

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

1] 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**.

2] 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*.

3] **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

The Law ought to be begun in us and be kept by us more and more

that Law which gives commandment concerning **the movements of the heart**, namely, the Decalog.

4] 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

The Law requires Spiritual Movements
Faith produces Spiritual 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].

We begin to fear and love God
We begin also to love our neighbors

5] 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***. 7] 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.] 8] God therefore is not loved until we apprehend mercy by faith. Not until then does He become a lovable object.

9] 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. 10] 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.]

Not outward works only, but works flowing from faith

11] 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. 12]

The Holy Spirit (received in faith) works other gifts: Love, thanksgiving, charity, patience

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.*

Veil = Human opinion that thinks that external works satisfy God's Law

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. 13] 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*.** 14] **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.

Veil Removed = We see the true character of our sinful condition.

15] 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 A. spiritual movements and B. external good works

[A. the good heart within and B. 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]. **16] The**

result convicts hypocrites, who by their own powers endeavor to fulfil the Law, that they cannot accomplish 17] 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. **18] 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.*

The true teaching about good works convicts hypocrites
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God is pleased because we are in Christ, not because of completed works of the law.

19] 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.

20] 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 1 John 4, 19 teaches: *We love Him, because He first loved us*, namely, because He gave His Son for us, and forgave us our sins.

Love Always Follows Faith

Thus he indicates that faith precedes and love follows.

21] 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 22] **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 8, 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.* 23] **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.**

Faith exists in repentance

24] 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 25] 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.

Love is an effect of faith

26] But someone 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:

Love is a work of the Holy Spirit and a fulfilling of the Law

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. 27] **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.** 28] If any one doubts whether sins are

But we do not receive forgiveness because of virtues of the law

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 29] 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 30] 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.**

31] Besides, the custom of speech is well known that by the same word we sometimes comprehend by synecdoche **the cause and effects.**

Faith is the cause,
Love is the effect

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 saved thee.* **32] 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 **33] 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"**

The highest worship is to seek forgiveness from the Christ

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 reproved 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.

34] 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

Faith with its Fruits

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.

35] 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 36] in Christ or in our works.**

A. 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.

B. 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.

37] 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.

38] 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.]

Why Does Love Not Justify?

39] 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. **40]** 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.

The fulfilling of the Law in believers is small and impure

Justification signifies not the beginning of the renewal, but the reconciliation

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.**

Faith alone makes heart content and at peace

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.**

Work cannot make the heart content and at peace with God's judgment and wrath

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 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, 8: *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.

41] 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. **42]** **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, **43]** 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? **44]** 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.

Christ does not cease to be Mediator after we have been renewed.

45] 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 **46]** of faith in Christ. Otherwise the

The inchoate fulfilment of the Law after being born again doesn't merit salvation

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 **47]** 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 7, 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, 32, 6: *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee.* Here he shows that even saints ought to seek remission **48]** 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.* **49]** 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], 50]** 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.

The Evil Desires in Flesh are Sins

51] 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 **52]** 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.* **53]** 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.] **54]** 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. **55]** **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.

56] 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 57] 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.

This inchoate fulfilling of the Law pleases on account of faith.

58] 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 right of the Law to accuse and condemn believers has been removed.

59] 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, 60] 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.

The promise ought always to be in sight

61] 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.