

Shorthand (University) Sermon on Romans 3:23–24¹

This is the fifth of six sermons by Charles Wesley, written shortly after his evangelical awakening, that survive only in copies he composed in the shorthand that he had learned from John Byrom. CW appears to have preached directly from the shorthand manuscript. These sermons were inaccessible, even to most scholars, until an expansion of the shorthand was published by Thomas R. Albin and Oliver A. Beckerlegge in 1987.²

John Byrom’s shorthand is constructed of consonant sounds, with vowel markers; though the latter are often omitted when assumed to be obvious. It also frequently uses single letters for entire words, abbreviations for phrases, and the like. As such, expansion of shorthand texts necessarily involves varying degrees of interpretation and hypothetical renderings.³ Since the entire sermon that follows is in shorthand, we do *not* enclose each line or paragraph in double square brackets “[[]],” as we do for brief shorthand additions to longhand texts. But when more than one expansion might make sense, the letters indicated by the shorthand are given, enclosing the remainder of our suggested expansion in single brackets “[].” When the expansion is more tentative, a question mark is included within the brackets “[?]”.

This manuscript was prepared for a specific occasion, recorded by CW in his MS Journal on July 1, 1739: “Preached my sermon on justification before the University with great boldness. All were very attentive. One could not help weeping.” As this suggests, CW presented at Oxford a revised form of his earlier sermon on Rom. 3:23–24. Significant portions of the earlier sermon are incorporated into this one.

The manuscript containing this sermon survives at the Methodist Archive and Research Centre (MA 1977/597/9). The transcription which follows is our expansion of the shorthand, which differs on a few occasions from that of Albin & Beckerlegge. We focus on CW’s final text—ignoring any text ~~struck out~~ and replaced by CW. We also indicate the page transitions (in **red** font) of the original manuscript.

¹This document was produced by the Duke Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition under editorial direction of Randy L. Maddox, with the assistance of Aileen F. Maddox. Last updated: Sept. 27, 2024.

²Thomas R. Albin and Oliver A. Beckerlegge (eds.). *Charles Wesley’s Earliest Evangelical Sermons: Six Shorthand Manuscript Sermons Now for the First Time Transcribed from the Original* (Ilford: Wesley Historical Society, 1987), 50–70.

³See Timothy Underhill, “John Byrom’s Shorthand: An Introduction,” *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society* 104 (2008): 61–91.

[this opening prayer is written on the manuscript cover]

Let us pray for all mankind, for the catholic church; especially that part of it established in these kingdoms; for our gracious sovereign lord, George of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith; for their royal highnesses, Frederick Prince of Wales, the Princess of Wales, the Duke, the Princesses, and all the royal family. For his majesty's most honourable Privy Council, the nobility, clergy, gentry, and commons of this land; for all schools and nurseries of true religion and useful learning; particularly the two universities. And here in Oxford, for the Right Honourable Charles, Earl of Arran, our honoured lord and chancellor;⁴ for the very worthy the Vice-Chancellor;⁵ for all the doctors, both the proctors, all heads and governors of colleges and halls with their respective societies; and (as I am more especially obliged) for the good estate of Christ Church; and therein for the Reverend the Dean, the Right Reverend, and Reverend the Canons, the students, chaplains, commoners, and all other members of that society.

Let us bless GOD unfeignedly for all his mercies in Christ Jesus, spiritual and temporal; particularly for the liberality of our founders and benefactors, among whom was Henry VIII, the munificent founder of Christ Church. Let us commend to his fatherly compassion the afflicted, and conclude our prayers saying:⁶

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

⁴Charles Butler (1671–1758), 1st Earl of Arran, was Chancellor of Oxford University from 1715 to 1758.

⁵Theophilus Leigh, D.D. (1691–1785), Master of Balliol (1726–85), was Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University from 1738 to 1740.

⁶The bidding prayer to this point is written in longhand. The Lord's Prayer and the sermon that follows are in shorthand.

