speak of justifying faith, we must keep in mind that these three objects concur: the promise, and that, too, gratuitous, and the merits of Christ, as the price and propitiation. The promise is received by faith; the "gratuitous" excludes our merits, and signifies that the benefit is offered only through mercy; the merits of Christ are the price, because there must be a certain propitiation for our sins. Scripture frequently implores mercy, and the holy Fathers often say that we are saved by mercy. As often, therefore, as mention is made of mercy, we must keep in mind that faith is there required, which receives the promise of mercy. And, again, as often as we speak of faith, we wish an object to be understood, namely, the promised mercy. For faith justifies and saves, not on the ground that it is a work in itself worthy, but only because it receives the promised mercy.

And throughout the prophets and the psalms this worship, this *_latreia_*, is highly praised, although the Law does not teach the gratuitous remission of sins. But the Fathers knew the promise concerning Christ that God for Christ's sake wished to remit sins. Therefore, since they understood that Christ would be the price for our sins, they knew that our works are not a price for so great a matter [could not pay so great a debt]. Accordingly, they received gratuitous mercy and remission of sins by faith, just as the saints in the New Testament. Here belong those frequent repetitions concerning mercy and faith, in the psalms and the prophets, as this, Ps. 130, 3 sq.: If Thou Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who

shall stand? Here David confesses his sins and does not recount his merits. He adds; But there is forgiveness with Thee. Here he comforts himself by his trust in God's mercy, and he cites the promise: My soul doth wait and in His Word do I hope, i.e., because Thou hast promised the remission of sins, I am sustained by this Thy promise. Therefore the fathers also were justified, not by the Law but by the promise and faith. And it is amazing that the adversaries extenuate faith to such a degree, although they see that it is everywhere praised as an eminent service, as in Ps. 50, 15: Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee. Thus God wishes Himself to be known, thus He wishes Himself to be worshiped, that from Him we receive benefits, and receive them, too, because of His mercy, and not because of our merits. This is the richest consolation in all afflictions [physical or spiritual, in life or in death as all godly persons know]. And such consolations the adversaries abolish when they extenuate and disparage faith, and teach only that by means of works and merits men treat with God [that we treat with God, the great Majesty, by means of our miserable, beggarly works and merits].

Part 4

That Faith in Christ Justifies.

In the first place, lest any one may think that we speak concerning an idle knowledge of the history, we must declare how faith is obtained [how the heart begins to believe]. Afterward we will show both that it justifies, and how this ought to be understood, and we will explain the objections of the adversaries. Christ, in the last chapter of Luke 24, 47, commands that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name. For the Gospel convicts all men that they are under sin, that they all are subject to eternal wrath and death, and offers for Christ's sake remission of sin and justification, which is received by faith. The preaching of repentance, which accuses us, terrifies consciences with true and grave terrors. [For the preaching of repentance, or this declaration of the Gospel: Amend your lives! Repent! When it truly penetrates the heart, terrifies the conscience, and is no jest, but a great terror, in which the conscience feels its misery and sin and the wrath of God.] In these, hearts ought again to receive consolation. This happens if they believe the promise of Christ, that for His sake we have remission of sins. This faith, encouraging and consoling in these fears, receives remission of sins, justifies and quickens. For this consolation is a new and spiritual life [a new birth and a new life]. These things are plain and clear, and can be understood by the pious, and have testimonies of the Church [as is to be seen in the conversion of Paul and Augustine]. The adversaries nowhere can say how the Holy Ghost is given. They imagine that the Sacraments confer the Holy Ghost *_ex opere operato_*, without a good emotion in the recipient, as though, indeed, the gift of the Holy Ghost were an idle matter.

But since we speak of such faith as is not an idle thought, but of that which liberates from death and produces a new life in hearts [which is such a new light, life, and force in the heart as to renew

our heart, mind, and spirit, makes new men of us and new creatures,] and is the work of the Holy Ghost; this does not coexist with mortal sin [for how can light and darkness coexist?], but as long as it is present, produces good fruits as we will say after a while. For concerning the conversion of the wicked, or concerning the mode of regeneration, what can be said that is more simple and more clear? Let them, from so great an array of writers, adduce a single commentary upon the Sententiae that speaks of the mode of regeneration. When they speak of the habit of love, they imagine that men merit it through works and they do not teach that it is received through the Word, precisely as also the Anabaptists teach at this time. But God cannot be treated with, God cannot be apprehended, except through the Word. Accordingly, justification occurs through the Word, just as Paul says, Rom. 1, 16: The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Likewise 10, 17: Faith cometh by hearing. And proof can be derived even from this that faith justifies, because, if justification occurs only through the Word, and the Word is apprehended only by faith, it follows that faith justifies. But there are other and more important reasons. We have said these things thus far in order that we might show the mode of regeneration, and that the nature of faith [what is, or is not, faith], concerning which we speak, might be understood.

Now we will show that faith [and nothing else] justifies. Here, in the first place readers must be admonished of this, that just as it is necessary to maintain this sentence: Christ is Mediator, so is it necessary to defend that faith justifies, [without works]. For how will Christ be Mediator if in justification we do not use Him as Mediator; if we do not hold that for His sake we are accounted righteous? But to believe is to trust in the merits of Christ, that for His sake God certainly wishes to be reconciled with us. Likewise, just as we ought to maintain that, apart from the Law, the promise of Christ is necessary, so also is it needful to maintain that faith justifies. [For the Law does not preach the forgiveness of sin by grace.] For the Law cannot be performed unless the Holy Ghost be first received. It is, therefore, needful to maintain that the promise of Christ is necessary. But this cannot be received except by faith. Therefore, those who deny that faith justifies, teach nothing but the Law, both Christ and the Gospel being set aside.

But when it is said that faith justifies, some perhaps understand it of the beginning, namely, that faith is the beginning of justification or preparation for justification, so that not faith itself is that through which we are accepted by God, but the works which follow; and they dream, accordingly, that faith is highly praised, because it is the beginning. For great is the importance of the beginning, as they commonly say, *„Archae aemioy pantos_*, The beginning is half of everything; just as if one would say that grammar makes the teachers of all arts, because it prepares for other arts, although in fact it is his own art that renders every one an artist. We do not believe thus concerning faith, but we maintain this, that properly and truly, by faith itself, we are for Christ's sake accounted righteous, or are acceptable to God. And because "to be justified" means that out of unjust men just men are made, or born again, it means also that they are pronounced or accounted just. For Scripture speaks in both ways. [The term "to be justified" is used in two ways: to denote, being converted or regenerated; again, being accounted righteous.] Accordingly we wish first to show this, that faith alone makes of an unjust, a just man, i.e., receives remission

of sins.

