

#### Apology IV. Justification

<sup>21</sup> Thus our opponents teach nothing but the **righteousness of reason or of law**, at which they look as the Jews did at the veiled face of Moses.<sup>3</sup> In smug hypocrites, **who think that they are keeping the law, they arouse presumption, a vain trust in works and a contempt for the grace of Christ....**<sup>30</sup> Why then may I not myself exclaim, too — yes, I will exclaim and chide them with a Christian's sorrow — 'You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace' (Gal. 5:4); for 'being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish your own, you did not submit to God's righteousness' (Rom. 10:3). For even as **Christ is 'the end of the law,' so likewise he is the Saviour of man's corrupted nature, for righteousness to 'every one who has faith' (Rom. 10:4).**"<sup>5</sup>

....<sup>43</sup> Since we obtain justification through a free promise, however, it follows that we cannot justify ourselves. Otherwise, why would a promise be necessary? The Gospel is, strictly speaking, the promise of forgiveness of sins and justification because of Christ. Since we can accept this promise only by faith, the Gospel proclaims **the righteousness of faith in Christ**, which the law does not teach. And this is not **the righteousness of the law**.<sup>44</sup> For the law requires our own works and our own perfection. But to us, oppressed by sin and death, the promise freely offers reconciliation for Christ's sake, which we do not accept by works but by faith alone. This faith brings to God a trust not in our own merits, but only in the promise of mercy in Christ.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, when a man believes that his sins are forgiven because of Christ and that God is reconciled and favorably disposed to him because of Christ, this personal faith obtains the forgiveness of sins and justifies us. In penitence and the terrors of conscience it consoles and encourages our hearts. **Thus it regenerates us and brings us the Holy Spirit, so that we can finally obey God's law, love him, truly fear him, be sure that he hears us, and obey him in all afflictions. It mortifies our lust.**<sup>46</sup> By freely accepting the forgiveness of sins, faith sets against God's wrath not our merits of love, but Christ the mediator and propitiator. This faith is the true knowledge of Christ, it uses his blessings, **it regenerates our hearts, it precedes our keeping of the law.**<sup>47</sup> About this faith there is not a syllable in the teaching of our opponents. Therefore we condemn our opponents for teaching **the righteousness of the law** instead of **the righteousness of the Gospel**, which proclaims the righteousness of faith in Christ.

<sup>89</sup> In Rom. 4:4, 5 he says, "To one who works, his wages are not reckoned as a gift but are his due. And to one who does not work but trusts in him who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is reckoned as righteousness.**" Here he clearly says that **faith itself is accounted for righteousness**. It is faith, therefore, that God declares to be righteousness; he adds that it is accounted freely and denies that it could be accounted freely if it were a reward for works. Therefore he excludes even the merit of works according to the moral law; for if by these we earned justification before God, faith would not be accounted for righteousness without works.<sup>90</sup> And afterwards (Rom. 4:9) Paul says, "**We say that faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.**"<sup>91</sup> In Rom. 5:1 he says, "Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God," that is, our consciences are tranquil and joyful before God,<sup>92</sup> and in **Rom. 10:10, "Man believes with his heart and so is justified,"** where he declares that **faith is the righteousness of the heart.**

<sup>370</sup> Our opponents urge that good works properly merit eternal life, since Paul says (Rom. 2:6), "He will render to every man according to his works"; and v. 10, "Glory and honor and peace for every one who does good." John 5:29, "Those who have done good will come forth to the

resurrection of life”; Matt. 25:35, “I was hungry and you gave me food,” etc. <sup>371</sup> These passages and all others like them where works are praised in the Scriptures must be taken to mean **not only outward works but also the faith of the heart**, since the Scriptures do not speak of hypocrisy but of **righteousness in the heart and of its fruits**. <sup>372</sup> **Whenever law and works are mentioned, we must know that Christ, the mediator, should not be excluded. He is the end of the law (Rom. 10:4)**, and he himself says, “Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). By this rule, as we have said earlier, all passages on works can be interpreted. **Therefore, when eternal life is granted to works, it is granted to the justified**. None can do good works except the justified, who are led by the Spirit of Christ; nor can good works please God without the mediator Christ and faith, according to Heb. 11:6, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” ...<sup>383</sup> The scholastics do not teach **the righteousness of faith**. They interpret faith as merely a knowledge of history or of dogmas, not as the power that grasps the promise of grace and righteousness, quickening the heart amid the terrors of sin and death. Therefore they corrupt many other statements. Paul says (Rom. 10:10), **“Man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.”** <sup>384</sup> Here we think that our opponents will grant that the mere act of confessing does not save, but that it saves only because of faith in the heart. Paul says that **confession saves in order to show what kind of faith obtains eternal life, a faith that is firm and active**. <sup>385</sup> No faith is firm that does not show itself in confession. Thus other **good works please God because of faith**, as the prayers of the church ask that everything be accepted because of Christ and request everything because of Christ. It is well known that every prayer closes with this phrase: “through Christ our Lord.”

### **Formula of Concord, SD, III. Free Will or Human Powers**

<sup>25</sup> In the third place, Holy Scriptures ascribe conversion, faith in Christ, regeneration, renewal, and everything that belongs to its real beginning and completion in no way to the human powers of the natural free will, be it entirely or one-half or the least and tiniest part, but altogether and alone to the divine operation and the Holy Spirit, as the Apology declares.<sup>9</sup> <sup>26</sup> **To some extent reason and free will are able to lead an outwardly virtuous life. But to be born anew, to receive inwardly a new heart, mind, and spirit, is solely the work of the Holy Spirit**. He opens the intellect and the heart to understand the Scriptures and to heed the Word, as we read in Luke 24:45, “Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.” Likewise, “Lydia heard us; the Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul” (Acts 16:14). “For God is at work in you, both to will and to work” (Phil. 2:13). God “gives the repentance” (Acts 5:31; 2 Tim. 2:25). He works faith, for “It has been granted to you by God that you should believe on him” (Phil. 1:29). “It is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent” (John 6:29). **God gives an understanding heart, seeing eyes, and hearing ears (Deut. 29:4; Matt. 13:15)**. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit “of regeneration and renewal” (Titus 3:5, 6). **God removes the hard, stony heart and bestows a new and tender heart of flesh that we may walk in his commandments (Ezek. 11:19; 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Ps. 51:12)**; creates us in Christ Jesus for good works (Eph. 2:10); and makes us new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). **In short, every good gift comes from God** (James 1:17). No one can come to Christ unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). “No one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matt. 11:27). “No one can say, Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3). “Apart from me,” says Christ, “you can do nothing (John 15:5). “All our sufficiency is from God” (2 Cor. 3:6). “What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?” (1 Cor. 4:7).