Romans 3:23–25

“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.”

In this epistle the Spirit of God, by the mouth of his apostle, first convinces the world of sin and then of righteousness. Herein is the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness²—as the heathen are first proved to do, because they lived not up to the light of nature, or that knowledge of himself which God had showed unto them.³ God therefore for their unthankfulness and idolatry gave them over to uncleanness, to vile affections, to a reprobate mind.⁴ He stirred the beast in them to chastise the evil, unnatural lust to punish learned pride.

Next he proves the Jews to hold the truth in unrighteousness, and declares them inexcusable and self-condemned for judging others, because they did the same things which they condemned.⁵ They were called Jews indeed, and rested in the law, and made their boast of God. But they did not keep the law they gloried in, but dishonoured God by transgressing it. They broke it in its spiritual meaning. In heart they were thieves, adulterers, sacrilegious, and were all concluded under sin by, “He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart; in the spirit not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.”⁶

To convince them that they were in no wise better by nature than the heathen, he shows from Scripture that there is no one righteous, no, not one.⁷ And then observes, “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.”⁸

“Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” (The consequence is inevitable. Because all men without exception are breakers of the law, therefore by his obedience to the law shall no man living be justified with God.) “For by the law” (the moral law) “is the knowledge of sin” (only, but no deliverance from it), “but now” (that all men are condemned and proved to have no sufficient righteousness of their own) “the righteousness of God without the law” (that is as contradistinguished from legal righteousness) “is manifested,

¹I.e., I[n] N[omine] I[esu]; “In the name of Jesus”

²See Rom. 1:17.

³See Rom. 1:19–20.

⁴See Rom. 1:20–28.

⁵See Rom. 2:3.

⁶Rom. 2:28–29.

⁷See Rom. 3:10.

⁸Rom. 3:19.

being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God” (not of men) “which is by faith of Jesus Christ” (which by faith as the instrument of receiving it is imputed) “unto all, and” (bestowed or put) “upon all them that believe. For there is no” [p. 2] (natural) “difference, for” (as it follows in the words of my text) “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.”⁹

In discoursing upon each word I shall

I. First show that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

II. Secondly, that we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

III. Thirdly, I shall show what that faith is through which we receive the atonement *applied to our soul in particular*.

IV. And fourthly, I shall conclude with a particular application.

[I.] I am first to show that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (ὕστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ Θεοῦ),¹⁰ are deprived of the glory of God, the glorious image of him that created them. This is the cause of all actual sin, our having lost the perfection of the divine nature. First then I shall show that we have sinned originally and then actually.

[I.i.] God created man in his own image, after his likeness.¹¹ He made him perfect, but a little lower than the angels,¹² one in heart and mind with himself, a real partaker of the divine nature.¹³ But man soon fell from that original dignity. He sinned by eating of the forbidden fruit, and in the day that he ate he spiritually died.¹⁴ The life of his soul, consisting in its union with God (like as the natural life consists in the union of soul and body), his spiritual life I say, was extinguished. The glory immediately departed from him, and he knew that he was naked¹⁵—naked of God, stripped of the divine image; a motley mixture of beast and devil.¹⁶

[ii.] In the moment that he was thus alienated from the life of God, his understanding was darkened through the ignorance that was then in him. Then also, he first felt the torment of self-will and hell of pride. His heart was turned within him from good to evil, from the Creator to the creature. His very soul clave to the dust, and all his affections became earthly, sensual, devilish.

[iii.] In him we see the type and father of us all. We all inherit from him a miserable, corrupt and sinful nature. We are a race of fallen spirits. We are all by nature children of wrath, ignorant of good, and haters of God.¹⁷ For the natural man (that is, every man without exception

⁹Rom. 3:20–25.

¹⁰Rom. 3:23.

¹¹See Gen. 1:27.

¹²See Ps. 8:5; Heb. 2:7.