The particle alone offends some, although even Paul says, Rom. 3, 28: We conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law. Again, Eph. 2, 8: It is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. Again, Rom. 3, 24: Being justified freely. If the exclusive alone displeases, let them remove from Paul also the exclusives freely, not of works, it is the gift, etc. For these also are [very strong] exclusives. It is, however, the opinion of merit that we exclude. We do not exclude the Word or Sacraments, as the adversaries falsely charge us. For we have said above that faith is conceived from the Word, and we honor the ministry of the Word in the highest degree. Love also and works must follow faith. Wherefore, they are not excluded so as not to follow, but confidence in the merit of love or of works is excluded in justification. And this we will clearly show.

Part 5

That We Obtain Remission of Sins by Faith Alone in Christ.

We think that even the adversaries acknowledge that, in justification, the remission of sins is necessary first. For we all are under sin. Wherefore we reason thus:-To attain the remission of sins is to be justified, according to Ps. 32, 1: Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven. By faith alone in Christ, not through love, not because of love or works, do we acquire the remission of sins, although love follows faith. Therefore by faith alone we are justified, understanding justification as the making of a righteous man out of an unrighteous, or that he be regenerated.

It will thus become easy to declare the minor premise [that we obtain forgiveness of sin by faith, not by love] if we know how the remission of sins occurs. The adversaries with great indifference dispute whether the remission of sins and the infusion of grace are the same change [whether they are one change or two]. Being idle men, they did not know what to answer [cannot speak at all on this subject]. In the remission of sins, the terrors of sin and of eternal death, in the heart, must be overcome, as Paul testifies, 1 Cor. 15, 56 sq.: The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. That is, sin terrifies consciences, this occurs through the Law, which shows the wrath of God against sin; but we gain the victory through Christ. How? By faith, when we comfort ourselves by confidence in the mercy promised for Christ's sake. Thus, therefore we prove the minor proposition. The wrath of God cannot be appeased if we set against it our own works, because Christ has been set forth as a Propitiator, so that, for His sake, the Father may become reconciled to us. But Christ is not apprehended as a Mediator except by faith. Therefore, by faith alone we obtain remission of sins when we comfort our hearts with confidence in the mercy promised for Christ's sake. Likewise Paul, Rom. 5, 2, says: By whom also we have access, and adds, by faith. Thus, therefore, we are reconciled to the Father, and receive remission of sins when we are comforted with confidence in the mercy

promised for Christ's sake. The adversaries regard Christ as Mediator and Propitiator for this reason, namely, that He has merited the habit of love; they do not urge us to use Him now as Mediator, but, as though Christ were altogether buried, they imagine that we have access through our own works, and, through these, merit this habit and afterwards, by this love, come to God. Is not this to bury Christ altogether, and to take away the entire doctrine of faith? Paul, on the contrary, teaches that we have access, i.e., reconciliation, through Christ. And to show how this occurs, he adds that we have access by faith. By faith, therefore, for Christ's sake, we receive remission of sins. We cannot set our own love and our own works over against God's wrath.

Secondly. It is certain that sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ, as Propitiator, Rom. 3, 25: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation. Moreover, Paul adds: through faith. Therefore this Propitiator thus benefits us, when by faith we apprehend the mercy promised in Him, and set it against the wrath and judgment of God. And to the same effect it is written, Heb. 4, 14. 16: Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest, etc., let us therefore come with confidence. For the Apostle bids us come to God, not with confidence in our own merits, but with confidence in Christ as a High Priest; therefore he requires faith.

Thirdly. Peter, in Acts 10, 43, says: To Him give all the prophets witness that through His name, whosoever believeth on Him, shall receive remission of sins. How could this be said more clearly? We receive remission of sins, he says, through His name i.e., for His sake; therefore, not for the sake of our merits, not for the sake of our contrition, attrition, love, worship, works. And he adds: When we believe in Him. Therefore he requires faith. For we cannot apprehend the name of Christ except by faith. Besides he cites the agreement of all the prophets. This is truly to cite the authority of the Church. [For when all the holy prophets bear witness, that is certainly a glorious, great excellent, powerful decretal and testimony.] But of this topic we will speak again after a while, when treating of "Repentance."

Fourthly. Remission of sins is something promised for Christ's sake. Therefore it cannot be received except by faith alone. For a promise cannot be received except by faith alone. Rom. 4, 16: Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure; as though he were to say: "If the matter were to depend upon our merits, the promise would be uncertain and useless, because we never could determine when we would have sufficient merit." And this, experienced consciences can easily understand [and would not, for a thousand worlds, have our salvation depend upon ourselves]. Accordingly, Paul says, Gal. 3, 22: But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. He takes merit away from us, because he says that all are guilty and concluded under sin; then he adds that the promise, namely, of the remission of sins and of justification, is given, and adds how the promise can be received, namely, by faith. And this reasoning, derived from the nature of a promise, is the chief reasoning [a veritable rock] in Paul, and is often repeated. Nor can anything be devised or imagined whereby this argument of Paul can be overthrown. Wherefore let not good minds suffer themselves to be forced from the conviction that we receive remission of sins for Christ's sake, only through faith. In

this they have sure and firm consolation against the terrors of sin, and against eternal death and against all the gates of hell. [Everything else is a foundation of sand that sinks in trials.]

But since we receive remission of sins and the Holy Ghost by faith alone, faith alone justifies, because those reconciled are accounted righteous and children of God, not on account of their own purity, but through mercy for Christ's sake, provided only they by faith apprehend this mercy. Accordingly, Scripture testifies that by faith we are accounted righteous, Rom. 3, 26. We, therefore, will add testimonies which clearly declare that faith is that very righteousness by which we are accounted righteous before God, namely, not because it is a work that is in itself worthy, but because it receives the promise by which God has promised that for Christ's sake He wishes to be propitious to those believing in Him, or because He knows that Christ of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. 1, 30.

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul discusses this topic especially, and declares that, when we believe that God, for Christ's sake is reconciled to us, we are justified freely by faith. And this proposition, which contains the statement of the entire discussion [the principal matter of all Epistles, yea, of the entire Scriptures], he maintains in the third chapter: We conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law, Rom. 3, 28. Here the adversaries interpret that this refers to Levitical ceremonies [not to other virtuous works]. But Paul speaks not only of the ceremonies, but of the whole Law. For he quotes afterward (7, 7) from the Decalog: Thou shalt not covet. And if moral works [that are not Jewish ceremonies] would merit the remission of sins and justification, there would also be no need of Christ and the promise, and all that Paul speaks of the promise would be overthrown. He would also have been wrong in writing to the Ephesians, 2, 8: By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works. Paul likewise refers to Abraham and David, Rom. 4, 1. 6. But they had the command of God concerning circumcision. Therefore, if any works justified these works must also have justified at the time that they had a command. But Augustine teaches correctly that Paul speaks of the entire Law, as he discusses at length in his book, *Of the Spirit and Letter*, where he says finally: These matters, therefore, having been considered and treated, according to the ability that the Lord has thought worthy to give us, we infer that man is not justified by the precepts of a good life, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

And lest we may think that the sentence that faith justifies, fell from Paul inconsiderately, he fortifies and confirms this by a long discussion in the fourth chapter to the Romans, and afterwards repeats it in all his epistles. Thus he says, Rom. 4, 4. 5: To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Here he clearly says that faith itself is imputed for righteousness. Faith, therefore, is that thing which God declares to be righteousness, and he adds that it is imputed freely, and says that it could not be imputed freely, if it were due on account of works. Wherefore he excludes also the merit of moral works [not only Jewish ceremonies, but all other good works]. For if justification before God were due to these, faith would not be imputed for righteousness without works.

