

## Justification – contrasting Catholic and Reformers' position

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How does God justify us to enter heaven? On this issue of justification 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformers broke away from the Catholic Church. Together with the authority of Scripture, they remain the main dividing and irreconcilable doctrines that divide Catholic Church and all Protestants churches to this very day. According to Reformed scholar Sproul those two are the formal (authority of Scripture) and material (justification) causes of Reformation<sup>1</sup>.

Catholic teachings on Justification were promulgated at sixth session of Council of Trent on 13 January 1547 to counter those of the Reformers. They are still binding to Catholics today and part of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (or Catechism for short)<sup>2</sup>, promulgated in 1992. The Catechism says that justification is the most excellent work of God's love made manifest in Christ Jesus and granted by the Holy Spirit<sup>3</sup>. Quoting from St. Augustine (354 – 430), then bishop of Hippo in North Africa, it states that our justification is even greater than creation of heaven and earth.

Martin Luther (1483 – 1546), whose 95 theses on 31 October 1517 ignited Reformation, wrote that justification is chief doctrine<sup>4</sup> and whoever falls from it is ignorant of God and is an idolater<sup>5</sup>. It is *the article upon which the church stands or fall*, a phrase often attributed to Luther, but it was not<sup>6</sup>. According to another Reformer, John Calvin (1509 – 1564), Justification is the principal ground on which religion must be supported<sup>7</sup>.

In Greek, in which all New Testament books were written, the word for justification is δικαιοσις (dikaiosis) and that of righteousness is δικαιοσυνη (dikaiosune). Both words are related to Greek verb δικαιοω (dikaio), which means “to justify” and to Greek adjective δικαιος (dikaios), which means righteous or just. All of them have stem δικε (dike) that means justice. Dike is goddess of justice in Greek mythology. In Hebrews, the word for righteous is <sup>8</sup>קִדְּוָה (tsadek) – that of “to justify” is קָדַשׁ (tsadak). Justice in Hebrew is קִדְּוָה (tsadek) while righteousness is הַקְּדָוָה (tsedaqah). The Aramaic equivalent of tsedaqah is הַקְּדָוָה (tsidqa), which appears in Daniel 4:27. Both tsedaqah and tsidqa may mean almsgiving or acts of charity as in Tobit 12:9 (Tobit, written in Aramaic, is not considered inspired by Protestants). In the Old Testament giving alms is not a matter of generosity but it is related to justice<sup>9</sup>. Thus, according to both Old and New Testaments, justification has something to do with righteousness and with justice.

Justification and salvation are closely related, though they are not the same. Salvation is being rescued by God from eternal condemnation in hell. Justification, on the other hand, deals with how God justifies us not to end up in hell, but to enter heaven. Justification is pre-requisite of salvation. All Christians believe that we do not deserve heaven because of our sins. Scripture says the soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:4, 20) and the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). The reason why we sin is because of Original Sin, i.e. the first sin committed by Adam. According to Catechism Adam and Eve were created in original holiness and justice<sup>10</sup>, which were lost when they committed sin. What they did is their personal sins but as their descendants we are affected by it, i.e. we were born deprived from original holiness and justice, as well as in fallen nature – we became children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). Fallen nature makes us inclined to sin, which the Church defines as concupiscence. *Therefore as sin came into the world through one man [Adam] and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned* (Romans 5:12). According to Scripture, our justification and salvation are only possible through Christ: *Then as one man's [Adam]*

*trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's [Christ] act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men (Romans 5:18).*

While Romans 5:12 may allude to it, the term "Original Sin" itself is not found in the Bible. Doctrine of Original Sin itself is not even stated in the Bible. It was St. Augustine who formulated this doctrine, but this does not mean he invented this doctrine. In his letter to Julian (known as *Against Julian*), then the bishop of Eclanum in Italy, he listed statement made by other Christians who predated him, showing continuous existence of the belief, even though they did not explicitly call it Original Sin. Doctrine of Original Sin was promulgated in synods (local councils) in Carthage (North Africa) in 418 AD, and most notably in Orange (or Arausio) in southern Gaul (France) on 3 July 529 AD.

As consequence of Original Sin, grace from God becomes necessary for our justification and salvation. What is grace? Whatever we get from God that we do not deserve we call as grace. Mercy, on the other hand, is when God does not let us get something we actually deserve. Catechism defines grace as favour, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons (John 1:12, Romans 8:16), partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) and of eternal life<sup>11</sup>.

If our justification and salvation depend on grace, what is the role of our free-will? Catholic teaching on relation between grace and free-will was also promulgated in Council of Orange. From Scripture we know that we have freedom to choose between good and evil, between life and death. *I [God] call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live (Deuteronomy 30:19).* But Scripture also refers God as the potter while we are clay, which the potter (God) molds according to His will (Romans 9:19-23). *I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So it depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy (Romans 9:15-16).* *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).* Jesus said that no one can come to Him unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). But in Revelation 3:20, although Jesus takes the initiative to knock at the door, He will come in and will be with us if we hear His voice and open the door. Thus, Scripture teaches both the role of grace and our free-will in our salvation. 529 AD Council of Orange<sup>12</sup> reconciled these two by declaring that (1) when we do evil, we do it *freely* using our free-will – God does not make us do so; and (2) when we do good, we do it *freely* only after and only through being moved by grace. Grace is a *prevenient* grace and it *makes us cooperate freely*. Our will to believe in Christ *freely* and to do good *freely* is therefore produced by and depend on grace. In our salvation grace is the *primary* cause while our free-will is *secondary* cause. This teaching is known later as synergism, from Greek "syn", meaning together, and Greek noun "ergon", meaning work. *We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).* The Greek verb translated as "work" in the above verse is *συνεργο* (sunergo), meaning work together, from which English word synergy originates. Catholics and *Arminian*<sup>13</sup> Protestants are synergists.

The Reformers taught that grace works *alone* in us (or *sola gratia*), without our cooperation. It is now known as *monergism*; Greek prefix mono means single. Luther, who wrote that our free-will is in captive<sup>14</sup>, taught that our salvation is monergistic, from start to end<sup>15</sup>. Calvin, on the other hand, taught that our salvation is monergistic only at regeneration, i.e. when grace works *alone* to set free our free-will. Without regeneration we are free only to do evil. Once set free, then we cooperate *freely* with grace to believe in Christ and to do good<sup>16</sup>. Most of Reformed scholars teach this type of monergism<sup>17</sup>. The Catholic Church in Council of Trent rejects both Luther's and Calvin's teachings<sup>18</sup>.

### Catholic

Justification is a *translation* from that state in which man is born a child of the first Adam, to the state of grace and of the adoption of the sons of God through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, our Saviour<sup>19</sup>.

Justification is an on-going process

Our Justification begins<sup>22</sup> when, moved by God's grace (John 6:44) and without any merit<sup>23</sup> from us (Ephesians 2:8) we believe in Christ as Lord and Saviour.

If Justification is one-time event and by faith alone, then inspired by the Holy Spirit Paul would write "justified by faith" (Romans 3:28, 5:1, Galatians 2:16 and 3:24) in Greek passive *perfect* tense. Passive perfect tense in Greek implies the action, i.e. to be justified, is completed in the past with continuing result to the present (from speaker/writer point of view) or we remain justified ever since<sup>24</sup>. If this is the case, then Justification by faith alone certainly has solid scriptural support. However, Paul wrote those verses in passive *present* tense (Romans 3:28) and in passive *aorist* tense (Romans 5:1, Galatians 2:16 and 3:24). Present tense in Greek implies an action that occurs, usually in present time; it could be an on-going action or not<sup>25</sup>, while aorist tense indicates an action took place, usually in the past, without any information whether it is on-going or completed<sup>26</sup>. When Luther translated New Testament from Greek to German, he added the word "alone" in Romans 3:28. After being pointed out that that word does not exist in Greek text, he still justified what he did. The reason he gave to those who questioned his addition of the word alone in Romans 3:28 was: "*Luther will have it so, and says that he is a doctor above all the doctors of the whole papacy.*"<sup>27</sup>

James 2:24 plainly denies justification by faith alone. The standard response to reconcile this verse with faith alone justification is: Paul in Romans wrote about the source or root of justification, i.e. by faith alone while James wrote about the fruit or outcome of justification. This is often expressed in the phrase "*justification is by faith alone, but not by faith that is alone*"<sup>28</sup>, or true faith must be accompanied by works. However, both Paul and James used the same (Greek) verb "to justify". James 2:21 does not say Abraham was sanctified when he offered Isaac. According to the Reformers it was supposed to take place in Abraham's sanctification after his faith alone (one time) justification. James supports the Catholic Church teaching that justification is not one time event by faith alone but is a process that includes sanctification.

