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## *Justification By Faith*

**James Atkinson**

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### **1. NOT AN ARTICLE OF DOCTRINE BUT A SUMMARY OF THE GOSPEL**

It is true that the phrase 'justification by faith' became a polemical party cry of the 16th century. It is equally true that it has often played that role among evangelicals these 400 years. What is regrettable, in my opinion, is that the phrase has virtually been appropriated by sectarians or fundamentalists today. But it is hardly necessary for me to remind this audience that our 16th century Reformers saw the phrase as a summary of the Gospel, indeed as a New Testament doctrine, originating in the Old Testament, and preserved down the centuries by the great Church Fathers; see e.g. Cranmer's *Homily*.

The phrase summed up the Gospel: it was no innovation, it was a renovation. It was no party cry; it was the clarion call of scholarly, evangelical churchmen, within a secularised, institutionalised, de-spiritualised Church, to proclaim the gospel of grace in Christ in authentic New Testament language.

The doctrine means that a man is saved by faith in Christ only, saved by the grace of God, and not by any works or human merit. The doctrine handles the first and last question of man: how do I stand in relation to God? It speaks of the paradox of how God handles man, man who knows his estrangement from God, his alienation from the mystery of being. In those devastating words of Luther,

*wir handeln nicht, sondern wir werden gehandelt.*

To express it in other words: it is not a question of asking ourselves what we are going to do about this distance from God which every man feels, but to open ourselves to what God has done, and is doing, to create that relationship.

It will be argued in this lecture that God has from the beginning been seeking to establish a normal, living relationship between Himself and sinful man. This is the story of the Bible, of man's failure to respond to God, narrowing down through the centuries to one man, Jesus Christ, who quite literally and uniquely was 'justified by faith'. Christ is the Author and Perfecter of our faith in that He showed in His perfect faith and obedience the only possible relationship to God. Unlike Christ man as sinner cannot effect that relationship. The moment he sees that truth, he is saved. The story of the Old Testament is the story of what God did to and with those who did not believe, the story of the New Testament is what God did to and with those who did believe.

Luther's formula was *sola fide*. He is criticised in Calvinist quarters for putting the question in the wrong way, an egocentric way, *Wie soll ich ein gnadigen Gott finden?* For Luther it was bound to be put that way, for he entered the monastery to save his soul. He set off on an egocentric mission, but like Saul, who set off to look for a couple of lost asses and returned with a kingdom, Luther won not his soul but the New Testament and the Gospel. Calvin came a generation later, and rightly set the theology in its true theocentric orbit. He went right back and traced the doctrine to God's eternal election as the ultimate ground of salvation

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and our only hope in life and death. But both mean the same thing, and both re-declare the common Gospel, promised in the Old Testament, fulfilled in and by Christ, proclaimed in the Acts and the Epistles, maintained by the Church. The heart of the matter is that evangelical theology maintains Salvation in Christ Only against any and all Pelagianism or synergism, which in varying degrees seek to divide the work and the merit between God and man. Luther said that this doctrine was the doctrine by which the Church would stand or fall. Be that as it may, let it suffice to say here that this central and Biblical and Patristic doctrine on which the Church is built belongs not to Protestantism but to the whole Church. It was the confession of Peter, the first creed of Christendom.

It is one of the ironies of history to reflect on how close the entire Church was to re-accepting this evangelical doctrine in the 16th century. At the Diet of Regensburg 1541 it was actually agreed on, but the papal curia rejected it and formulated its own theology at Trent. Reginald Pole, though clearly arguing in his *Treatise on Justification* (1569) that a man was saved by love in addition to faith, nevertheless, always strove to retain this evangelical doctrine within the Catholic corpus; e.g. he once offered the spiritual advice: 'to believe that faith only saved but to act as if works only saved.' Not unlike the Calvinist minister who said he was Arminian towards the world, Calvinist towards himself. Justification by faith is a paradox of many facets, and I am making a plea to pass beyond the formula, for God is greater than any formula. It is surely a remarkable fact to learn that Hans Küng (*Rechtfertigung* 1957) cannot find any irreducible distinctions between the evangelical and catholic doctrines enough to divide the Church and not just a theological school. He sees definitions such as Justification by Faith as *confirmations*, which are strictly speaking dispensable, whose existence can only be justified if they arrive at clearer understanding. Ming even concurs with the XXXIX Articles.