And afterwards, Rom. 4, 9: For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. Chapter 5, 1 says: Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, i.e., we have consciences that are tranquil and joyful before God. Rom. 10, 10: With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. Here he declares that faith is the righteousness of the heart. Gal. 2, 15: We have believed in Christ Jesus that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law. Eph. 2, 8. For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.

John 1, 12: To them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. John 3, 14. 15: As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish. Likewise, v. 17: For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned.

Acts 13, 38. 39: Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses. How could the office of Christ and justification be declared more clearly? The Law, he says, did not justify. Therefore Christ was given, that we may believe that for His sake we are justified. He plainly denies justification to the Law. Hence, for Christ's sake we are accounted righteous when we believe that God, for His sake, has been reconciled to us. Acts 4, 11. 12: This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. But the name of Christ is apprehended only by faith. [I cannot believe in the name of Christ in any other way than when I hear His merit preached, and lay hold of that.] Therefore, by confidence in the name of Christ, and not by confidence in our works, we are saved. For "the name" here signifies the cause which is mentioned because of which salvation is attained. And to call upon the name of Christ is to trust in the name of Christ, as the cause or price because of which we are saved. Acts 15, 9: Purifying their hearts by faith. Wherefore that faith of which the Apostles speak is not idle knowledge, but a reality, receiving the Holy Ghost and justifying us [not a mere knowledge of history, but a strong powerful work of the Holy Ghost, which changes hearts].

Hab. 2, 4: The just shall live by his faith. Here he says, first that men are just by faith by which they believe that God is propitious and he adds that the same faith quickens, because this faith produces in the heart peace and joy and eternal life [which begins in the present life].

Is. 53, 11: By His knowledge shall He justify many. But what is the knowledge of Christ unless to know the benefits of Christ, the promises which by the Gospel He has scattered broadcast in the world? And to know these benefits is properly and truly to believe in Christ, to believe that that which God has promised for Christ's sake He will certainly fulfil.

But Scripture is full of such testimonies, since, in some places, it presents the Law, and in others the promises concerning Christ, and the remission of sins, and the free acceptance of the sinner for Christ's sake.

Here and there among the Fathers similar testimonies are extant. For Ambrose says in his letter to a certain Irenaeus: Moreover, the world was subject to him by the Law for the reason that, according to the command of the Law, all are indicted, and yet, by the works of the Law, no one is justified, i.e., because, by the Law, sin is perceived, but guilt is not discharged. The Law, which made all sinners, seemed to have done injury, but when the Lord Jesus Christ came, He forgave to all sin which no one could avoid, and, by the shedding of His own blood, blotted out the handwriting which was against us. This is what he says in Rom. 5, 20: "The Law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Because after the whole world become subject, He took away the sin of the whole world, as he [John] testified, saying, John 1, 29: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And on this account let no one boast of works, because no one is justified by his deeds. But he who is righteous has it given him because he was justified after the laver [of Baptism]. Faith, therefore, is that which frees through the blood of Christ, because he is blessed "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered," Ps. 32, 1. These are the words of Ambrose, which clearly favor our doctrine; he denies justification to works, and ascribes to faith that it sets us free through the blood of Christ. Let all the Sententiarists, who are adorned with magnificent titles, be collected into one heap. For some are called angelic; others, subtle; and others irrefragable [that is, doctors who cannot err]. When all these have been read and reread, they will not be of as much aid for understanding Paul as is this one passage of Ambrose.

To the same effect, Augustine writes many things against the Pelagians. In f the Spirit and Letter he says: The righteousness of the Law, namely, that he who has fulfilled it shall live in it, is set forth for this reason that when any one has recognized his infirmity he may attain and work the same and live in it, conciliating the Justifier not by his own strength nor by the letter of the Law itself (which cannot be done), but by faith. Except in a justified man, there is no right work wherein he who does it may live. But justification is obtained by faith. Here he clearly says that the Justifier is conciliated by faith, and that justification is obtained by faith. And a little after: By the Law we fear God; by faith we hope in God. But to those fearing punishment grace is hidden; and the soul laboring, etc., under this fear betakes itself by faith to God's mercy, in order that He may give what lie commands. Here he teaches that by the Law hearts are terrified, but by faith they receive consolation. He also teaches us to apprehend, by faith, mercy, before we attempt to fulfil the Law. We will shortly cite certain other passages.

Truly, it is amazing that the adversaries are in no way moved by so many passages of Scripture, which clearly ascribe justification to faith, and, indeed, deny it to works. Do they think that the same is repeated so often for no purpose? Do they think that these words fell inconsiderately from the Holy Ghost? But they have also devised sophistry whereby they elude them. They say that these passages of Scripture, (which speak of faith,) ought to be received as referring

to a *_fides formata_*, i.e., they do not ascribe justification to faith except on account of love. Yea, they do not, in any way, ascribe justification to faith, but only to love, because they dream that faith can coexist with mortal sin. Whither does this tend, unless that they again abolish the promise and return to the Law? If faith receive the remission of sins on account of love, the remission of sins will always be uncertain, because we never love as much as we ought, yea, we do not love unless our hearts are firmly convinced that the remission of sins has been granted us. Thus the adversaries, while they require in the remission of sins and justification confidence in one's own love, altogether abolish the Gospel concerning the free remission of sins; although at the same time, they neither render this love nor understand it, unless they believe that the remission of sins is freely received.

We also say that love ought to follow faith as Paul also says, Gal. 5, 6: For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love. And yet we must not think on that account that by confidence in this love or on account of this love we receive the remission of sins and reconciliation just as we do not receive the remission of sins because of other works that follow. But the remission of sins is received by faith alone, and, indeed, by faith properly so called, because the promise cannot be received except by faith. But faith, properly so called, is that which assents to the promise [is when my heart, and the Holy Ghost in the heart, says: The promise of God is true and certain]. Of this faith Scripture speaks. And because it receives the remission of sins, and reconciles us to God, by this faith we are [like Abraham] accounted righteous for Christ's sake before we love and do the works of the Law, although love necessarily follows. Nor, indeed, is this faith an idle knowledge, neither can it coexist with mortal sin, but it is a work of the Holy Ghost, whereby we are freed from death, and terrified minds are encouraged and quickened. And because this faith alone receives the remission of sins, and renders us acceptable to God, and brings the Holy Ghost, it could be more correctly called *_gratia gratum faciens_*, grace rendering one pleasing to God, than an effect following, namely, love.