### Catholic

Because Justification is an on-going process, we are justified and saved by grace<sup>29</sup> (Titus 3:7) through faith (Ephesians 2:8) and through sanctification (2 Thessalonians 2:13). Therefore, Sanctification is integral part of Justification<sup>30</sup>.

### Reformers

Justification is God's *judicial declaration* that the sinner is counted as just or righteous by virtue of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ<sup>20</sup>.

Justification is one-time event<sup>21</sup>

We are justified when, moved by God's grace (John 6:44) and without any merit from us (Ephesians 2:8) we believe in Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Because Justification is one-time event, we are justified and saved by grace (Titus 3:7) through faith (Ephesians 2:8) alone (or *sola fide*). Sanctification comes after Justification but these two are inseparable<sup>31</sup>.

Sanctification (Greek 'αγιασμος) and holiness (Greek 'αγιουσυνε) have the same stem, holy (Greek 'αγιος). To sanctify (Greek 'αγιαζο) or to consecrate means to make holy or to purify. All believers of Christ are saints<sup>32</sup> or the holy ones (Greek 'αγιος) because they are set apart to be sanctified.

Without holiness no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). Most Protestants accuse the Catholic Church of conflating sanctification with justification. *And those whom he predestined he [God] also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified* (Romans 8:30). Sanctification, being also the work of God (1 Thessalonians 5:23, 2 Thessalonians 2:13), is not mentioned in Romans 8:30. Then it should be part of being justified, as taught by the Catholic Church. In 1 Corinthians 6:11 Paul placed justified after sanctified, indicating that we are justified after being sanctified.

### Catholic

God sanctifies us *wholly* (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The Greek word for wholly is (h)oloteles (‘ολοτελες), which means perfect or complete<sup>33</sup>.

### Reformers

According to Berkhof<sup>34</sup> and *Westminster Confession of Faith*<sup>35</sup>, our sanctification is imperfect, i.e. believers must contend with sin as long as they live.

We do commit sin through out our sanctification, but grace will move and enable us to repent. At the end of our sanctification, before our glorification in heaven, God will perfectly cleanse us from our sins because nothing unclean can enter heaven (Revelation 21:27). The Catholic Church and the Reformers disagree on what justification does in us, as shown in the following:

### Catholic

#### Intrinsic Justification

Through (on-going) Justification, the righteousness of God through Christ is *infused* by the Holy Spirit in us or through Justification we are *made* righteous<sup>36</sup>.

Justification includes remission of our sins and renewal of our inner being, i.e. we are made and become righteous - our sins are washed away. We are changed or transformed, from unrighteous state to righteous one.

In Justification, our righteousness comes from God<sup>40</sup> through Christ and by infusion it becomes inherent part of us or we become righteous.

We enter heaven based on what Christ did on the cross<sup>41</sup> *and what He and/or God do in us*. Through Christ we are made righteous (Romans 5:19)

### Reformers

#### Extrinsic Justification

Through (one-time event) Justification, the righteousness of Christ is *imputed* on us or through Justification we are *declared* (or counted as) righteous<sup>37</sup>. We are not made righteous.

There is no change within us after (one-time event) Justification. Luther expressed this concept in Latin as *simul iustus et peccator*<sup>38</sup>, meaning justified and sinner at the same time. According to Westminster Handbook to Reformed Theology, Christians are [counted as] righteous and sinner at the same time<sup>39</sup>.

Imputed righteousness of Christ implies that we use (external/alien) righteousness of Christ to cover our unrighteousness. We are righteous externally but internally we remain unrighteous.

We enter heaven based solely on what Christ did on the cross (or *solus Christus*) and not based on anything we do.

Scripture defines a righteous person as the one who does what is right (Ezekiel 18:5, 1 John 3: 7). It is possible only by prevenient grace through Christ - because apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). While salvation is the work of God, we are not passive, but work together with grace (Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 15:10, Philippians 2:12). In Matthew 25:31 – 46 those who did righteous acts (verse 35 to 40)

that make them righteous are the ones who will go to eternal life. Those who are unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of heaven (1 Corinthians 6:9). *Righteousness delivers from death* (Proverbs 10:2).

Faith is counted or reckoned (passive form of Greek verb λογίζομαι) as righteousness (Romans 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 22, 23, 24; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23). Certainly, to have faith in Christ is one of act that makes us righteous as mentioned in 1 John 3:7. Thus Catholics understand that Abraham became righteous by his faith (Genesis 15:6). According to the Reformers Abraham was declared righteous by his faith and this completed his justification. Yet Abraham had faith in God for the first time not in Genesis 15:6. According to Hebrews 11:8, Abraham already had faith when he was called by God to go out to a place that will be his inheritance (Genesis 12:1-8).

The Reformers introduced the concept of imputed righteousness of Christ on us, which means we use external or alien righteousness of Christ. However Scripture denies such concept in Ezekiel 18:20: *the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself*. Scripture also denies “simul iustus et peccator” or “justified and sinner at the same time” in Ezekiel 33:12: *the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins*.

Are we made righteous through Christ as taught by the Catholic Church or, as according to the Reformers, is being righteous something out of our reach but demanded by God and therefore we need external/alien righteousness of Christ imputed on us? We will examine what Scripture says about being righteous.

### **Catholic**

While Scripture says no one is righteous (Romans 3:10, Psalms 53:2-3, 143:2) it also refers Noah, Daniel, Job (Ezekiel 14:14), Joseph (Matthew 1:19), Elizabeth and Zechariah (Luke 1:6), Paul (1 Thessalonians 2:10), Abel (Hebrews 11:4) and even Lot (2 Peter 2:7) as righteous persons. The existence of righteous persons, without naming them is shown in Psalms 5:12, 34:15, Matthew 5:45, 1 Peter 3:12 and many other verses. Since Scripture cannot contradict itself the best explanation is no one can be righteous by himself, his righteousness must come from God.

Being righteous is neither being sinless nor doing righteous acts continuously, without failing, through-out our life. Such absolute righteousness belongs only to God (2 Chronicles 12:6, Jeremiah 12:1). Scripture says: *The righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins* (Ezekiel 33:12) and *a righteous man falls seven times and rises again* (Proverbs 24:16). A righteous person will sin from time to time. When a righteous person commits iniquity, he will die, and all his past righteousness will be forgotten (Ezekiel 18:24). What he needs to do is repenting. Scripture says

### **Reformers**

Scripture says no one is righteous (Romans 3:10). *God looks down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any that are wise, that seek after God. They have all fallen away; they are all alike depraved; there is none that does good, no, not one* (Psalms 53: 2-3). *Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for no man living is righteous before thee* (Psalms 143:2).

*Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins* (Ecclesiastes 7:20). *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23). *Who can say, “I have made my heart clean; I am pure from sin”?* (Proverbs 20:9). Our iniquities make us unable to meet God’s standard: *If thou, O LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?* (Psalms 130:3). *Whoever breaks one law is guilty of breaking all* (James 2:10).

when a wicked man turns away from his wickedness, he will surely live (Ezekiel 18:27-28) – all his past wickedness will be forgotten, or he will be in righteous state. *Righteousness delivers from death* (Proverbs 10:2). We are able to repent after being moved by, and only by grace from God through Christ.

God loves righteous deeds (Psalms 11:7). Paul told Timothy to aim for righteousness (1 Timothy 6:11, 2 Timothy 2:22). God even rewards us according to our righteousness (Psalms 18:20, Proverbs 11:18). Isaiah 64:5 says: *Thou [God] meetest him that joyfully works righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways.*

When we die, we will be judged based on whether we die in righteous state or not. We become righteous through Christ, (Romans 5:19). We are neither judged based on how many righteous acts nor on how many sins we commit in our life (Ezekiel 18:21-22, 24).