¹³See 2 Pet. 1:3.

¹⁴See Gen. 2:17.

¹⁵See Gen. 3:7.

¹⁶See William Law, *A Demonstration of the Gross and Fundamental Errors of a late Book* (London: W. Innys & R. Mansby, 1737), 240.

¹⁷See Eph. 2:3; Rom. 1:30.

while in a state of nature) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. For they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.¹⁸ The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.¹⁹ All the powers [p. 3] of men are totally depraved. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in him, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.²⁰ His understanding is darkened, his will perverse, his affections set on earthly things.²¹ Pride and concupiscence make up his wretched composition. And if you take away that spark of God which was restored to him at his redemption, there remains in him nothing but pure beast and devil.

[iv.] Such are we all through original sin, or “that fault and corruption of the nature of every man, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit.”²² That this infection is, and remains, both in the unregenerate and regenerate, our own Church²³ teaches us agreeable to Scripture and experience. And those unhappy men who deny this corruption are themselves the strongest proof of it. How else were it possible for one pretending to reason to imagine such a creature as man could in his present state come out of the hands of a pure and wise and mighty God. As is the workman, such must be the workmanship. A powerful, perfect, happy being could make nothing weak, imperfect or miserable. Man therefore must have undergone a change since his first creation. Of this every thinking person has sensible demonstration in those astonishing contrarieties he finds within himself. He finds two opposite principles, inclining him to good and evil, which nothing can account for but the scriptural doctrine of a fallen race.

[v.] But I now speak to those who acknowledge all Scripture to be given by inspiration of God.²⁴ And while we receive his testimony we must own that we are literally born in sin, and consequently children of wrath and heirs of hell. We are naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam. A corrupt tree can bring forth only corrupt fruit. And such as is the fountain, such must be the stream. Whence every man must say with David, “Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”²⁵ Or with Eliphaz, “What is man that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous?”²⁶ (How then can man be justified with God, or how can he be clean that is born of woman?) Alas, in him dwelleth no good thing; but sin dwelleth in him.²⁷ His inward parts are very wickedness.²⁸ His heart is deceitful above all

¹⁸See 1 Cor. 2:14.

¹⁹See Rom. 8:7.

²⁰See Isa. 1:5–6.

²¹See Eph. 4:18; Col. 3:2.

²²BCP, Articles of Religion, Article IX, “Of Original or Birth Sin.”

²³Church is capitalized in the sermon when it is clear CW means the Church of England.

²⁴See 2 Tim. 3:16.

²⁵Ps. 51:5.

²⁶Job 15:14.

²⁷See Rom. 7:17–18.

²⁸See Ps. 5:9.

things, and desperately wicked.²⁹ Nay, every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.³⁰ [p. 4]

[vi.] How truly then does our Church teach us that this infection of nature in every person born into the world deserveth God's wrath and damnation.³¹ For saith not the Scripture so? By one man's disobedience many are made sinners.³² By the offence of one, judgment is come upon all men to condemnation.³³ In Adam all died.³⁴ Sin by him entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned in him.³⁵ Death reigns by one,³⁶ even spiritual, temporal, and eternal death. In the midst of life we are in spiritual death.³⁷ A few posting³⁸ hours brings on our t[ime of] t[rial]³⁹, and that consigns us to the death that never dies, the fire that never shall be quenched.⁴⁰

[vii.] Such is the portion of our natural inheritance. We are all involved in the guilt of original sin, which like the ancient flood has overspread the face of the earth and sweeps all before it into a miserable eternity.

[2.i.] The Scripture hath concluded all under sin;⁴¹ and that not only original, but also actual. This the great apostle shows at large in the words preceding my text, where speaking of Jews and Gentiles he asks, "Are we better than they" (are we in ourselves better than the most profligate sinners?) "No, in no wise. For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. They are all gone out of the way. They are together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no, not one. [...] Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God. [...] There is no difference. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."⁴² "There is not a just man upon earth," said the preacher, "that doeth good and sinneth not."⁴³ And we have therefore the greatest reason, everyone of us, to say with the man after God's own heart. "Enter not into judgment with

²⁹See Jer. 17:9.