Thus far, in order that the subject might be made quite clear, we have shown with sufficient fulness, both from testimonies of Scripture, and arguments derived from Scripture, that by faith alone we obtain the remission of sins for Christ's sake, and that by faith alone we are justified, i.e., of unrighteous men made righteous, or regenerated. But how necessary the knowledge of this faith is, can be easily judged, because in this alone the office of Christ is recognized, by this alone we receive the benefits of Christ; this alone brings sure and firm consolation to pious minds. And in the Church [if there is to be a church, if there is to be a Christian Creed], it is necessary that there should be the [preaching and] doctrine [by which consciences are not made to rely on a dream or to build on a foundation of sand, but] from which the pious may receive the sure hope of salvation. For the adversaries give men bad advice [therefore the adversaries are truly unfaithful bishops, unfaithful preachers and doctors; they have hitherto given evil counsel to consciences, and still do so by introducing such doctrine] when they bid them doubt whether they obtain remission of sins. For how will such persons sustain themselves in death who have heard nothing of this faith, and think that they ought to doubt whether they obtain the remission of sins? Besides it is necessary that in the Church of

Christ the Gospel be retained, i.e., the promise that for Christ's sake sins are freely remitted. Those who teach nothing of this faith, concerning which we speak, altogether abolish the Gospel. But the scholastics mention not even a word concerning this faith. Our adversaries follow them, and reject this faith. Nor do they see that, by rejecting this faith, they abolish the entire promise concerning the free remission of sins and the righteousness of Christ.

Part 6

Article III: Of Love and the Fulfilling of the Law.

Here the adversaries urge against us: If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments, Matt. 19, 17; likewise: The doers of the Law shall be justified, Rom. 2, 13, and many other like things concerning the Law and works. Before we reply to this, we must first declare what we believe concerning love and the fulfilling of the Law.

It is written in the prophet, Jer. 31, 33: I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. And in Rom. 3, 31 Paul says: Do we, then, make void the Law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the Law. And Christ says, Matt. 19, 17: If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. Likewise, 1 Cor. 13, 3: If I have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. These and similar sentences testify that the Law ought to be begun in us, and be kept by us more and more [that we are to keep the Law when we have been justified by faith, and thus increase more and more in the Spirit]. Moreover, we speak not of ceremonies, but of that Law which gives commandment concerning the movements of the heart, namely, the Decalog. Because, indeed, faith brings the Holy Ghost, and produces in hearts a new life, it is necessary that it should produce spiritual movements in hearts. And what these movements are, the prophet, Jer. 31, 33, shows, when he says: I will put My Law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. Therefore, when we have been justified by faith and regenerated, we begin to fear and love God, to pray to Him, to expect from Him aid, to give thanks and praise Him and to obey Him in afflictions. We begin also to love our neighbors, because our hearts have spiritual and holy movements [there is now, through the Spirit of Christ a new heart mind, and spirit within].

These things cannot occur until we have been justified by faith, and, regenerated, we receive the Holy Ghost: first, because the Law cannot be kept without [the knowledge of] Christ; and likewise the Law cannot be kept without the Holy Ghost. But the Holy Ghost is received by faith, according to the declaration of Paul, Gal. 3, 14: That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Then, too, how can the human heart love God while it knows that He is terribly angry, and is oppressing us with temporal and perpetual calamities? But the Law always accuses us, always shows that God is angry. [Therefore, what the scholastics say of the love of God is a dream.] God therefore is not loved until we apprehend mercy by faith. Not until then does He become a lovable object.

Although, therefore, civil works, i.e., the outward works of the Law,

can be done, in a measure, without Christ and without the Holy Ghost [from our inborn light], nevertheless it appears from what we have said that those things which belong peculiarly to the divine Law, i.e., the affections of the heart towards God, which are commanded in the first table, cannot be rendered without the Holy Ghost. But our adversaries are fine theologians; they regard the second table and political works; for the first table [in which is contained the highest theology, on which all depends] they care nothing, as though it were of no matter; or certainly they require only outward observances. They in no way consider the Law that is eternal, and placed far above the sense and intellect of all creatures [which concerns the very Deity, and the honor of the eternal Majesty], Deut. 6, 5: Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with all thine heart. [This they treat as such a paltry small matter as if it did not belong to theology.]

But Christ was given for this purpose, namely, that for His sake there might be bestowed on us the remission of sins, and the Holy Ghost to bring forth in us new and eternal life, and eternal righteousness [to manifest Christ in our hearts, as it is written John 16, 15: He shall take of the things of Mine, and show them unto you. Likewise, He works also other gifts, love, thanksgiving, charity, patience, etc.]. Wherefore the Law cannot be truly kept unless the Holy Ghost be received through faith. Accordingly, Paul says that the Law is established by faith, and not made void; because the Law can only then be thus kept when the Holy Ghost is given. And Paul teaches 2 Cor. 3, 15 sq., the veil that covered the face of Moses cannot be removed except by faith in Christ, by which the Holy Ghost is received. For he speaks thus: But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Paul understands by the veil the human opinion concerning the entire Law, the Decalog and the ceremonies, namely, that hypocrites think that external and civil works satisfy the Law of God and that sacrifices and observances justify before God ex opere operato. But then this veil is removed from us, i.e., we are freed from this error, when God shows to our hearts our uncleanness and the heinousness of sin. Then, for the first time, we see that we are far from fulfilling the Law. Then we learn to know how flesh, in security and indifference, does not fear God, and is not fully certain that we are regarded by God, but imagines that men are born and die by chance. Then we experience that we do not believe that God forgives and hears us. But when, on hearing the Gospel and the remission of sins, we are consoled by faith, we receive the Holy Ghost, so that now we are able to think aright concerning God, and to fear and believe God, etc. From these facts it is apparent that the Law cannot be kept without Christ and the Holy Ghost.

We, therefore, profess that it is necessary that the Law be begun in us, and that it be observed continually more and more. And at the same time we comprehend both spiritual movements and external good works [the good heart within and works without]. Therefore the adversaries falsely charge against us that our theologians do not teach good works, while they not only require these, but also show how they can be done [that the heart must enter into these works, lest they be mere lifeless, cold works of hypocrites]. The result convicts hypocrites, who by their own powers endeavor to fulfil the Law, that they cannot accomplish what they attempt. [For are they