Scripture says that our righteousness is like filthy rags to God (Isaiah 64:6).

We need righteousness of Christ, accepted by faith alone, to cover our sins, so when we die, we can pass God's judgment. Instead of looking at our sins, God will look at perfect righteousness of Christ and let us enter heaven.

Since the word justification is related to the word justice the word justice to judgment. Both the Catholic Church and the Reformers accept the forensic aspect of justification. The difference is best described using justification model.

### Justification model

#### Catholic

##### Family and Forensic Justification

God is our Father and we become His children through our faith in Christ (John 1:12, Galatians 4:4-5, Ephesians 1:5). As Father, God will nurture and raise us. In the process, He will sometime chastise us for our wrong doings, rewards us for doing good, train and discipline us for our own good.

In this Family model, justification is a process. We start as babies in the family and grow up under God's fatherly guidance. It is up and down process as we misbehave from time to time and God always corrects and forgives us if we repent. The final outcome is we become like Him, i.e. we become righteous.

#### Reformers

##### Forensic Justification

God is the judge and we stand in the courtroom guilty for our iniquities and deserve to be thrown to jail, i.e. hell. We are in grim and hopeless situation. Then God provides the only escape through Christ. If we believe in Him, He will clothes us with His perfect righteousness that covers our iniquities.

In this courtroom model, justification is one-time event and involves double exchange or double imputation. Christ righteousness is imputed on us, who remain sinners and not righteous while our sins are imputed on Him, who remains sinless and righteous.

When we die we will be judged (Hebrews 9:27). As we are made righteous through Christ (Romans 5:19) then we are also legally declared righteous. God does not direct His wrath to Christ on the cross, but Christ willingly offered Himself as our substitute. *Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22).*

Instead of looking at our sins, God will look at perfect righteousness of Christ and declare us, who remain sinners as righteous. The Reformers make God (1) justify us who remain sinners and (2) direct His wrath to innocent Christ. Proverbs 17:15 says: *He who justifies the wicked and he condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the Lord.*

A good father will not tell his children that they can do whatever they like, simply because they are his children. There are always rules to be kept, training and discipline they must undergo. They are not meant to make their life difficult but to nurture them. Thus, Catholics may do penance, have ash on their forehead at the beginning of Lent, and perform self-mortification like fasting and abstinence. To Protestants, they are considered as unnecessary, or even as scandalous, because Christ already did everything for us on the cross. This leads us to the controversial issue: What is the role of good works in our salvation?

### Catholic

We are not justified by (good) works without grace through Christ<sup>42</sup>.

When asked how to inherit eternal life, Christ answer was obeying the Commandments (Mark 10:19). The Commandments can be expressed as to love God with all our heart and with our soul and to love our neighbour as ourselves (Luke 10:27). *“Do this [the Commandments], and you will live”*, said Christ in Luke 10:28. Through loving one another we fulfill the Law (Romans 13:8-10, James 2:8). Only by being connected to Christ, the true vine, we receive prevent grace that enables us to do those Commandments (John 15:1-5). Christ did not ask us to obey Commandments continuously. We may and will fail from time to time. Prevent grace will move us to voluntarily repent.

We do not deserve any merits from doing good works (obeying Commandments) because our ability to do them comes from and is only possible by His grace. But God, our Father, does reward us, His adopted children, for our good works (Proverbs 13:13, Psalms 18:20, 2 John 8, Revelation 22:12 etc.). His rewards are gift or grace<sup>49</sup> from Him and they even include eternal life (John 5:28-29, Romans 2:6-7).

Because our merits are grace then we can merit for ourselves and for others another grace<sup>53</sup> as

### Protestant

Good works are not the basis of our justification – justification is by faith alone.

Good works are necessary for salvation of already justified (by faith alone) person, wrote Luther<sup>43</sup> because he must show the fruits of his justified state. What Luther wrote was affirmed by Turretin<sup>44</sup>, Hodge<sup>45</sup> and Piper<sup>46</sup>. This is now known as *Lordship Salvation* concept. Those who oppose this concept say that a justified person should, but not always, perform good works, i.e. he may continue living in sin, with neither repentance nor good works, but is still saved<sup>47</sup>. They are labeled as antinomian<sup>48</sup> by followers of Lordship Salvation and in return they accuse adherents of Lordship Salvation of adding works to faith alone salvation.

Luther wrote that our good works are not only imperfect, but we commit venial sin when we do good works. To the believers, Christ righteousness will cover this imperfection<sup>50</sup>. According to Calvin our good works are polluted and will not pass God judgment<sup>51</sup>. We do not merit anything from our good works because they are defiled and polluted with sins, wrote Reformed systematic theologian Berkhof<sup>52</sup>.

How can we merit grace? If grace is merited, then it is no longer grace! Refer to end note 53 for Catholic response.

Scripture says: *And from his [Christ] fullness have we all received, grace upon grace* (John 1:16).

Some Protestants accuse the Catholic Church of teaching of salvation by grace plus merit. This caricature comes through understanding the word merit as it is used in our daily life. When we work we merit our wages. Our wages are not gift from our employer but something we deserve. Our employer needs our skill and we need our salary to pay our bill. In contrast God does not need anything from us as He can do everything Himself. The merits of our good works are not something we deserve but God graciously reward us<sup>54</sup>.

The following analogy could better illustrate the difference between Catholic and Reformers' teaching on Justification and salvation. A child played outside his home and in the process dirtied himself and his clothes. He would not be welcomed home in that condition, but he cannot clean himself and his clothes.

#### **Catholic**

Christ offered him free undeserved service to clean his dirty body and clothes. He accepted that free service by faith, became clean, went back playing and in the process dirtied himself again. Christ offered him the same free service again. When his father called him home, he walked home with clean body and clothes, made possible only by Christ. Accepting that free service represents infusion of God's righteousness in us.

#### **Reformers**

Christ offered him free undeserved gift of His spotless robe. He accepted that free gift by faith (one time only) and continued playing and dirtying himself. When his father called him home, he walked home wearing the spotless robe Christ gave him to cover his dirty body and clothes. The spotless robe is Christ righteousness; by accepting and wearing that robe over his dirty body and clothes represents the imputation of Christ righteousness.

Free service from Christ are Sacrament of Baptism (the first and only once), Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation and, optionally, purgatory. What is Sacrament? The English word "Sacrament" comes from Latin "*Sacramentum*", which is translation of the Greek *μυστήριον* (mysterion). In New Testament the word appears in Matthew 13:11, Romans 16:25, 1 Corinthians 4:1 etc., and it means something that is revealed from a previously hidden truth. The classic definition of sacrament is: *the visible form of invisible grace*, that came from St. Augustine of Hippo<sup>55</sup>. Using our five senses we cannot detect grace and therefore through sacraments it becomes visible to us. While Sacraments have their basis in the Scripture, the concept of sacraments developed over time. The Catholic Church, together with Eastern Orthodox Church, Oriental Orthodox churches and Church of the East, recognizes seven Sacraments. They are *Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Extreme unction or Anointing of the Sick, Holy Order and Matrimony*. In 1519 Luther still accepted three sacraments when he wrote *The Sacrament of Penance, the Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism and the Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ and the Brotherhoods*<sup>56</sup>. One year later, he wrote *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*<sup>57</sup> where he accepted only Baptism and Eucharist. Following Luther, some Protestant churches recognize only those two sacraments. The others believe that Baptism is only public declaration of faith in Christ (nowhere stated in Scripture) while the Eucharist, or mostly known as Lord's Supper, if they still practise it, is only memorial meal. Both have nothing to do with grace or they are no longer sacraments.

#### **Catholic**

Justification is conferred in Baptism<sup>58</sup>. It is necessary for salvation (Mark 16:16; John 3:5; 1

#### **Reformers**

Luther believed in Baptism of Regeneration and through Baptism we are born again<sup>61</sup>. He taught



Peter 3:21) of those who hear the Gospel and have the chance to take it<sup>59</sup>. Baptism is sacrament of regeneration (Titus 3:5), i.e. through Baptism we are born again (John 3:3,5) as sons of God<sup>60</sup>. Romans 6:3-4 says: *We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

Through Baptism all past sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16) and their punishment<sup>64</sup>, as well as (guilt of) Original Sin are forgiven and we receive grace of justification or sanctifying grace<sup>65</sup>. While the guilt of Original Sin is removed, concupiscence (inclination to sin), however, remains with us.