## 2. SALVATION BY WORKS AND SALVATION BY FAITH

There are two ways of salvation in the Bible.

(a) There is salvation in Christ only by faith, which was promised in the Old Testament, which Christ Himself made possible, and which He commissioned the apostles to proclaim after it had been effected.

(b) There is the other (which can be understood only in relation to the former), and that is salvation by obedience to the Law, by which obedience a man made himself acceptable to God. This was the Judaism, in which Christ and His disciples were brought up, and of which St. Paul was the zealous defender over against the Gospel (i.e. the former method).

Christ moved men beyond this doctrine of salvation by merit, as Paul was to do after his conversion. He had come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. He did not come as a rabbi to teach the Law, but as Christ, to show men who loved the Law that, had they understood the Law they would have seen it as a preparation for the Gospel: if they had understood the righteousness of the

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Law they would have seen the necessity of the righteousness of the Gospel. When Christ spoke to them of the relationship between God and man, it was in terms of a lost son (Luke

15) who was saved not by his righteousness but by the mercy and goodness of the father. The son could never on his own have restored the relationship he had broken. The labourers in the vineyard (Matt. 20) were rewarded not in proportion to their work but by the graciousness of their master. The Pharisee (Luke 18:9ff.) was not justified for all his virtue and goodness, solid though these were, whereas the publican was, because, aware of his sin and hopelessness, there was still hope for him, in that he had none in himself and just cried to God. No man can have any claim on God. The message was proclaimed to all alike: Repent and believe the Gospel. The truth of Christ's Gospel lies in that he knows man is estranged from God in sin, even rebellious, and to restore this human estrangement required a move from God. If the Old Testament is viewed from the point of view of God's gracious activity the New Testament is seen as its perfect fulfilment.

This point may be illustrated by comparing the ministry of Christ with that of John the Baptist. John, too, preached a mission of repentance, but there was a paralysis about his message. When his bewildered converts asked John what they were to do now that they had repented and been baptised, all that John could suggest was ethical advice: even John, though greatest of all born of women was in another world, a religion of Law, merit, ethics. 'He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise' (Luke 3). To the publicans he said, 'Exact no more than that which is appointed you'. To the soldiers, 'Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages'. Rather feeble doctrine for such a fiery preacher. But with Christ it was different. He showed his hearers that it was not advice they needed, but the saving Word of God. They had had the finest advice ever given to any people, the Law, but their trouble was that they could not keep the Law for they were in sin. He spoke of a repentance that brought them into the Kingdom of God, of a God who all the centuries had been gracious and merciful, of a God who loved them and sought them while they were yet sinners, of a God who had offered the ultimate, Himself as man, to win, redeem, even to die for ungrateful sinners. 'Never man spake as this man spake' (John 7:46). 'And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.... And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth' (Luke 20b, 22). 'For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes' (Matt. 7:29). It was the self-authenticating Word of God seeking out and searching out the hearts of men. It was a new message of salvation, different from, other than, any they had ever heard before. It was not a call to do more and to do it better, but a call to see more and to hear it better. 'Take heed how ye hear' (Mark 4:24): to see what God was purposing and had purposed; to hear again this saving Word which was seeking to cleanse, redeem and enhearten men; to allow God to effect His mighty, saving purpose through Him. John could properly proclaim the prophecy of Isaiah, 'All flesh shall see the salvation of God'. And when 'all men mused in their hearts of John', he could but declare, 'One mightier than I cometh: He shall baptize you with water and the Holy Ghost' (Luke 3:4-16). This baptism was to mean not only the repentance we all need but the new evangelical doctrine of re-birth from above: it meant the transition from the Law to the Gospel.

This distinction between the dispensations of John and Jesus was brought to its ultimate conclusion by the apostles, for while Christ preached the Gospel the

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totality of it could only be appropriated after the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension. That is why one finds the clearest Gospel not in the gospels but in the epistles. A man can make almost anything he likes of Christ if he restricts himself to the Synoptic Gospels: he can find any picture he wants to find—the prophet, the preacher, the first socialist, the zealot....