free from hatred, envy, strife, anger, wrath, avarice, adultery, etc.? Why, these vices were nowhere greater than in the cloisters and sacred institutes.] For human nature is far too weak to be able by its own powers to resist the devil, who holds as captives all who have not been freed through faith. There is need of the power of Christ against the devil, namely, that, inasmuch as we know that for Christ's sake we are heard, and have the promise, we may pray for the governance and defense of the Holy Ghost, that we may neither be deceived and err, nor be impelled to undertake anything contrary to God's will. [Otherwise we should, every hour, fall into error and abominable vices.] Just as Ps. 68, 18 teaches: Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts for man. For Christ has overcome the devil, and has given to us the promise and the Holy Ghost, in order that, by divine aid, we ourselves also may overcome. And 1 John 3, 8: For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Again, we teach not only how the Law can be observed, but also how God is pleased if anything be done, namely, not because we render satisfaction to the Law, but because we are in Christ, as we shall say after a little. It is, therefore, manifest that we require good works. Yea, we add also this, that it is impossible for love to God, even though it be small, to be sundered from faith, because through Christ we come to the Father, and, the remission of sins having been received, we now are truly certain that we have a God, i.e., that God cares for us; we call upon Him, we give Him thanks, we fear Him, we love Him as John teaches in his first Epistle, 4, 19: We love Him he says, because He first loved us, namely, because He gave His Son for us, and forgave us our sins. Thus he indicates that faith precedes and love follows. Likewise the faith of which we speak exists in repentance i.e., it is conceived in the terrors of conscience, which feels the wrath of God against our sins, and seeks the remission of sins, and to be freed from sin. And in such terrors and other afflictions this faith ought to grow and be strengthened. Wherefore it cannot exist in those who live according to the flesh, who are delighted by their own lusts and obey them. Accordingly, Paul says, Rom. 8, 1: There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. So, too, vv. 12. 13: We are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Wherefore, the faith which receives remission of sins in a heart terrified and fleeing from sin does not remain in those who obey their desires, neither does it coexist with mortal sin.

From these effects of faith the adversaries select one, namely, love, and teach that love justifies. Thus it is clearly apparent that they teach only the Law. They do not teach that remission of sins through faith is first received. They do not teach of Christ as Mediator, that for Christ's sake we have a gracious God; but because of our love. And yet, what the nature of this love is they do not say, neither can they say. They proclaim that they fulfil the Law, although this glory belongs properly to Christ; and they set against the judgment of God confidence in their own works; for they say that they *_merit de condigno_* (according to righteousness) grace and eternal life. This confidence is absolutely impious and vain. For in this life we cannot satisfy the Law, because carnal nature does not cease to bring forth wicked dispositions [evil inclination and desire], even though the Spirit in us resists them.

But some one may ask: Since we also confess that love is a work of the Holy Ghost, and since it is righteousness, because it is the fulfilling of the Law, why do we not teach that it justifies? To this we must reply: In the first place, it is certain that we receive remission of sins, neither through our love nor for the sake of our love, but for Christ's sake, by faith alone. Faith alone, which looks upon the promise, and knows that for this reason it must be regarded as certain that God forgives, because Christ has not died in vain, etc., overcomes the terrors of sin and death. If any one doubts whether sins are remitted him, he dishonors Christ, since he judges that his sin is greater or more efficacious than the death and promise of Christ although Paul says, Rom. 5, 20: Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, i.e., that mercy is more comprehensive [more powerful, richer, and stronger] than sin. If any one thinks that he obtains the remission of sins because he loves, he dishonors Christ, and will discover in God's judgment that this confidence in his own righteousness is wicked and vain. Therefore it is necessary that faith [alone] reconciles and justifies. And as we do not receive remission of sins through other virtues of the Law, or on account of these namely, on account of patience, chastity, obedience towards magistrates, etc., and nevertheless these virtues ought to follow, so, too, we do not receive remission of sins because of love to God although it is necessary that this should follow. Besides, the custom of speech is well known that by the same word we sometimes comprehend by synecdoche the cause and effects. Thus in Luke 7, 47 Christ says: Her sins, which are many, are forgiven for she loved much. For Christ interprets Himself [this very passage] when He adds: Thy faith hath saved thee. Christ, therefore, did not mean that the woman, by that work of love, had merited the remission of sins. For that is the reason He says: Thy faith hath sated thee. But faith is that which freely apprehends God's mercy on account of God's Word [which relies upon God's mercy and Word, and not upon one's own work]. If any one denies that this is faith [if any one imagines that he can rely at the same time upon God and his own works], he does not understand at all what faith is. [For the terrified conscience is not satisfied with its own works, but must cry after mercy, and is

comforted and encouraged alone by God's Word.] And the narrative itself shows in this passage what that is which He calls love. The woman came with the opinion concerning Christ that with Him the remission of sins should be sought. This worship is the highest worship of Christ. Nothing greater could she ascribe to Christ. To seek from Him the remission of sins was truly to acknowledge the Messiah. Now, thus to think of Christ, thus to worship Him, thus to embrace Him, is truly to believe. Christ, moreover, employed the word "love" not towards the woman, but against the Pharisee, because He contrasted the entire worship of the Pharisee with the entire worship of the woman. He reproveth the Pharisee because he did not acknowledge that He was the Messiah, although he rendered Him the outward offices due to a guest and a great and holy man. He points to the woman and praises her worship, ointment, tears, etc., all of which were signs of faith and a confession, namely, that with Christ she sought the remission of sins. It is indeed a great example which, not without reason, moved Christ to reprove the Pharisee, who was a wise and honorable man, but not a believer. He charges him with impiety, and admonishes him by the example of the woman, showing thereby that it is disgraceful to him, that, while an unlearned woman believes God, he, a doctor of the Law, does not believe, does not acknowledge the Messiah, and does not seek from Him remission of sins

and salvation. Thus, therefore, He praises the entire worship [faith with its fruits, but towards the Pharisee He names only the fruits which prove to men that there is faith in the heart] as it often occurs in the Scriptures that by one word we embrace many things; as below we shall speak at greater length in regard to similar passages, such as Luke 11, 41: Give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you. He requires not only alms, but also the righteousness of faith. Thus He here says: Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much i.e., because she has truly worshiped Me with faith and the exercises and signs of faith. He comprehends the entire worship. Meanwhile He teaches this, that the remission of sins is properly received by faith, although love, confession, and other good fruits ought to follow. Wherefore He does not mean this, that these fruits are the price, or are the propitiation, because of which the remission of sins, which reconciles us to God, is given. We are disputing concerning a great subject, concerning the honor of Christ, and whence good minds may seek for sure and firm consolation whether confidence is to be placed in Christ or in our works. Now, if it is to be placed in our works, the honor of Mediator and Propitiator will be withdrawn from Christ. And yet we shall find, in God's judgment, that this confidence is vain, and that consciences rush thence into despair. But if the remission of sins and reconciliation do not occur freely for Christ's sake, but for the sake of our love, no one will have remission of sins, unless when he has fulfilled the entire Law, because the Law does not justify as long as it can accuse us. Therefore it is manifest that, since justification is reconciliation for Christ's sake we are justified by faith, because it is very certain that by faith alone the remission of sins is received.