The Catechism says that through (Sacrament of) Baptism we receive *sanctifying* or *deifying* grace<sup>71</sup> – it is the grace that makes us righteous and partakers of His Divinity (2 Peter 1:4) and therefore entitles us to go to heaven. It is distinguished from *actual* grace, which is the (prevenient) grace from God that moves and enables us to believe in Christ, to obey His commandments and to repent.

According to Scripture we lose our righteous state through committing sin and regain it through repenting. *When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die for it; for the iniquity which he has committed he shall die. Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is lawful and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions which he had committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die (Ezekiel 18:26-28).* Catholics believe that we lose our righteous state through committing *deadly* or *mortal* sins.

### Catholic

Following Scripture (1 John 5:16-17) Catholics believe in deadly (mortal) sins and non-deadly (venial) sins. We commit deadly sins whenever we break any grave matter with full knowledge and with complete consent<sup>72</sup>. Grave matter is specified in the Ten Commandments<sup>73</sup>.

### Reformers

Luther interpreted 1 John 5:16-17 to mean believers in Christ commit venial sins while non-believers commit mortal sins<sup>74</sup>. According to Calvin, mortal sins are committed by the Reprobate (those predestined by God to hell)<sup>75</sup>. Sproul wrote that mortal and venial sins are teaching of Rome (the Catholic Church)<sup>76</sup>.

Every one of us commits sins from time to time, both deadly (mortal) and non-deadly ones, even after becoming believers in Christ and after being baptized. We lose our sanctifying grace from our Baptism through mortal sin. Moved by prevenient grace from God we voluntarily repent to obtain God's forgiveness. That is the reason why Christ gave the authority to forgive sins to the Church (John 20:23) in the form of Sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance, through which we regain our sanctifying grace and put us back in righteous state.

Following Scripture (Ezekiel 18:16-28) Catholics believe that we will go to heaven if we die without any unrepented deadly (mortal) sin, i.e. if we die in righteous state or with sanctifying grace in us. Our salvation neither depends on our performance in obeying Commandments, nor on number of sins we committed

that Baptism is necessary for salvation<sup>62</sup>. Calvin also related Titus 3:5 to Baptism of Regeneration<sup>63</sup>.

To *most* Evangelicals, we are born again after we sincerely say *sinner's prayer*: acknowledging our sinfulness, believing in Christ as personal Lord and Saviour and confessing that He died on the cross for our sins.

According to Luther Baptism erases past sins<sup>66</sup>. Calvin, on the other hand, wrote that through Baptism both past and future sins are forgiven<sup>67</sup>. Both Luther<sup>68</sup> and Calvin<sup>69</sup> denied that Baptism erases Original Sin, i.e. it remains with them, but no longer imputed on them<sup>70</sup>.

through-out our life. What happens if one dies still with some non-deadly (venial) sins. The person must undergo purification through purgatory<sup>77</sup> as nothing unclean can enter heaven (Revelation 21:27).

### **Catholic**

Scripture refers God as refiner's fire (Malachi 3:2) who put some into fire as one refines silver and test gold (Zechariah 13:8-9).

In Colossians 1:24 Paul wrote: *Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh, I complete what is lacking<sup>81</sup> in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church.* Christ's suffering is indeed sufficient for our redemption but this does not mean we can no longer suffer, especially when we suffer for our own good, i.e. while being purified.

Christ said in Mark 10:45: *For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as ransom for many* [for all in 1 Timothy 2:6]. His statement was finished/accomplished on the cross. Purgatory is not condemnation. Those in purgatory will eventually go to heaven.

Do Catholics believe in assurance of salvation? This question is related to what we call as predestination. Because our salvation depends on prevenient grace from God and not on our free-will, then there are those whom He graciously chose from eternity to be saved or the Elect (Greek εκλεκτος, Matthew 24:31, Romans 8:33).

### **Catholic**

The Elect have assurance of salvation but unless revealed by God, we do not know who and how many they are<sup>82</sup>. The Elect are those who, by grace, will persevere to the end, i.e. those who die as righteous persons.

When Paul greeted several persons in Romans 16, only one (Rufus) in verse 13 he referred as the Elect. This does not mean the rest were not the Elect but only Rufus' election was revealed to Paul. Even Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:27 that he himself could be disqualified (Greek αδοκιμος). If faith alone saves and guarantee us salvation, then there are those who ship-wreck their faith (1 Timothy 1:19). No one ship-wrecks a false faith!

While there is predestination of the Elect to heaven, the Catholic Church rejects the belief that God predestines the rest, or known as the Reprobate, to hell<sup>83</sup>. They end-up in hell because God, being

### **Reformers**

After nailed his 95 theses Luther still believed in purgatory<sup>78</sup>, though he did not enforce it to others. Later he changed his mind and referred purgatory as the greatest falsehood and a lie of the devil<sup>79</sup>. Calvin also denied purgatory and called it a deadly device of devil that makes void the cross of Christ<sup>80</sup>.

Since we use Christ' righteousness to cover our unrighteousness, purification through purgatory becomes obsolete. Purgatory makes what Christ did on the cross insufficient, contrary to what He said: *it is finished* (John 19:30). *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus* (Romans 8:1).

### **Protestant**

Some believe in assurance of salvation or once saved (by faith alone) is always saved, i.e. those who believe in Christ will persevere (keep their faith) to the end. Others reject such belief.

omniscience and not bound by time dimension, from eternity foreknew their rejection of His grace and let them do so. In other words, they end-up in hell because of their own will, not because God's will. Scripture (Matthew 25:42) says that hell was prepared for the devil and his angels, even though the Reprobate end up there. God calls every one of us for our salvation by grace through Christ (Romans 5:18, 1 Corinthians 15:22, Titus 2:11). He desires all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4) and come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9) and He has no pleasure on the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11). Among Protestants those belonging to Reformed tradition believe in double predestination, i.e. God when He created the world, by His decree, predestines the Elect to heaven and the Reprobate to hell<sup>84</sup>.

## End Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Sproul: *Are We Together*, page 9 – 10.  
Robert Charles Sproul (1939 - 2017) was respected Reformed theologian and pastor. He was the founder of Ligonier Ministry ([www.ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org)) and served as executive editor of *Tabletalk* magazine published by Ligonier Ministry.
- <sup>2</sup> [www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/INDEX.HTM)
- <sup>3</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1994
- <sup>4</sup> Luther: *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John*, Luther's Works, Vol. 23, page 129
- <sup>5</sup> Luther: *Lectures on Galatians*, Luther's Works, Vol. 26, page 395
- <sup>6</sup> The phrase appears in the Introduction of one of Luther's writings: *The Disputation Concerning Justification*.

*Though Luther was not a theological systematizer in the manner of Melancthon or Calvin, he recognized that all aspects of evangelical theology were related to the one article of faith by which the church stands or falls. That is why he said in the preface to this disputation, "As you have often heard, most excellent brothers, because that one article concerning justification even by itself creates true theologians, therefore it is indispensable in the church and just as we must often recall it, so we must frequently work on it."*

Introduction to *the Dispute Concerning Justification* (underlined emphasis added)  
Luther's Works, Vol. 34, page 147

- <sup>7</sup> Calvin: *Institutes of Christian Religion*, 3.11.1
- <sup>8</sup> Words in Hebrew are read from right to left.
- <sup>9</sup> *According to the Mosaic conception, wealth is a loan from God, and the poor have a certain claim on the possessions of the rich; while the rich are positively enjoined to share God's bounties with the poor.*  
1906 Jewish Encyclopedia (<http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1295-alm>)
- <sup>10</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church # 404
- <sup>11</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1996
- <sup>12</sup> *"The good will of God and of man. Men do their own will, not God's, when they do what displeases God; but when they do what they wish, in order to serve the divine will, even though willingly they do what they do, nevertheless, it is the will of Him by whom what they will is both prepared and ordered"*  
Canon 23 of Orange Council (underlined emphasis added)  
Denzinger, H., & Rahner, K. (Eds.): *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, page 79
- <sup>13</sup> from Dutch theologian Jacob Harmensen or in Latin, Jacobus Arminius (1560 – 1609)
- <sup>14</sup> *On the other hand in relation to God, or in matters pertaining to salvation or damnation, a man has no free choice, but is a captive, subject and slave either of the will of God or the will of Satan.*