³⁰See Gen. 6:5.

³¹Church of England, Article IX.

³²See Rom. 5:19. Orig. reads "ones man's"; a slip.

³³See Rom. 5:18.

³⁴See 1 Cor. 5:22.

³⁵See Rom. 5:12.

³⁶See Rom. 5:17.

³⁷See BCP, Burial service, committal prayer.

³⁸*OED*, "fleeting."

³⁹The shorthand indicates a phrase that repeats the consonant "t."

⁴⁰See Mark 9:48.

⁴¹See Gal. 3:22.

⁴²Rom. 3:9–23.

⁴³Eccles. 7:20.

thy servant, Oh Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.”⁴⁴ “If thou Lord wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it?”⁴⁵

From these and many other scriptures it is evident that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we say we have not actually sinned, we make God a liar and his word is not in us.⁴⁶ We have offended and in many things do still offend all.⁴⁷

[ii.] This will appear still plainer to us if we consider the nature and extent of that law in the transgressing [p. 5] of which sin consists. Indeed while we look upon it as did the carnal Jews, as do the generality of Christians, to be merely an outward fence or restraint, we may fool ourselves that we keep the law because we abstain from the outward act of sin. But this is the least part of the law. It does indeed condemn everyone of gross sin. And he that so committeth sin is of the devil.⁴⁸ But it no less condemns every idle word and every unholy thought. He breaks the law who breaks it outwardly and in the letter; but not he only. The law is spiritual;⁴⁹ that is, it has a meaning infinitely broader, higher, and deeper than we can at first-sight perceive—or indeed than we can ever perceive, till God hath opened our eyes by that Spirit which he hath promised to send that he may reprove the world of sin.⁵⁰ Without his operation it is impossible to discern the full sense and spirituality of the law, though our Lord himself came down from heaven to discover it.⁵¹ Of this we need no stronger proof than those Christians, as they are called, who read his Sermon upon the Mount,⁵² and yet continue utterly ignorant of what spiritual righteousness means.

[iii.] Throughout that excellent discourse our Lord sets himself to rescue the law from those softening, polluting, gross interpretations the scribes and Pharisees had put upon it, who had purged it of all its spiritual meaning and taught that whosoever observed it outwardly fulfilled it eff[ective]ly. In opposition to this our divine teacher explains that law which he only could fulfil. He begins with discussing those holy tempers without which all outward obedience is formal and pharisaical.⁵³ For all our pretensions to righteousness are vain till we attest⁵⁴ that poverty of spirit, to which alone belongs the kingdom of heaven; till we not only see but feel our misery, and go mourning all the day long, refusing to be comforted by any created good, and looking for the Holy Ghost the comforter. To this must be added a meekness which no injuries can overcome, no affronts or indignities can exasperate; a hunger and thirst after divine righteousness as much stronger than the natural appetite as spiritual food is better than bodily; a

⁴⁴Cf. Ps. 143:2 (BCP).

⁴⁵Ps. 130:3 (BCP).

⁴⁶See 1 John 1:8, 10.

⁴⁷See James 3:2.

⁴⁸See 1 John 3:8.

⁴⁹See Rom. 7:14.

⁵⁰See John 16:7–8.

⁵¹See John 6:38.

⁵²Matt. 5–7.

⁵³CW now works through the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3–12).