Now, therefore, let us reply to the objection which we have above stated: [Why does love not justify anybody before God?] The adversaries are right in thinking that love is the fulfilling of the Law, and obedience to the Law is certainly righteousness. [Therefore it would be true that love justifies us if we would keep the Law. But who in truth can say or boast that he keeps the Law, and loves God as the Law has commanded? We have shown above that God has made the promise of grace, because we cannot observe the Law. Therefore Paul says everywhere that we cannot be justified before God by the Law.] But they make a mistake in this that they think that we are justified by the Law. [The adversaries have to fail at this point, and miss the main issue, for in this business they only behold the Law. For all men's reason and wisdom cannot but hold that we must become pious by the Law, and that a person externally observing the Law is holy and pious. But the Gospel faces us about, directs us away from the Law to the divine promises, and teaches that we are not justified, etc.] Since, however, we are not justified by the Law [because no person can keep it], but receive remission of sins and reconciliation by faith for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of love or the fulfilling of the Law, it follows necessarily that we are justified by faith in Christ. [For before we fulfil one tittle of the Law, there must be faith in Christ by which we are reconciled to God and first obtain the remission of sin. Good God, how dare people call themselves Christians or say that they once at least looked into or read the books of the Gospel when they still deny that we obtain remission of sins by faith in Christ? Why, to a Christian it is shocking merely to hear such a statement.]

Again, [in the second place,] this fulfilling of the Law or obedience

towards the Law, is indeed righteousness, when it is complete; but in us it is small and impure. [For, although they have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, and the new, yea the eternal life has begun in them, there still remains a remnant of sin and evil lust, and the Law still finds much of which it must accuse us.] Accordingly, it is not pleasing for its own sake, and is not accepted for its own sake. But although from those things which have been said above it is evident that justification signifies not the beginning of the renewal, but the reconciliation by which also we afterwards are accepted, nevertheless it can now be seen much more clearly that the inchoate fulfilling of the Law does not justify, because it is accepted only on account of faith. [Trusting in our own fulfilment of the Law is sheer idolatry and blaspheming Christ, and in the end it collapses and causes our consciences to despair. Therefore, this foundation shall stand forever, namely, that for Christ's sake we are accepted with God, and justified by faith, not on account of our love and works. This we shall make so plain and certain that anybody may grasp it. As long as the heart is not at peace with God, it cannot be righteous, for it flees from the wrath of God, despairs, and would have God not to judge it. Therefore the heart cannot be righteous and accepted with God while it is not at peace with God. Now, faith alone makes the heart to be content, and obtains peace and life Rom. 5, 1, because it confidently and frankly relies on the promise of God for Christ's sake. But our works do not make the heart content, for we always find that they are not pure. Therefore it must follow that we are accepted with God, and justified by faith alone, when in our hearts we conclude that God desires to be gracious to us, not on account of our works and fulfilment of the Law, but from pure grace, for Christ's sake. What can our opponents bring forward against this argument? What can they invent and devise against the plain truth? For this is quite certain, and experience teaches forcibly enough, that when we truly feel the judgment and wrath of God, or become afflicted, our works and worship cannot set the heart at rest. Scripture indicates this often enough as in Ps. 143, 2: Enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. Here he clearly shows that all the saints, all the pious children of God, who have the Holy Ghost, if God would not by grace forgive them their sin, still have remnants of sin in the flesh. For when David in another place, Ps. 7, 8, says: Judge me O Lord, according to my righteousness, he refers to his cause, and not to his righteousness, and asks God to protect his cause and word, for he says: Judge, O Lord, my cause. Again, in Ps. 130, 3 he clearly states that no person, not even the greatest saints, can bear God's judgment, if He were to observe our iniquity, as he says: If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand! And thus says Job, 9, 28: I was afraid of all my works (Engl. vers., sorrows). Likewise chap. 9, 30: If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch. And Prov. 20, 9: Who can say, I have made my heart clean? And 1 John 1, 8: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. And in the Lord's Prayer the saints ask for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore even the saints have guilt and sins. Again in Num. 14, 18: The innocent will not be innocent. And Zechariah, 2, 13, says: Be silent O all flesh, before the Lord. And Isaiah 40, 6 sqq.: All flesh is grass, i.e., flesh and righteousness of the flesh cannot endure the judgment of God. And Jonah says, 2, 9: They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. Therefore, pure mercy preserves us, our own works, merits, endeavors, cannot preserve us. These and similar declarations in the Scriptures

testify that our works are unclean, and that we need mercy. Wherefore works do not render consciences pacified but only mercy apprehended by faith does.] Nor must we trust that we are accounted righteous before God by our own perfection and fulfilling of the Law, but rather for Christ's sake.

First [in the third place], because Christ does not cease to be Mediator after we have been renewed. They err who imagine that He has merited only a first grace, and that afterwards we please God and merit eternal life by our fulfilling of the Law. Christ remains Mediator, and we ought always to be confident that for His sake we have a reconciled God even although we are unworthy. As Paul clearly teaches when he says [By whom also we have access to God, Rom. 5, 2. For our best works, even after the grace of the Gospel has been received, as I stated, are still weak and not at all pure. For sin and Adam's fall are not such a trifling thing as reason holds or imagines, it exceeds the reason and thought of all men to understand what a horrible wrath of God has been handed on to us by that disobedience. There occurred a shocking corruption of the entire human nature, which no work of man, but only God Himself, can restore], 1 Cor. 4, 4: I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified, but he knows that by faith he is accounted righteous for Christ's sake, according to the passage: Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, Ps. 32, 1; Rom. 4, 7. [Therefore we need grace, and the gracious goodness of God, and the forgiveness of sin, although we have done many good works.] But this remission is always received by faith. Likewise, the imputation of the righteousness of the Gospel is from the promise; therefore it is always received by faith, and it always must be regarded certain that by faith we are for Christ's sake, accounted righteous. If the regenerate ought afterwards to think that they will be accepted on account of the fulfilling of the Law, when would conscience be certain that it pleased God, since we never satisfy the Law? Accordingly, we must always recur to the promise; by this our infirmity must be sustained, and we must regard it as certain that we are accounted righteous for the sake of Christ, who is ever at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us, Rom. 8, 34. If any one think that he is righteous and accepted on account of his own fulfilment of the Law, and not on account of Christ's promise, he dishonors this High Priest. Neither can it be understood how one could imagine that man is righteous before God when Christ is excluded as Propitiator and Mediator.