Luther: *The Bondage of the Will* (underlined emphasis added)  
Luther's Works, Vol. 33, page 70

*Thus the human will is placed between the two like a beast of burden. If God rides it, it wills and goes where God wills, as the psalm says: "I am become as a beast [before thee] and I am always with thee" [Psalms 73:22]. If Satan rides it, it wills and goes where Satan wills; nor can it choose to run to either of the two riders or to seek him out, but the riders themselves contend for the possession and control of it.*

*ibid*

Luther's Works, Vol. 33, pages 65-66

- <sup>15</sup> *In just the same way (our answer continues), before man is changed into a new creature of the Kingdom of the Spirit, he does nothing and attempts nothing to prepare himself for this renewal and this Kingdom, and when he has been recreated he does nothing and attempts nothing toward remaining in this Kingdom, but the Spirit alone does both of these things in us, recreating*

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us without us and preserving us without our help in our recreated state, as also James says: "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of his power, that we might be a beginning of his creature" [James 1:18]—speaking of the renewed creature.

Luther: *The Bondage of the Will* (underlined emphasis added)

Luther's Works, Vol. 33, page 243

- <sup>16</sup> *But the question is asked whether freedom to choose good or evil does not naturally reside in man. He [Augustine] replies: "It must be acknowledged that we have free choice to do both evil and good. But in doing evil each one is free of righteousness and the slave of sin, while in doing good, no one can be free, unless he has first been set free by the Son of God [Augustine: Rebuke and Grace 1.2]. So people are freed from evil by the grace of God alone. Without this they do no good at all, whether by thinking, or by willing and loving, or by acting. This means not only that when [grace] shows them they know what they should do, but that when it enables them they gladly do what they know [to be right]. [Augustine: ibid 2.3] And he then explains this more briefly. "The human will does not obtain grace through its freedom, but rather freedom through grace." [ibid 8.17]*

Calvin: *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, page 130 (underlined emphasis added)

English translation by G.I. Davies and edited by A.N.S. Lane

Since Calvin's statement above relied on Augustine, did Augustine teach monergistic regeneration? The following statement by Augustine should clarify that he taught what is known as synergism in Catholicism.

*But God made you without you. You didn't, after all, give any consent to God making you. How were you to consent, if you didn't yet exist? So while he made you without you, he doesn't justify you without you. So he made you without your knowing it, he justifies you with your willing consent to it.*

Augustine: *Sermon 169.13* (underlined emphasis added)

English translation from: *The Works of Saint Augustine: sermons III/5 (148-183)*, page 231

- <sup>17</sup> *The act of grace which regenerates, operating within the spontaneous energies of the soul and changing their character, can neither be co-operated with nor resisted. But the instant the soul is regenerated it begins to co-operate with and sometimes, alas! also to resist subsequent gracious influences prevenient and co-operative.*

Hodge, A.A.: *Outlines of Theology*, page 448-449 (underlined emphasis added)

Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823 – 1886) was Reformed theologian. He was Principal of Princeton Seminary from 1878 to 1886, after his father, Charles Hodge (1797 to 1878) who held that position from 1851 to 1878.

*There is much confusion about the debate between monergism and synergism. When Augustinianism is defined as monergistic, one must remember that it is monergistic with respect to the beginning of salvation, not to the whole process. Augustinianism does not reject all synergism, but does reject a synergism that is all synergism.*

Sproul, R.C.: *Willing to Believe: The Controversy over Free Will*, pages 73

Sanctification is not monergistic. It is synergistic. That is, it demands the cooperation of the regenerate believer.

Sproul, R.C.: *Chosen by God*, page 131 (underlined emphasis added)

- <sup>18</sup> *The Synod furthermore declares, that in adults, the beginning of the said Justification is to be derived from the prevenient grace of God, through Jesus Christ, that is to say, from His vocation, whereby, without any merits existing on their parts, they are called; that so they, who by sins were alienated from God, may be disposed through His quickening and assisting grace, to convert themselves to their own justification, by freely assenting to and co-operating with that said grace: in such sort that, while God touches the heart of man by the illumination of the Holy Ghost, neither is man himself utterly without doing anything while he receives that inspiration, forasmuch as he is also able to reject it; yet is he not able, by his own free will, without the grace of God, to move himself unto justice in His sight.*

Trent: Decree on Justification, Chapter 5 (underlined emphasis added)

*If any one shall say, that the free will of man moved and excited by God, by assenting to God exciting and calling, nowise co-operates to the end that it should dispose and prepare itself for obtaining the grace of justification; and that it cannot refuse consent, if it would, but that, like something inanimate, it does nothing whatever, and is merely in a passive state; let him be anathema.*

Canon IV on the Decree on Justification

CANON V. *If any one shall say, that, since Adam's sin, the free will of man is lost and extinguished; or, that it is a thing with a name only, yea, a title without a reality, a figment, in fine, brought into the Church by Satan; let him be anathema.*

Canon V on the Decree on Justification

- <sup>19</sup> Council of Trent: *Decrees on Justification*, Chapter IV

- <sup>20</sup> Sproul: *Faith Alone*, page 44

Other definitions from Protestant side:

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*But the doctrine of justification is this, that we are pronounced righteous and are saved solely by faith in Christ, and without works.*

Luther: *Lectures on Galatians*  
Luther's Works, Vol. 26, page 223

*The acceptance with which God receives us into his favour as if we were righteous*

Calvin: *Institutes of Christian Religion* 3.11.2

*Justification is a judicial act of God, in which He declares, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that all the claims of the law are satisfied with respect to the sinner.*

Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*, page 513

Louis Berkhof (1873 – 1957) was one of distinguished Reformed theologians. He taught at Calvin Theological Seminary from 1906 and served as its president from 1931 – 1944.

<sup>21</sup> *Justification takes place once for all. It is not repeated, neither is it a process; it is complete at once and for all time.*

Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*, page 513

<sup>22</sup> *we are therefore said to be justified by faith, because faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation, and the root of all Justification; without which it is impossible to please God*

Council of Trent: *Decrees on Justification*, Chapter VIII

<sup>23</sup> *The Synod furthermore declares, that in adults, the beginning of the said Justification is to be derived from the prevenient grace of God, through Jesus Christ, that is to say, from His vocation, whereby, without any merits existing on their parts, they are called.*

Council of Trent: *Decrees on Justification*, Chapter V

*Since the initiative belongs to God in the order of grace, no one can merit the initial grace of forgiveness and justification, at the beginning of conversion.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2010

<sup>24</sup> Greek verbs have both aspect and tense – the former indicates what type of action the verb describes. There are three aspects: *completed*, *undefined* and *on-going* (or *continuous*). Greek perfect tense has the first one, i.e. the action is completed in the past whose effects are felt in the present (from speaker/writer point of view).

*The Greek perfect is one of the more interesting tenses and is often used to express great theological truths. The Greek perfect describes an action that was brought to completion and whose effects are felt in the present. Because it describes a completed action, by implication the action described by the perfect verb normally occurred in the past.*

Mounce, W.D.: *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*, page 225 (underlined emphasis added)

<sup>25</sup> The aspect (see end note 22) of Greek present tense is either on-going or undefined (Mounce: *ibid*, page 129). It indicates on-going action like in John 10:14: *I [Christ] know my own [sheep]*. It may also indicate actions that happens regularly or repeatedly like the verb “to fall” in Matthew 17:15: *for often he falls into the fire*, and the verb “to fast” in Luke 18:12: *I fast twice a week*. In its undefined aspect, present tense may indicate non-continuous action that happens in the future: *“surely, I [Christ] am coming soon”* (Revelation 22:20) or even a non-continuous action that happens in the past: *The next day he [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him and said”* (John 1:29).

