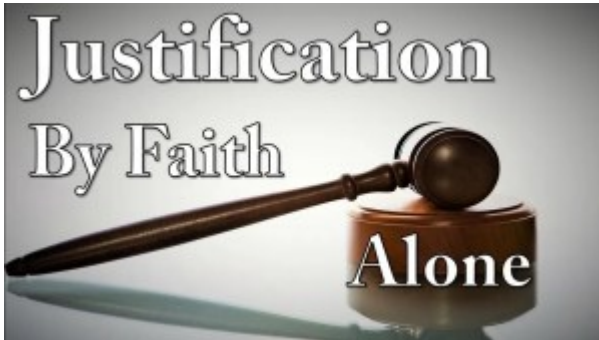


The Papal System – XVII. Catholic Justification



Continued from [The Papal System – XVI. The Celibacy of the Clergy](#).

The Council of Trent says: "If any man shall declare that men are justified without the righteousness of Christ, through which he has obtained merit for us, or that *through that righteousness itself they are formally justified*; let him be accursed."

"If any man shall say that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy, forgiving sins for Christ's sakes or that this confidence is the only thing by which we are justified; let him be accursed."

The Council of Trent boastfully declared that it was "Lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit," at the beginning of every important decree; meaning that its decisions were all prompted by Him who moved holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Examine these two canons in the light of the Spirit's revelations. The first curses those who say that men are formally justified through Christ's righteousness; the second curses those who say that confidence in the divine mercy forgiving sins for Christ's sake is the only thing by which we are justified. Paul comes under this curse, for he says (Catholic version, Rom. iii. 28): "For we account a man to be justified by faith without the works of the law." And if inspired Paul arrived at such a conclusion, we may safely sit down beside him and let the Council of Trent, lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit, curse him and us.

"O how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan.
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile:
From ostentation, as from weakness free,
It stands like the caerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscribed upon its portals from afar,
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
Legible only in the light they give,
Stand the soul quickening words, BELIEVE AND LIVE."
—Cowper

The decree on justification has sixteen chapters and thirty-three canons; it is very elaborate, and contains some truth and much pernicious error. Take it altogether, it is one of the most self-contradictory, gospel-denying, and detestable efforts which one could well imagine.

Continued in [XVIII. Purgatory](#)

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