But in the epistles, and at its finest in Romans, Paul has fixed the content of faith clearly and unequivocally for all time. Fixed it in his total sweep of what Christ has done for us men and for our salvation. There is an important reason to pass from Jesus to Paul at this point. It was one thing for Jesus to preach the doctrine of free grace and justification by faith to dispossessed Galileans, the accursed 'people of the land', but it was quite another thing to convert the Jews obedient and loyal to the Law and the Cult, to persuade Jerusalem and to convince Judaism that the time was fulfilled and the Law fulfilled in the Gospel. Christ fought this fight, and it cost Him His life. Of the Gospel writers only John saw this, with his emphasis on Christ's preaching and teaching in the Temple at the feasts. It was here in the Temple of Jerusalem that the Johannine debates declared the full significance of the Galilean preaching. It took a Hebrew rabbi, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the Law perfect, to tell the world what it meant for a man to be justified, not by the works of the Law (a claim he could make), but freely of the grace of God. This is what was meant by justification by faith in Christ only. Let us now turn to see how Paul understood this doctrine.

The phrase 'justification by faith' gives expression to what is essentially new and distinctive in Christianity. It differentiates it not only from its historical origin, Judaism, but from all other religions of the world. Paul saw two radically distinct doctrines of salvation in conflict. One, salvation by the works of the Law, by earning merit by human effort and discipline, and so making oneself acceptable to God by a human righteousness in accordance with this declared Law: a way of discipline, effort, ethic, self-righteousness. The other, a way for a sinner knowing he could never make himself righteous enough to be acceptable to God, and in this recognition joyfully to accept with both hands the free mercy of God offered to him, a sinner. It was now a matter no longer of man and his works but God and His Work. It was now no longer a matter of man and his righteousness, but God and His Righteousness. It was not a case of God being far removed and of man making efforts to reach Him. It was the other way round. It was man who was far removed from God, who had come all the way in Christ while man was in sin and opposition to God, freely offering to sinful man unconditional forgiveness and a new life and a new righteousness: a life hid with Christ in God.

It is important to stress at this point the objectivity of this deliverance, of which St. John could write, 'that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life' (1 John 1:1). There was a very heavy cross which, had you carried it, would have filled your shoulder with splinters; of a tomb which, had you seen it, you would have found empty; of a Christ who hand to hand defeated all the tyrants: wrath, sin, law, even death. We are like a man trapped in a bog: unless somebody comes along and can give a power from a base firmer and other than our own, we shall go under. Faith is not something you start with and which grows: you have nothing at all. It is 'a free surrender and a joyous wager on the unseen, untried

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and unknown goodness of God' (Luther: Sermon July 25th, 1522. W.A. 10.3.239). 'If you believe, you possess'; said Luther, 'if you do not believe, you do not possess—everyone always has as much of God as he believes.' In other words, God becomes effective in our life as we believe in Him. Faith is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8). It is not something we put into the bargain: nor is it something for which you can strive. It is not credulity, neither is it a feeling. It is not a mystical intuition, neither is it a comfortable psychological state of mind. It is not assent to propositions. It is not the case that a man has faith and that thereby he is enabled to believe the Gospel. Rather it is that when this Gospel is proclaimed, faith is called out, created, given by God: a man is literally confronted by God. It comes as a new kind of self-

understanding: not a change of opinion, nor an act of the unconscious, but a movement in man's existence, brought about through an encounter with God. This is what Paul meant when he described the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation. It wins, compels, changes, arrests: it makes a man aware of a new dimension. The hearing the Gospel is an event in a person's life such as being confirmed, or getting married, or having a baby. It happens. That is what I mean by objectivity. When the Gospel is declared and heard, it brings faith with it. The Gospel is primary: when it is preached it awakens faith in us. When one hears the Gospel, and is conquered by it, that is faith. K ung writes: 'In justification the sinner can give nothing which he does not receive by God's grace. He stands there with his hands entirely empty.' Just as Abraham in Gen. 15:6 and Rom. 4:3 and as the Israelites before Moses in Exod. 4:31: 'And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped.' This man is a man who knows that he has nothing to build for God, but he accepts God's word, like David. 'Would you build me a house to dwell in? ... Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house' (2 Sam. 7:5,11). This man is a man who will not dash off on a charger, but whose power lies in quietness and trust (cf. Isa. 30:15-16), who receives the kingdom of God like a little child (Mark 10:15) and who says nothing else than a Marian 'let it be to me' (Luke 1:38); a man who expects nothing from himself, but expects all from God, who is completely open to that which is his only refuge—this man is the man who does not work but believes and therefore radically excludes any 'self-boasting'. 'Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On the principle of works? No, but on the principle of faith. For we hold that a man is justified by faith [alone] apart from works of law' (Rom. 3:27-28; cf. Rom. 4:2, 5-6; 5:11; 9:30-32; 10:4-6; 1 Cor. 4:7; 2 Cor. 12:9). 'Yet [we] know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so even we have believed in Jesus Christ, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified' (Gal. 2:16; 3:6; Phil. 3:9; etc.).