Again [in the fourth place], what need is there of a long discussion? [If we were to think that, after we have come to the Gospel and are born again, we were to merit by our works that God be gracious to us, not by faith, conscience would never find rest, but would be driven to despair. For the Law unceasingly accuses us, since we never can satisfy the Law.] All Scripture, all the Church cries out that the Law cannot be satisfied. Therefore this inchoate fulfilment of the Law does not please on its own account, but on account of faith in Christ. Otherwise the Law always accuses us. For who loves or fears God sufficiently? Who with sufficient patience bears the afflictions imposed by God? Who does not frequently doubt whether human affairs are ruled by God's counsel or by chance? Who does not frequently doubt whether he be heard by God? Who is not frequently enraged because the wicked enjoy a better lot than the pious, because the pious are oppressed by the wicked? Who does satisfaction to his own calling? Who loves his neighbor as himself? Who is not tempted by

lust? Accordingly Paul says, Rom. 7, 19: The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not that I do. Likewise v. 25: With the mind I myself serve the Law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin. Here he openly declares that he serves the law of sin. And David says, Ps. 143, 2: Enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. Here even a servant of God prays for the averting of judgment. Likewise Ps. 32, 2: Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. Therefore, in this our infirmity there is always present sin, which could be imputed, and of which he says a little while after, v. 6: For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee. Here he shows that even saints ought to seek remission of sins. More than blind are those who do not perceive that wicked desires in the flesh are sins, of which Paul, Gal. 5, 17, says: The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. The flesh distrusts God, trusts in present things, seeks human aid in calamities, even contrary to God's will, flees from afflictions, which it ought to bear because of God's commands, doubts concerning God's mercy, etc. The Holy Ghost in our hearts contends with such dispositions [with Adam's sin] in order to suppress and mortify them [this poison of the old Adam, this desperately wicked disposition], and to produce new spiritual movements. But concerning this topic we will collect more testimonies below, although they are everywhere obvious not only in the Scriptures, but also in the holy Fathers.

Well does Augustine say: All the commandments of God are fulfilled when whatever is not done, is forgiven. Therefore he requires faith even in good works [which the Holy Spirit produces in us], in order that we may believe that for Christ's sake we please God, and that even the works are not of themselves worthy and pleasing. And Jerome, against the Pelagians, says: Then, therefore, we are righteous when we confess that we are sinners, and that our righteousness consists not in our own merit, but in God's mercy. Therefore, in this inchoate fulfilment of the Law, faith ought to be present, which is certain that for Christ's sake we have a reconciled God. For mercy cannot be apprehended unless by faith, as has been repeatedly said above. [Therefore those who teach that we are not accepted by faith for Christ's sake but for the sake of our own works, lead consciences into despair.] Wherefore, when Paul says, Rom. 3, 31: We establish the Law through faith, by this we ought to understand, not only that those regenerated by faith receive the Holy Ghost, and have movements agreeing with God's Law, but it is by far of the greatest importance that we add also this, that we ought to perceive that we are far distant from the perfection of the Law. Wherefore we cannot conclude that we are accounted righteous before God because of our fulfilling of the Law, but in order that the conscience may become tranquil, justification must be sought elsewhere. For we are not righteous before God as long as we flee from God's judgment, and are angry with God. Therefore we must conclude that, being reconciled by faith, we are accounted righteous for Christ's sake, not for the sake of the Law or our works, but that this inchoate fulfilling of the Law pleases on account of faith, and that, on account of faith, there is no imputation of the imperfection of the fulfilling of the Law, even though the sight of our impurity terrifies us. Now, if justification is to be sought elsewhere, our love and works do not therefore justify. Far above our purity, yea, far above the Law itself ought to be placed the death and satisfaction of Christ, presented to us that we might be sure that because of this satisfaction, and not because of our fulfilling of the Law, we have a gracious God.

Paul teaches this in Gal. 3, 13, when he says: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, i.e. the Law condemns all men, but Christ, because without sin He has borne the punishment of sin, and been made a victim for us has removed that right of the Law to accuse and condemn those who believe in Him, because He Himself is the propitiation for them for whose sake we are now accounted righteous. But since they are accounted righteous, the Law cannot accuse or condemn them, even though they have not actually satisfied the Law. To the same purport he writes to the Colossians, 2, 10: Ye are complete in Him, as though he were to say: Although ye are still far from the perfection of the Law, yet the remnants of sin do not condemn you, because for Christ's sake we have a sure and firm reconciliation, if you believe, even though sin inhere in your flesh.

The promise ought always to be in sight that God, because of His promise, wishes for Christ's sake, and not because of the Law or our works, to be gracious and to justify. In this promise timid consciences ought to seek reconciliation and justification, by this promise they ought to sustain themselves, and be confident that for Christ's sake, because of His promise, they have a gracious God. Thus works can never render a conscience pacified, but only the promise can. If, therefore, justification and peace of conscience must be sought elsewhere than in love and works, love and works do not justify, although they are virtues and pertain to the righteousness of the Law, in so far as they are a fulfilling of the Law. So far also this obedience of the Law justifies by the righteousness of the Law. But this imperfect righteousness of the Law is not accepted by God, unless on account of faith. Accordingly it does not justify, i.e., it neither reconciles, nor regenerates, nor by itself renders us accepted before God.

From this it is evident that we are justified before God by faith alone [i.e., it obtains the remission of sins and grace for Christ's sake and regenerates us. Likewise, it is quite clear that by faith alone the Holy Ghost is received; again, that our works and this inchoate fulfilling of the Law do not by themselves please God. Now, even if I abound in good works like Paul or Peter, I must seek my righteousness elsewhere, namely, in the promise of the grace of Christ, again, if only faith calms the conscience, it must, indeed be certain that only faith justifies before God. For, if we wish to teach correctly, we must adhere to this, that we are accepted with God not on account of the Law, not on account of works, but for Christ's sake. For the honor, due Christ, must not be given to the Law or our-miserable works.] because by faith alone we receive remission of sins and reconciliation, because reconciliation or justification is a matter promised for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of the Law. Therefore it is received by faith alone, although, when the Holy Ghost is given, the fulfilling of the Law follows.

Part 7

Reply to the Arguments of the Adversaries.

Now, when the grounds of this case have been understood, namely, the

distinction between the Law and the promises, or the Gospel, it will be easy to resolve the objections of the adversaries. For they cite passages concerning the Law and works, and omit passages concerning the promises. But a reply can once for all be made to all opinions concerning the Law, namely, that the Law cannot be observed without Christ, and that if civil works are wrought without Christ, they do not please God. [God is not pleased with the person.] Wherefore, when works are commended, it is necessary to add that faith is required, that they are commended on account of faith, that they are the fruits and testimonies of faith. [This our doctrine is, indeed, plain; it need not fear the light, and may be held against the Holy Scriptures. We have also clearly and correctly presented it here, if any will receive instruction and not knowingly deny the truth. For rightly to understand the benefit of Christ and the great treasure of the Gospel (which Paul extols so greatly), we must separate, on the one hand, the promise of God and the grace that is offered, and, on the other hand the Law, as far as the heavens are from the earth. In shaky matters many explanations are needed, but in a good matter one or two thoroughgoing explanations dissolve all objections which men think they can raise.] Ambiguous and dangerous cases produce many and various solutions. For the judgment of the ancient poet is true:

"An unjust cause, being In Itself sick, requires skilfully applied remedies."