<sup>26</sup> *The aorist indicates an undefined action usually occurring in the past.*

*The aorist tense has often been mishandled by both scholars and preachers. Aorist verbs too frequently are said to denote once-for-all action when the text has no such intention.*

Mounce, W.D.: *ibid*, pages 198, 202 (underlined emphasis added)

Aorist verbs have undefined aspect, i.e. the writer or speaker does not tell us whether the action is completed or on-going. We need to look at the context to know it. Thus, an aorist verb may indicate once-for-all action as in Roman 6:10: *“he [Christ] died to sin once for all”*. The phrase “once for all”, also found in Hebrews 7:27 and 9:12 (of which corresponding verbs are also aorist), tells us that the action is once for all. Aorist verb may indicate on-going action: *“for God so loved the world”* (John 3:16) and *“The grass withers, and the flowers fall”* (1 Peter 1:24) or actions (on going and not) that happen in the future: *“They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years”* (Revelation 20:4).

<sup>27</sup> *Here, in Romans 3[:28], I knew very well that the word solum is not in the Greek or Latin text; the papists [Catholics] did not have to teach me that. It is a fact that these four letters s o l a are not there. And these blockheads stare at them like cows at a new gate. At the same time they do not see that it conveys the sense of the text; it belongs there if the translation is to be clear and vigorous. I wanted to speak German, not Latin or Greek, since it was German I had undertaken to speak in the translation. But it is the nature of our German language that in speaking of two things, one of which is affirmed and the other denied, we use the word solum (allein) along with the word nicht [not] or kein [no]. For example, we say, “The farmer brings*

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*allein grain and kein money"; "No, really I have now nicht money, but allein grain"; "I have allein eaten and nicht yet drunk"; "Did you allein write it, and nicht read it over?" There are innumerable cases of this kind in daily use.*

*But to return to the matter in hand! If your papist wants to make so much fuss about the word sola (alone) tell him this, "Dr. Martin Luther will have it so, and says that a papist and an ass are the same thing." Sic volo, sic jubeo; sit pro ratione voluntas [I will it; I command it; my will is reason enough" is line 223 from the famous sixth satire of the Roman poet Juvenal (ca. a.d. 60-140), directed against the female sex. Luther used the quotation when he wanted to characterize the capricious unlimited power of the pope]. We are not going to be the pupils and disciples of the papists, but their masters and judges. For once, we too are going to be proud and brag with these blockheads; and as St. Paul boasts over against his mad raving saints [II Cor. 11:21ff.], so I shall boast over against these asses of mine. Are they doctors? So am I. Are they learned? So am I. Are they preachers? So am I. Are they theologians? So am I. Are they debaters? So am I. Are they philosophers? So am I. Are they dialecticians? So am I. Are they lecturers? So am I. Do they write books? So do I.*

*Let this be the answer to your first question. And please give these asses no other and no further answer to their useless braying about the word sola than simply this, "Luther will have it so, and says that he is a doctor above all the doctors of the whole papacy." It shall stay at that! Henceforth I shall simply hold them in contempt, and have them held in contempt, so long as they are the kind of people-I should say, asses-that they are.*

Luther: *On Translating: an Open Letter*  
Luther's Works, Vol. 35, pages 185 to 189

<sup>28</sup> *Justification is by faith alone, but not by faith that is alone. Saving faith is not a "lonely" faith, having no works following as a companion.*

Sproul: *Faith Alone*, page 156

*In plain words, faith alone justifies a person, Rom. 3-5. After a man has been justified by faith, it is inevitable that the fruits of justification follow, since a good tree is not able not to bear good fruits, and a bad tree bad fruits, as Christ says (Matt. 7:18).*

Luther: *Minor Prophets II: Jonah and Habakkuk*,  
Luther's Works Vol. 19, page 23

*On the other hand, the subject of justification was discussed more cursorily, because it seemed of more consequence first to explain that the faith by which alone, through the mercy of God, we obtain free justification, is not destitute of good works;*

Calvin: *Institutes of Christian Religion* 3.11.1

<sup>29</sup> *Our justification comes from the grace of God*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1996

<sup>30</sup> *This disposition, or preparation, is followed by Justification itself, which is not remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man, through the voluntary reception of the grace, and of the gifts, whereby man of unjust becomes just [righteous], and of an enemy a friend, that so he may be an heir according to hope of life everlasting*

Council of Trent: *Decrees on Justification*, Chapter VII

*Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1989

<sup>31</sup> *God justifies not only by pardoning but by regenerating, he asks, whether he leaves those whom he justifies as they were by nature, making no change upon their vices? The answer is very easy: as Christ cannot be divided into parts, so the two things, justification and sanctification, which we perceive to be united together in him, are inseparable.*

Calvin: *Institutes of Christian Religion* 3.11.6

<sup>32</sup> *This is because Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is hailed as 'alone holy,' loved the Church as his Bride, giving himself up for her so as to sanctify her; he joined her to himself as his body and endowed her with the gift of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God." The Church, then, is "the holy People of God," and her members are called "saints."*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 823 (underlined emphasis added)

<sup>33</sup> *All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity. All are called to holiness: 'Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect [Matthew 5:48]*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2013

<sup>34</sup> Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*, page 537.

<sup>35</sup> *This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.*

Westminster Confession of Faith XIII.2

Westminster Confession of Faith, completed in 1646, is the confession of faith of English-speaking Presbyterians

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<sup>36</sup> *the alone formal cause is the justice of God, not that whereby He Himself is just [righteous], but that whereby He maketh us just [righteous], that, to wit, with which we being endowed by Him, are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and we are not only reputed, but are truly called, and are, just [righteous], receiving justice within us, each one according to his own measure, which the Holy Ghost distributes to every one as He wills, and according to each one's proper disposition and co-operation.*

Council of Trent: *Decrees on Justification*, Chapter VII

<sup>37</sup> *The sinner is declared righteous in view of the fact that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him.*

Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*, page 517

<sup>38</sup> *Thus a Christian man is righteous and a sinner at the same time [in Latin simul iustus et peccator], holy and profane, an enemy of God and a child of God.*

Luther: *Lectures on Galatians*  
Luther's Works, Vol. 26, page 232

<sup>39</sup> *Christians are righteous and sinners at the same time – righteous because our sin is covered by the perfect righteousness of Christ and sinful because in and of ourselves we are still prone to follow the cravings of the flesh.*

Donald K McKim (editor): *The Westminster Handbook to Reformed Theology*, page 202

<sup>40</sup> *Justification is at the same time the acceptance of God's righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. Righteousness (or 'justice') here means the rectitude of divine love. With justification, faith, hope and charity are poured into our hearts, and obedience to divine will is granted us.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1991

<sup>41</sup> *but the meritorious cause is His most beloved only-begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when we were enemies, for the exceeding charity wherewith he loved us, merited Justification for us by His most holy Passion on the wood of the cross, and made satisfaction for us unto God the Father.*

Council of Trent: *Decrees on Justification*, Chapter VII

*Justification has been merited for us by the Passion of Christ who offered himself on the cross as a living victim, holy and pleasing to God, and whose blood has become the instrument of atonement for the sins of all men.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1992

<sup>42</sup> *If any one saith, that man may be justified before God by his own works, whether done through the teaching of human nature, or that of the law, without the grace of God through Jesus Christ; let him be anathema.*

Council of Trent: Canon I of the Decrees on Justification

<sup>43</sup> *Works are necessary to salvation, but they do not cause salvation, because faith alone gives life. On account of the hypocrites we must say that good works are necessary to salvation. It is necessary to work. Nevertheless, it does not follow that works save on that account, unless we understand necessity very clearly as the necessity that there must be an inward and outward salvation or righteousness. Works save outwardly, that is, they show evidence that we are righteous and that there is faith in a man which saves inwardly, as Paul says, "Man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved" [Rom. 10:10]. Outward salvation shows faith to be present, just as fruit shows a tree to be good.*

Luther: *The Disputation Concerning Justification* (underlined emphasis added)

Luther's Works, Vol. 34, page 165

<sup>44</sup> *Hence it is evident that the question here does not concern the necessity of merit, causality and efficiency - whether good works are necessary to effect salvation or to acquire it of right. Rather the question concerns the necessity of means, of presence and of connection or order - Are they required as the means and way for possessing salvation? This we hold.*

Turretin, F.: *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*,

Seventeenth Topic: Sanctification and Good Works, Vol. 2, page 702 (underlined emphasis added)

Francis Turretin (1623 – 1687) was Swiss Italian Reformed theologian.