### 3. THE TEXT 'JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH'

When Paul wanted to make this doctrine unequivocally clear he expressed it  $\text{O d e d ik o is  k p iste os x h setai}$  (Rom. 1:17).

This text had played a remarkable role in Jewish history and was to play a still more remarkable role in Christian history.

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(a) We meet it first in Hab. 2:4. Confronted by the Chaldean invader, who was to devastate their land and take the people of God into captivity, the prophet went into his tower to hear what God was to say to him. God re-assured him that the proud conqueror would one day fall, but that 'the righteous shall live by His faithfulness'. Pride, pillage, war lead a people to its own destruction: Chaldea would walk the path of Assyria. Nevertheless, in his faithful devotion to God the Jew as Jew would be preserved and survive, while the proud conqueror would go the way of all aggressors, who show their unbelief by working against God.

(b) In the synagogue the text played the significant role of a summary of the Law. The Talmudic tradition says that on Sinai Moses received 613 commandments; King David summed them up in 11 (Ps. 15); Isaiah summed them up in 6 (Isa. 33:15f.); Micah in 3 (Mic. 6:6-8); Another Isaiah in 2 (Isa. 56:1); finally, Habakkuk in one, 'the just shall live by His

faith'. This meant that the synagogue considered this a summing up of righteousness by the Law and its works. To keep this was to hold on to life: by such a faith shall the faithful live.

(c) Now Paul takes this prophetic and hallowed word to show that though originally it meant righteousness by faithfulness to the Law and its works, it was yet designated by God to mean the righteousness not of the Law but of faith. How could a rabbi handle the Word of God with such liberty, indeed perversity? He justified his case in this way: the rabbis taught that Scripture had many meanings, and not all of them immediately disclosed in the original context. They taught, of course, there was first the plain, incontrovertible, obvious, historical meaning attached to the event: this was never doubted or questioned. For example, the Israelites were saved from hunger and thirst in the wilderness by the manna and the water from the rock. Is that text exhausted by its first plain meaning? When those who sat in Moses' seat refused to believe Christ, arguing, 'Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness', Jesus replied, 'Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world... I am the bread of life' (John 6:31ff.). The meaning of a passage was never exhausted by its first original meaning. The word was the Word of God, but it became the living Word of God when the interpreter heard from God its contemporary and further meaning. Scripture was not exhausted by what God said and did to and with the original recipients. Paul knew it had a further word to say to his contemporaries, 'upon whom the end of the ages has come' (1 Cor. 10:11). To express it differently the events of scripture happened forward, but have to be interpreted backward from Christ, their Omega point. As Luther was later to say to Erasmus, *Tolle Christum e scripturas quid amplius in illis invenies?* 'Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed"' (Gal. 3:8). Or as Christ expressed it, again to an atmosphere of unbelief, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad' (John 8:56).

When that promise was first made to Habakkuk, it had its own meaning, but its fuller meaning was yet to be disclosed. The veil over scripture was removed by Christ. God purposed to say through Habakkuk what He was now saying through Paul. Paul combines the two ideas of the righteous man (ὁ δίκαιος) and faith (ἐκ πίστεως) into one, he who is justified by faith, and it is this man who 'shall

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live'. Habakkuk is, of course, speaking of righteousness by faithfulness to the Law: Paul is saying that the ultimate meaning of that is fulfilled in a righteousness of faith in the Gospel of Christ.