But in just and sure cases one or two explanations derived from the sources correct all things that seem to offend. This occurs also in this case of ours. For the rule which I have just recited, explains all the passages that are cited concerning the Law and works [namely, that without Christ the Law cannot be truly observed, and although external works may be performed, still the person doing them does not please God outside of Christ]. For we acknowledge that Scripture teaches in some places the Law, and in other places the Gospel, or the gratuitous promise of the remission of sins for Christ's sake. But our adversaries absolutely abolish the free promise when they deny that faith justifies, and teach that for the sake of love and of our works we receive remission of sins and reconciliation. If the remission of sins depends upon the condition of our works, it is altogether uncertain. [For we can never be certain whether we do enough works, or whether our works are sufficiently holy and pure. Thus, too, the forgiveness of sins is made uncertain, and the promise of God perishes, as Paul says, Rom. 4, 14: The promise is made of none effect, and everything is rendered uncertain.] Therefore the promise will be abolished. Hence we refer godly minds to the consideration of the promises, and we teach concerning the free remission of sins and concerning reconciliation, which occurs through faith in Christ. Afterwards we add also the doctrine of the Law. [Not that by the Law we merit the remission of sins, or that for the sake of the Law we are accepted with God, but because God requires good works.] And it is necessary to divide these things aright, as Paul says, 2 Tim. 2, 15. We must see what Scripture ascribes to the Law, and what to the promises. For it praises works in such a way as not to remove the free promise [as to place the promise of God and the true treasure, Christ, a thousand leagues above it].

For good works are to be done on account of God's command, likewise for the exercise of faith [as Paul says, Eph. 2, 10: We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works], and on account of confession and giving of thanks. For these reasons good works

ought necessarily to be done, which, although they are done in the flesh not as yet entirely renewed, that retards the movements of the Holy Ghost, and imparts some of its uncleanness, yet, on account of Christ, are holy, divine works, sacrifices, and acts pertaining to the government of Christ, who thus displays His kingdom before this world. For in these He sanctifies hearts and represses the devil, and, in order to retain the Gospel among men, openly opposes to the kingdom of the devil the confession of saints, and, in our weakness, declares His power. The dangers, labors, and sermons of the Apostle Paul, of Athanasius, Augustine, and the like, who taught the churches, are holy works, are true sacrifices acceptable to God, are contests of Christ through which He repressed the devil, and drove him from those who believed. David's labors, in waging wars and in his home government, are holy works, are true sacrifices, are contests of God, defending the people who had the Word of God against the devil, in order that the knowledge of God might not be entirely extinguished on earth. We think thus also concerning every good work in the humblest callings and in private affairs. Through these works Christ celebrates His victory over the devil, just as the distribution of alms by the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 16, 1, was a holy work and a sacrifice and contest of Christ against the devil, who labors that nothing may be done for the praise of God. To disparage such works, the confession of doctrine, affliction, works of love, mortifications of the flesh would be indeed to disparage the outward government of Christ's kingdom among men. Here also we add something concerning rewards and merits. We teach that rewards have been offered and promised to the works of believers. We teach that good works are meritorious, not for the remission of sins, for grace or justification (for these we obtain only by faith), but for other rewards, bodily and spiritual, in this life and after this life because Paul says, 1 Cor. 3, 8: Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor. There will, therefore, be different rewards according to different labors. But the remission of sins is alike and equal to all, just as Christ is one, and is offered freely to all who believe that for Christ's sake their sins are remitted. Therefore the remission of sins and justification are received only by faith, and not on account of any works, as is evident in the terrors of conscience, because none of our works can be opposed to God's wrath, as Paul clearly says, Rom. 5, 1: Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith, etc. But because faith makes sons of God, it also makes coheirs with Christ. Therefore, because by our works we do not merit justification, through which we are made sons of God, and coheirs with Christ, we do not by our works merit eternal life; for faith obtains this, because faith justifies us and has a reconciled God. But eternal life is due the justified, according to the passage Rom. 8, 30: Whom He justified, them He also glorified. Paul, Eph. 6, 2, commends to us the commandment concerning honoring parents, by mention of the reward which is added to that commandment where he does not mean that obedience to parents justifies us before God, but that, when it occurs in those who have been justified, it merits other great rewards. Yet God exercises His saints variously, and often defers the rewards of the righteousness of works in order that they may learn not to trust in their own righteousness, and may learn to seek the will of God rather than the rewards, as appears in Job, in Christ, and other saints. And of this, many psalms teach us, which console us against the happiness of the wicked, as Ps. 37, 1: Neither be thou envious. And Christ says, Matt. 5, 10: Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake;

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. By these praises of good works, believers are undoubtedly moved to do good works. Meanwhile, the doctrine of repentance is also proclaimed against the godless, whose works are wicked; and the wrath of God is displayed, which He has threatened all who do not repent. We therefore praise and require good works, and show many reasons why they ought to be done.

Thus of works Paul also teaches when he says, Rom. 4, 9 sq., that Abraham received circumcision, not in order that by this work he might be justified; for by faith he had already attained it that he was accounted righteous. But circumcision was added in order that he might have in his body a written sign, admonished by which he might exercise faith, and by which also he might confess his faith before others, and by his testimony might invite others to believe. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice, Heb. 11, 4. Because, therefore, he was just by faith, the sacrifice which he made was pleasing to God, not that by this work he merited the remission of sins and grace, but that he exercised his faith and showed it to others, in order to invite them to believe.

Although in this way good works ought to follow faith, men who cannot believe and be sure that for Christ's sake they are freely forgiven, and that freely for Christ's sake they have a reconciled God, employ works far otherwise. When they see the works of saints, they judge in a human manner that saints have merited the remission of sins and grace through these works. Accordingly, they imitate them, and think that through similar works they merit the remission of sins and grace; they think that through these works they appease the wrath of God, and attain that for the sake of these works they are accounted righteous. This godless opinion concerning works we condemn. In the first place, because it obscures the glory of Christ when men offer to God these works as a price and propitiation. This honor, due to Christ alone, is ascribed to our works. Secondly, they nevertheless do not find, in these works, peace of conscience, but in true terrors, heaping up works upon works, they at length despair because they find no work sufficiently pure [sufficiently important and precious to propitiate God, to obtain with certainty eternal life, in a word, to tranquilize and pacify the conscience]. The Law always accuses, and produces wrath. Thirdly, such persons never attain the knowledge of God [nor of His will]; for, as in anger they flee from God, who judges and afflicts them, they never believe that they are heard. But faith manifests the presence of God, since it is certain that God freely forgives and hears us.

Moreover, this godless opinion concerning works always has existed in the world [sticks to the world quite tightly]. The heathen had sacrifices, derived from the fathers. They imitated their works. Their faith they did not retain, but thought that the works were a propitiation and price on account of which God would be reconciled to them. The people in the law [the Israelites] imitated sacrifices with the opinion that by means of these works they would appease God, so to say, *ex opere operato*. We see here how earnestly the prophets rebuke the people: Ps. 50, 8: I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, and Jer. 7, 22: I spake not unto your fathers concerning burnt offerings. Such passages condemn not works, which God certainly had commanded as outward exercises in this government, but they condemn the godless opinion according to which they thought that by these works they appeased the wrath of God, and thus cast away faith. And because no works pacify the conscience, new works,

in addition to God's commands, were from time to time devised [the hypocrites nevertheless used to invent one work after another,

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