*For since the will of God is the supreme and indispensable rule of our duty, the practice of good works cannot but be considered as highly necessary (which the Lord so often and so expressly recommends and enjoins in his word). There is no need to refer to passages for they are so numerous. Let the following be specially consulted (1 Thess. 4:3, 4; 1 Jn. 4:21; Jn. 13:34; Mt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 1:15, 16; 2 Pet. 1:5-7, 10; Rom. 6:11, 12; 12:1, off.). And so far from leaving to each one the license of living according to his pleasure, it openly condemns and abhors it (Rom. 6:1, 2, 15; Gal. 5:13; 1 Thess. 4:7; 1 Pet. 2:16) and declares that believers are "debtors" who are bound to new obedience by an indissoluble and indispensable bond (Rom. 8:12; 13:7; 1 Jn. 4:11), not only by the necessity of the precept, but also by the necessity of the means.*

*ibid*, page 703 (underlined emphasis added)

*For since good works have the relation of the means to the end (Jn. 3:5, 16; Mt. 5:8); of the "way" to the goal (Eph. 2:10; Phil. 3:14); of the "sowing" to the harvest (Gal. 6:7, 8); of the "first fruits" to the mass (Rom. 8:23); of labor to the reward (Mt. 20:1); of the "contest" to the crown (2 Tim. 2:5; 4:8), everyone sees that there is the highest and an indispensable necessity of good works for obtaining glory. It is so great that it cannot be reached without them (Heb. 12:14; Rev. 21:27).*

*ibid*, page 705 (underlined emphasis added)

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<sup>45</sup> *Although not the ground of our acceptance, good works are absolutely essential to salvation, as the necessary consequences of a gracious state of soul and perpetual requirements of the divine law. Gal v. 22,23; Eph ii.10; John xiv.21*

Hodge, A.A.: *The Confession of Faith*, page 196 (underlined emphasis added).

<sup>46</sup> *Paul calls this effect or fruit or evidence of faith the “work of faith” (1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11) and the “obedience of faith” (Romans 1:5; 16:26). These works of faith, and this obedience of faith, these fruits of the Spirit that come by faith, are necessary for our final salvation. No holiness, no heaven (Hebrews 12:14). So, we should not speak of getting to heaven by faith alone in the same way we are justified by faith alone.*

Piper, John: *Does God really saves us by faith alone?* 25 Sep 2017 online article at [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org) (underlined emphasis added)

John Piper (born in 1946) is founder and teacher of DesiringGod.org and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary.

<sup>47</sup> *Today there exists in part of the evangelical church a wholly unrealistic view of the nature of Christian experience. According to those who hold this view, effective Christian living is virtually an inevitable result of new birth. But this view is as remote from the Bible as east is remote from west.*

Hodges: *Absolutely Free*, page 69

Zane Clark Hodges (1932 – 2008) was American pastor who taught at Dallas Seminary.

*Let it be noted that this [Romans 8:10] is a description of a Christian, one in whom Christ and the Spirit live. Yet the physical house which contains them is spiritually dead!*

*ibid*, page 70

*What they [Romans 7:15-25] do describe is the astounding enigma of Christian experience. The believer in Jesus is alive in spirit, while still inhabiting a physical house which is dead to God’s life as it can possibly be.*

*ibid*, page 71

<sup>48</sup> from Greek anti (against) and nomos (law). The term Antinomian was coined by Luther to describe what John Agricola (1494 – 1566) taught: Christians are not required to obey Law [Commandments] because they are saved by faith alone.

<sup>49</sup> *Filial adoption, in making us partakers by grace in the divine nature, can bestow true merit on us as a result of God’s gratuitous justice. This is our right by grace, the full right of love, making us “co-heirs” with Christ and worthy of obtaining “the promised inheritance of eternal life.” The merits of our good works are gifts of the divine goodness. “Grace has gone before us; now we are given what is due.... Our merits are God’s gifts.”*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2009 (underlined emphasis added)

*The saints have always had a lively awareness that their merits were pure grace.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2011 (underlined emphasis added)

<sup>50</sup> *Thus we sin even when we do good, unless God through Christ covers this imperfection and does not impute it to us. Thus it becomes a venial sin, though the mercy of God, who does not impute it for the sake of faith and the plea on behalf of this imperfection for the sake of Christ. Therefore, he who thinks that he might be regarded as righteous because of his works is very foolish, since if they were offered as a sacrifice to the judgment of God, they still would be found to be sins. . . . Therefore iniquity will be found in his righteousness, that is, even his good works will be unrighteous and sinful. This iniquity will not be found in believers and those who cry to Him, because Christ has brought them aid from the fullness of his purity and has hidden the imperfection of theirs.*

Luther: *Lectures on Romans*

Luther’s Works, Vol. 25, pages 276-277

What Luther taught above was condemned in Council of Trent:

*If any one saith, that, in every good work, the just sins venially at least, or-which is more intolerable still-mortally, and consequently deserves eternal punishments; and that for this cause only he is not damned, that God does not impute those works unto damnation; let him be anathema.*

*If any one saith, that the justified sins when he performs good works with a view to an eternal recompense; let him be anathema.*

Council of Trent: Canon 25 and 26 on the Decree on Justification

<sup>51</sup> *All we assign to man is that, by his impurity he pollutes and contaminates the very works which were good. The most perfect thing which proceeds from man is always polluted by some stain. Should the Lords therefore bring to judgment the best of human works, he would indeed behold his own righteousness in them; but he would also behold man’s dishonour and disgrace.*

Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion* 3.15.3

<sup>52</sup> *Even the best works of believers are polluted by sin.*

Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*, page 523



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<sup>53</sup> *Moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity, we can then merit for ourselves and for others the graces needed for our sanctification, for the increase of grace and charity, and for the attainment of eternal life. Even temporal goods like health and friendship can be merited in accordance with God's wisdom. These graces and goods are the object of Christian prayer. Prayer attends to the grace we need for meritorious actions.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2010 (underlined emphasis added)

The above clause starts with "moved by the Holy Spirit and by charity", i.e. we must be moved by grace first before we can merit grace for ourselves or for others. For example, moved by grace a person works as missionary and his missionary works merit grace of salvation for others. Or moved by grace we pray for conversion of others and God answer our prayer. God does not need our missionary works or prayer because He can do everything by Himself, yet He involves us in His works to save mankind.

<sup>54</sup> *The merit of man before God in the Christian life arises from the fact that God has freely chosen to associate man with the work of his grace.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2008

*With regard to God, there is no strict right to any merit on the part of man. Between God and us there is an immeasurable inequality, for we have received everything from him, our Creator.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2007

<sup>55</sup> Augustine: *On the Catechism of the Uninstructed* 26:50.

<sup>56</sup> For full text refer to Luther's Works, Vol. 35.