Of course, Paul's case was not based on one text: he taught that the entire Old Testament spoke of, prophesied, and was ultimately fulfilled in a righteousness by faith not works. The significance of Abraham, who is the father of us all, is that he believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness (Rom. 4:3). He was the man who 'was not weak in faith', and 'staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief... being fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able to perform.... This was all written not for his sake alone... but for us also to whom righteousness shall be imputed if we believe' (Rom. 4:19-24). All this happened centuries before the Law was given. It had been God's clear intent all along that man should be justified not by obedience to the Law, but by faith, trust, confidence in God and His Promises.

Paul also further deepened this truth of justification by faith by showing that it never could rest on man's faith but only on God's faithfulness. He expressed this theologically by showing that salvation was by God's promise and election 'it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy' (Rom. 9:16). This he argued by showing that not all the seed of Abraham are the children of promise 'that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth' (Rom. 9:11). Jacob was chosen, Esau was not: and they were twin brothers.

#### 4. CERTAIN MISUNDERSTANDINGS

The doctrine has led to certain misunderstandings which might be worth clearing up:

##### (a) *James and Paul*

It has been a common ploy of Roman Catholics to seek to discount this theology by quoting James (Jas. 2:14ff.) against Paul, where he argues that faith without works is dead, and that Abraham was justified by his works. The answer is simple. The word 'works' in James and in Paul means two entirely different things, as does the word 'faith'. To James in this context 'faith' means orthodoxy, assent: to Paul, the total commitment of body and soul to Christ. James is saying, that unless a faith issues in the fruit of good works directed to one's neighbour, it is no faith at all. That Paul also said: and Christ before him. The word 'works' in Paul means the works of the Law in doing which a man claimed justification, acceptance by God. This was the clash of Christ against Judaism, and of Paul against the Judaisers, even when they included Peter and James and the pillars of the Church. James is protesting against a formal orthodoxy, the mere holding of opinions which bear no fruit in Christian conduct. Paul is protesting against Judaisers who make the Law a pre-condition of the Gospel. Luther was always sensitive to this distinction: 'faith alone justifies', he said, 'yet faith is never alone'. It is never without love and the works of love. 'Where there is not love, neither is there faith, but mere hypocrisy.'

A further point may be added here. What gives force to the appeal to James is

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that Roman Catholicism has always demanded the performance of meritorious works and good deeds alongside the receiving of God's saving work in Christ. This doubtless modifies the simplicity of justification by faith in Christ only: Roman Catholic theologies have never felt easy with the Pauline doctrine. It is worth reminding ourselves, too, that the natural man does not take easily to the doctrine either, particularly if he is cultured, educated and moral. The natural man has a tendency (with Rome) to believe that essentially it is his own decency, his own efforts, and his own doing that restore him to God, or at least go a long way towards it. This is why Roman Catholicism tends to emphasise the Church, the evangelicals Christ. Paradoxically to preach Christ only gives a purer doctrine of the Church as well as the power of the Gospel. The Gospel always tends to dissolve the institutional Church, and sadly, the institutional Church tends to destroy the Gospel: perhaps the true church will have to tolerate the empirical church till the end of time.

##### (b) *Matt. 25*

Another passage not infrequently raised against the Pauline doctrine is the parable of the Last Judgment where people are ultimately divided on a basis of works done. This does not argue

that a man is justified by his works, for such a view is plain contrary not only to Matthew's parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20), but to all of Christ's teaching on forgiveness, mercy and grace. It is saying what James emphasised later: the acid test of faith is the fruit of good works. A faith without works is empty talk.

**(c) Righteousness—imputed or imparted?**

Here is a distinct difference between evangelical and catholic theologians.

The evangelicals teach that the plain and only meaning of the word 'justify' is to be accounted or deemed righteous, to have righteousness imputed to one, so that a relationship made abnormal by sin may be made normal. The catholics teach that justification is not by 'faith alone' but by faith furnished with love, *fides caritate formata*. They do teach, however, that it is by the grace of God a man is led to faith, by which they mean essentially assent to the faith of which the Roman Catholic Church is custodian and interpreter. It is taught that he is then ready for sanctifying grace, which, if lost, may be restored through the sacrament of penance. The necessity for justifying faith to be furnished with love is explained by the fact that though God forgives a sinner he cannot enter into fellowship with Him in his sinful state. God the Righteous cannot countenance man the unrighteous. Hence, in justifying the sinner, God makes the sinner righteous. Righteousness is not imputed, leaving the sinner sinful, but is imparted. God grants the sinner the love which is the fulfilling of the Law, whereby he is acceptable. In short, he is justified not by faith alone but by faith and love.

