

APOLOGY

XV. HUMAN TRADITIONS

⁶ We have previously shown at length that men are justified by the faith that they have a gracious God not because of works but freely for Christ's sake. This is definitely the teaching of the Gospel, for Paul clearly teaches (Eph. 2:8), "By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" and not of men. ⁷ They say that men merit the forgiveness of sins by these human observances. What is this but to set up another justifier and mediator instead of Christ? ⁸ Paul says to the **Galatians (5:4), "You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law."** That is, if by the observance of the law you think you deserve to be accounted righteous before God, then Christ is of no use to you, for why does anyone need Christ if he believes he is righteous by his own observance of the law? ⁹ God has appointed Christ as the mediator; he wants to be gracious to us through him, not through our own righteousness. These men believe that God is reconciled and gracious because of the traditions and not because of Christ. Thus they rob Christ of his honor as the mediator.

APOLOGY, XII MONASTIC VOWS

¹¹ First, it certainly is not a legitimate vow if the one making it supposes that by it he merits the forgiveness of sins before God or makes satisfaction for sins before God. This idea is an open insult to the Gospel, which teaches that the forgiveness of sins is given us freely for Christ's sake, as we have said at length above. Thus it was fitting for us to quote Paul's statement from **Galatians (Gal. 5:4), "You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace."** Those who seek the forgiveness of sins not by faith in Christ, but by monastic works, take away from Christ's honor and crucify him again. But listen how the architects of the Confutation slip away here! ¹² They apply the passage in Paul only to the law of Moses. And they add that the monks observe everything for Christ's sake and try to live more closely according to the Gospel in order to merit eternal life. To this they append a horrible epilogue in the words: "Therefore what has here been charged against monasticism is wicked."

FC SD III. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH BEFORE GOD

¹ The third controversy which has arisen among several theologians of the Augsburg Confession concerns the righteousness of Christ or of faith which God by grace through faith reckons to poor sinners as righteousness.

² The one party⁸ contended that the righteousness of faith, which St. Paul calls the righteousness of God,⁹ is the essential righteousness of God (namely, Christ himself as the true, natural, essential Son of God, who through faith dwells in the elect, impels them to do what is right, and is in this way their righteousness), and that in comparison with this righteousness the sins of all men are like a drop of water compared to the mighty ocean.

³ On the other side some have held and taught that Christ is our righteousness only according to his human nature.

⁴ **Against both parties the other teachers of the Augsburg Confession² held unanimously that Christ is our righteousness, not according to the divine nature alone or according to the human nature alone but according to both natures; as God and man he has by his perfect obedience redeemed us from our sins, justified and saved us. Therefore they**

maintained that the righteousness of faith is forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and the fact that we are adopted as God’s children solely on account of the obedience of Christ, which, through faith alone, is reckoned by pure grace to all true believers as righteousness, and that they are absolved from all their unrighteousness because of this obedience....

²⁷ Love is a fruit which certainly and necessarily follows true faith. For if a person does not love, this indicates certainly that he is not justified but is still in death, or that he has again lost the righteousness of faith, as St. John says (1 John 3:14). But when St. Paul says, “We are justified by faith apart from works (Rom. 3:28), he indicates thereby that neither the preceding contrition nor the subsequent works belong in the article or matter of justification by faith. For good works do not precede justification; rather they follow it, since a person must first be righteous before he can do good works. ²⁸ Similarly, although renewal and sanctification are a blessing of Christ, the mediator, and a work of the Holy Spirit, it does not belong to the article or matter of justification before God; it rather follows justification, because in this life sanctification is never wholly pure and perfect on account of our corrupted flesh. **In his beautiful and exhaustive exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians Dr. Luther well states:**

²⁹ “We certainly grant that we must teach about love and good works too. But it must be done at the time and place where it is necessary, namely, when we deal with good works apart from this matter of justification. At this point the main question with which we have to do is not whether a person should also do good works and love, but how a person may be justified before God and be saved. And then we answer with St. Paul that we are justified alone through faith in Christ, and not through the works of the law or through love — not in such a way as if we thereby utterly rejected works and love (as the adversaries falsely slander and accuse us) but so that we may not be diverted (as Satan would very much like) from the main issue with which we here have to do into another extraneous matter which does not belong in this article at all. Therefore, while and as long as we have to do with this article of justification, we reject and condemn works, since the very nature of this article cannot admit any treatment or discussion of works. For this reason we summarily cut off every reference to the law and the works of the law in this conjunction.” (WA 40^l. 204; Luther’s Works, v. 26, p.137))

So far Luther.

⁶⁷ If anybody regards anything more as necessary by way of a detailed explanation of this high and important article of justification before God, on which the salvation of our souls depends, we direct him for the sake of brevity to **Dr. Luther’s beautiful and splendid exposition of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians.**

FC SD IV. Good Works

²¹ Secondly, when we teach that good works are necessary we must also explain why and for what causes they are necessary, as the Augsburg Confession and the Apology have done.⁴ ²² But here we must be extremely careful that works are not drawn into and mingled with the article of justification and salvation. Therefore we correctly reject the propositions that good works are necessary for the believers’ salvation, or that it is impossible to be saved without good works,

since such propositions are directly contrary to the doctrine of exclusive terms in the articles of justification and salvation (that is, they are diametrically opposed to St. Paul's words which exclude our works and merit completely from the article of justification and salvation and ascribe everything solely to the grace of God and the merit of Christ, as was explained in the preceding article).^{5 23} Furthermore, these propositions deprive tempted and troubled consciences of the consolation of the Gospel, give occasion for doubt, are dangerous in many ways, confirm presumptuous trust in one's own righteousness and confidence in one's own good works, and are adopted by the papists and used to their own advantage against the pure doctrine of salvation by faith alone.^{6 24} Thus they are contrary to the pattern of sound words, like the Scripture passage which ascribes the bliss of salvation solely to the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works (Rom. 4:6), or the statement in Article VI of the Augsburg Confession, "We are saved without works solely by faith."

Luther also has rejected and condemned these propositions:

²⁵ **1.** In the case of the false prophets among the **Galatians**;⁷

²⁶ **2.** In his writings against the papists at many places;

³¹ Therefore we must begin by earnestly criticizing and rejecting the false Epicurean delusion which some dream up that it is impossible to lose faith and the gift of righteousness and salvation, once it has been received, through any sin, even a wanton and deliberate one, or through wicked works; and that even though a Christian follows his evil lusts without fear and shame, resists the Holy Spirit, and deliberately proceeds to sin against his conscience, he can nevertheless retain faith, the grace of God, righteousness, and salvation. ³² We should often, with all diligence and earnestness, repeat and impress upon Christians who have been justified by faith these true, immutable, and divine threats and earnest punishments and admonitions: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9). "**Those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God**" (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5). "If you live according to the flesh you will die" (Rom. 8:13). "On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience" (Col. 3:6).

Large Catechism V

⁷⁵ Suppose you say, "What shall I do if I cannot feel this need or experience hunger and thirst for the sacrament?" Answer: For persons in such a state of mind that they cannot feel it, I know no better advice than to suggest that they put their hands to their bosom and ask whether they are made of flesh and blood. If you find that you are, then for your own good turn to **St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians** and hear what are the fruits of the flesh: "**The works of the flesh are plain: adultery, immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and the like.**"

Small Catechism

17. What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in **John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2** and **Ephesians 5**.

20. But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in **Galatians 5** and **Romans 7**.

Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in **John 15–16** and in **1 John 2** and **5**.

Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in **John 8** and **16**; **1 Peter 5**; **Ephesians 6**; and **2 Timothy 2**.