<sup>57</sup> For full text refer to Luther's Works, Vol. 36

<sup>58</sup> *Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1992

<sup>59</sup> *The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation [John 3:5] He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them [Matthew 28:19-20]. Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament [Mark 16:16]. The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are 'reborn of water and the Spirit'. God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1257

<sup>60</sup> *Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1213

*Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte 'a new creature', an adopted son of God, who has become a 'partaker of the divine nature, [2 Corinthians 5:17, 2 Peter 1:4] member of Christ and co-heir with him [Romans 8:17, 1 Corinthians 6:15, 12:17] and the temple of the Holy Spirit [1 Corinthians 6:19].*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1265

<sup>61</sup> *The significance of baptism is a blessed dying unto sin and a resurrection in the grace of God, so that the old man, conceived and born in sin, is there drowned, and a new man, born in grace, comes forth and rises. Thus St. Paul, in Titus 3[:5], calls baptism a "washing of regeneration," since in this washing a person is born again and made new. As Christ also says, in John 3[:3, 5], "Unless you are born again of water and the Spirit (of grace), you may not enter into the kingdom of heaven." For just as a child is drawn out of his mother's womb and is born, and through this fleshly birth is a sinful person and a child of wrath [Eph. 2:3], so one is drawn out of baptism and is born spiritually. Through this spiritual birth he is a child of grace and a justified person. Therefore sins are drowned in baptism, and in place of sin, righteousness comes forth.*

Luther: *The Holy and Blesses Sacrament of Baptism*

Luther's Works, Vol. 35, page 30

<sup>62</sup> *These every person must know. In the first place, note the command of God, which is very stern when he says: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). This is a strict command; if a person wants to be saved, let him be baptized; otherwise he is in God's disfavor.*

Luther: *Sermons I*

Luther's Works Vol. 51, page 182-183

<sup>63</sup> *By the washing of regeneration I have no doubt that he alludes, at least, to baptism, and even I will not object to have this passage expounded as relating to baptism; not that salvation is contained in the outward symbol of water, but because baptism tells to us the salvation obtained by Christ.*

*Now the Apostles are wont to draw an argument from the Sacraments, to prove that which us there exhibited under a figure, because it ought to be held by believers as a settled principle, that God does not sport with us by unmeaning figures, but*

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*inwardly accomplishes by his power what he exhibits by the outward sign; and therefore, baptism is fitly and truly said to be “the washing of regeneration”.*

*But here Paul addresses believers, in whom baptism is always efficacious, and in whom, therefore, it is properly connected with its truth and efficacy. But this mode of expression we are reminded that, if we do not wish to annihilate holy baptism, we must prove its efficacy by “newness of life” [Romans 6:4].*

Calvin: *Commentary on Timothy, Titus, Philemon*

<sup>64</sup> *By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1263

<sup>65</sup> *The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of justification*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1266

<sup>66</sup> *From this it follows, to be sure, that when someone comes forth out of baptism, he is truly pure, without sin, and wholly guiltless.*

Luther: *Word and Sacrament I*

Luther's Works, Vol. 35, page 32

<sup>67</sup> *Nor is it to be supposed that baptism is bestowed only with reference to the past, so that, in regard to new lapses into which we fall after baptism, we must seek new remedies of expiation in other so-called sacraments, just as if the power of baptism had become obsolete. We ought to consider that at whatever time we are baptised, we are washed and purified once for the whole of life. Wherefore, as often as we fall, we must recall the remembrance of our baptism, and thus fortify our minds, so as to feel certain and secure of the remission of sins. For though, when once administered, it seems to have passed, it is not abolished by subsequent sins.*

Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 4.15.3

<sup>68</sup> *All the universities have taught in this manner and the books of these universities are full of this idea that baptism removes original sin. Therefore, no sin at all remains in the baptized. But sins which men do after baptism do not extend to the blood of Christ, but actual sins are characteristic of human nature and we ought to remove them and we ought to make satisfaction for them. Original sin has been destroyed in baptism. Therefore, it is necessary that we make satisfaction for actual sins. This is a popish doctrine and an invention of those who share his opinion that many ways of reconciling God have been discovered. We see that this argument is the fountain and source of all monasteries, masses, pilgrimages, invocation of the saints, and similar devices by which men try to make satisfaction for sins. We, however, declare with Augustine, who alone preserved this teaching for us, that original sin is removed not so that it does not exist, but so that it is not imputed.*

Luther: *The Disputation Concerning Justification*

Luther's Works, Vol. 34, page 180

<sup>69</sup> *It is now clear how false the doctrine is which some long ago taught, and others still persist in, that by baptism we are exempted and set free from original sin, and from the corruption which was propagated by Adam to all his posterity, and that we are restored to the same righteousness and purity of nature which Adam would have had if he had maintained the integrity in which he was created.*

Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 4.15.10

<sup>70</sup> Luther and Calvin lumped together guilt of Original Sin and its effect or concupiscence. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, distinguishes between the guilt of Original Sin, which is removed by Baptism and its effect or concupiscence, which remains with Baptized persons.

*If anyone denies that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is conferred in baptism, the guilt of original sin is remitted, or even asserts that the whole of that which has the true and proper nature of sin is not taken away, but says that it is only touched in person or is not imputed, let him be anathema. But this holy Synod confesses and perceives that there remains in the baptized concupiscence of an inclination, although this is left to be wrestled with, it cannot harm those who do not consent, but manfully resist by the grace of Jesus Christ.*

Council of Trent: Canon 5 of the Decrees on Original Sin

<sup>71</sup> *The grace of Christ is the gratuitous gift that God makes to us of his own life, infused by the Holy Spirit into our soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it. It is the sanctifying or deifying grace received in Baptism. It is in us the source of the work of sanctification.*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1999

<sup>72</sup> *For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: “Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent.”*

Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1857

- <sup>73</sup> *Grave matter is specified by the Ten Commandments, corresponding to the answer of Jesus to the rich young man: "Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and your mother."*  
Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1858
- <sup>74</sup> *Therefore it is a pernicious error when the sophists distinguish among sins on the basis of the substance of the deed rather than on the basis of the persons. A believer's sin is the same sin and sin just as great as that of the unbeliever. To the believer, however, it is forgiven and not imputed, while to the unbeliever it is retained and imputed. To the former it is venial; to the latter it is mortal. This is not because of a difference between the sins, as though the believer's sin were smaller and the unbeliever's larger, but because of a difference between the persons.*  
Luther: Lectures on Galatians  
Luther's Works, Vol. 27, page 76
- <sup>75</sup> Calvin Commentary on 1 John, available at: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom45.v.vi.v.html>
- <sup>76</sup> *Rome distinguishes between mortal and venial sin. Venial sin is real sin but is less serious. Mortal sin is called mortal because it kills the justifying grace in the soul. Mortal sin destroys grace but not faith. A person can retain faith and still not justified.*  
Sproul: *Grace Unknown*, page 63
- <sup>77</sup> *All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.*  
Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1030-31
- <sup>78</sup> *The existence of a purgatory I have never denied. I still hold that it exists, as I have written and admitted many times, though I have found no way of proving it incontrovertibly from Scripture or reason. I find in Scripture that Christ, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Job, David, Hezekiah, and some others tasted hell in this life. This I think was purgatory, and it seems not beyond belief that some of the dead suffer in like manner. Tauler has much to say about it, and, in short, I myself have come to the conclusion that there is a purgatory, but I cannot force anybody else to come to the same result.*  
Luther: *Defense and Explanation of all the Articles*, written c. 1521  
Luther's Works, Vol. 32, page 95
- <sup>79</sup> *And purgatory is the greatest falsehood, because it is based on ungodliness and unbelief; for they deny that faith saves, and they maintain that satisfaction for sins is the cause of salvation.*  
Luther: *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21 – 25*, written c. 1539  
Luther's Works, Vol. 4, page 315
- Of purgatory there is no mention in Holy Scripture; it is a lie of the devil, in order that the papists may have some market days and snares for catching money*  
Luther: *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 45 – 50*, written c. 1545, Luther's Works, Vol. 8, page 316
- <sup>80</sup> *We are bound, therefore, to raise our voice to its highest pitch, and cry aloud that purgatory is a deadly device of Satan; that it makes void the cross of Christ; that it offers intolerable insult to the divine mercy; that it undermines and overthrows our faith.*  
Calvin: *Institutes of Christian Religion* 3.5.6
- <sup>81</sup> The Greek (noun) is ὑστέρημα, which means deficiency or lacking or want. It also appears in Luke 21:4 (translated as poverty or as penury in KJV), 1 Corinthians 16:17, 2 Corinthians 8:14, 9:12, 11:9, Philippians 2:30 and 1 Thessalonians 3:10.
- <sup>82</sup> *If any one saith, that he will for certain, of an absolute and infallible certainty, have that great gift of perseverance unto the end, - unless he has learned this by special revelation; let him be anathema.*  
Council of Trent: *Decrees on Justification*, Canon 16
- <sup>83</sup> *We not only do not believe that some have been truly predestined to evil by divine power, but also with every execration we pronounce anathema upon those, if there are [any such], who wish to believe so great an evil.*  
Council of Orange  
Denzinger, H., & Rahner, K. (Eds.): *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, page 81
- God predestines no one to go to hell*  
Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1037
- <sup>84</sup> *By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which He determined within Himself whatever He wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.*  
Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 3.21.6
- By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.*  
Westminster Confession of Faith III.3