Luther's teaching seems closer to the New Testament, truer to experience. The sinner cannot and can never attain any righteousness of his own: he merits or deserves only condemnation. It is that God of His mercy, while we were yet sinners, freely opted to receive us to Himself and to restore us from His side to a fellowship that we from our side had broken and could never mend. Luther used to express it, *simul justus et peccator*. On Rom. 4:7. W.A. LVI 272. 17. *Semper peccator, semper penitens, semper justus*. On Rom. 12:2. W.A. LVI 442. 17. *Ignoranter*

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*justi et scienter iniusti; peccatores in re, iusti autem in spe*. On Rom. 4:7. W.A LVI. 269. 30.

The story of his discovery of this precious truth is one of the loveliest of all time. He describes how he went into the monastery to save his soul, and how that all the disciplines, the confessions, the absolutions never answered his need or spoke to his condition. The more aware he was of God and His Purity, His Righteousness, His Transcendence, the more keenly he became aware of his own creatureliness, his own unrighteousness, his own mortal finitude. He knew he could never attain the righteousness God demanded, and that one day he would be bound to face God's destructive Wrath. Until he realised by long study and prayer that it was not a matter of Martin and his righteousness but God and His Righteousness, not a matter of Martin's work but God's Work. God knew this all the time, had so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever should believe in Him should not perish but have eternal life. Martin realised that the meaning of Christianity was not a matter of works of merit, pilgrimages, fastings, good works etc. but a simple capitulation in faith to God's work of salvation. 'When I saw that Law meant one thing and Gospel another,' he said, 'I broke through.' Faith to Luther meant, 'In utter despair of everything, save Christ'. When a man realises that in the matter of his own salvation he has nothing and can do nothing, he is then

received by God, considered acceptable, justified only on the grounds that he accepts what is proffered.

It is important in this connection to remember that when we use the word 'faith' we mean 'faith in Christ'. We are justified *per fidem propter Christum*. Faith is simply taking what is offered. 'Faith is only the instrument by which righteousness is received and cannot be confounded with Christ, who is the material cause, and at once author and dispenser of so great a benefit' (Calvin). Perhaps it could be argued in a spirit of reconciliation that the righteousness first imputed merges into a righteousness active, and therefore, in part imparted?

**(d) *No ancient academic polemic***

The tendency to treat this debate as an ancient disputation of the theological schools, and therefore, of no contemporary relevance, should be rejected. Not only does the phrase sum up the true nature of the Gospel, but also the secret of spiritual growth. Roman Catholic theology tends to confuse justification with sanctification. It seeks to make a man grow in justification by teaching works, disciplines, fastings, almsgivings etc. as human works which are a necessary part of man's justification. But sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit raising a man already justified by faith, not a contributing factor to man's justification. Sanctification like justification is by grace alone through faith alone.

Conclusion: This truth, justification by faith in Christ only, is the basis of Christianity. It is the key to the kingdom of heaven. A man who appropriates this truth is a man who has passed from the danger of death to the reality of life. You may know the story of the traveller who arrived on horseback in the middle of the night at an inn on the shores of Lake Constance, having lost his way during a great snow storm. When the astonished innkeeper told the traveller that the roads had all been impassable for days, and that the traveller had actually ridden not along the road but over the frozen lake, the man blanched and collapsed in horror at the thought of how near death he had been as his horse's hoofs had

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pounded not the road but the thin ice surface of the lake. The awareness of justification by faith produces a similar reaction in the Christian man. He realises how very near he was to being lost in his former blind passage across the ice of his own efforts and works, and in the warmth and light of the inn contemplates how nearly lost he was, in spite of his brave and noble effort to reach journey's end; such a man takes fresh heart and goes on a saved man, a chastened man, but a believing man, a man justified by faith.