⁵⁴The shorthand might also be expanded as “taste.”

purity of heart which sees God and only God in everything. Merciful we must likewise be as our Father which is in heaven is merciful; and lastly peacemakers, like unto him when he was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. After all the world, or they that will not be reconciled to him, must set to their seal that we belong to Christ by reviling and persecuting and saying all manner of evil against us falsely for his sake, while we rejoice and are exceeding glad. In nothing terrified by our adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to us of salvation, and that of God.⁵⁵ [p. 6]

[iv.] Such are the tempers required of every Christian as ob[taining?] unto salvation. Herein must our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, or we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁶ God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.⁵⁷ He requires the heart; a spiritual not a mere literal obedience,⁵⁸ the power of godliness not the bare form.⁵⁹ Wherefore if we allow him to be a true interpreter of the law, we must acknowledge ourselves to be transgressors of it. To instance in the sixth commandment: concerning which our Lord himself assures us that not only he that sheddeth man's blood transgresses it, but that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, whosoever expresses that anger in an opprobrious name or slighting word is guilty of murder.⁶⁰

[v.] The seventh commandment he explains in like manner, extending to the first wandering of the desire.⁶¹ So that a single thought, a secret motion of the heart makes a man in the sight of God a murderer or an adulterer. And here he may justly say to everyone of us, Thou art the man!⁶² Thou art a murderer, thou art an adulterer! For which of us can say he never felt any touch of causeless anger against his brother? He that hath ever felt the least degree of hatred against another whether friend or enemy, he stands convicted of murder—for he that hateth his brother is a murderer.

[vi.] With respect to the adulterer likewise we may make our Lord's challenge: He that is without sin amongst you, let him first cast a stone at her.⁶³ But suppose our hearts could acquit us of having ever known one impure thought throughout our lives; are we hereby justified of this challenge? No, in no wise. The apostle informs us of a spiritual adultery. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses," said he, "know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?"⁶⁴ Know ye not that the whole conversation of our life is one continued habit of rebellion, treachery, and unfaithfulness to that one husband to whom ye were espoused in baptism ...

⁵⁵See Phil. 1:28.

⁵⁶See Matt. 5:20.

⁵⁷See John 4:24.

⁵⁸See 2 Cor. 3:6.

⁵⁹See 2 Tim. 3:5.

⁶⁰See Matt. 5:21–22.

⁶¹See Matt. 5:27–28.

⁶²See 2 Sam. 12:7.

⁶³See John 8:7.

⁶⁴James 4:4.

unless you have indeed renounced that world which ye then so solemnly promised and vowed to renounce.⁶⁵ If you have now any share in its pursuits after riches, honour, and pleasure, any conformity to its fashions, any hope of keeping favour with it; that is, with those who are not led by the Spirit of God in all things, then do you live in an habit of spiritual adultery. Then are you friends to the world and enemies to God.⁶⁶

[vii.] To those among us who are thus of the world, that is who either love or are loved by it, it may hence appear that they have not so much as the Pharisee's plea: "I thank God that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers!"⁶⁷ But suppose we had? Does righteousness stand in negatives only? Does it not require good to be done as well as evil to be left undone? Yes doubtless, we may answer, and go on with our boasting Pharisee, "I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess";⁶⁸ or to put it in other words, "I use all the means of grace, I do much good." It is well. [p. 7] He is no fulfiller of the law that does not. But neither is he that does—unless all these actions proceed from a heart entirely devoted to God. Unless they are fruits of that perfect love required by the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and strength."⁶⁹ Who among us is there that can say, "This have I done"? I have so loved God—with my entire affection, with the utmost extent of my understanding, with all and every degree of all my passions and affections, with the whole capacity and propensity of my soul. Who of all the sons of Adam could ever say it? Alas we must confess, with man this is impossible.⁷⁰ Here every mouth is stopped indeed, and all the world become guilty before God.⁷¹

[viii.] As evidently are we concluded under sin by almost every part of the gospel. "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks. Rejoice evermore."⁷² "Whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."⁷³ But these scriptures, someone will say, are not to be taken literally. I ask that person, Who told you so? The world, the flesh, and the devil did, I grant you.⁷⁴ But not Christ. And their authority will never bear you out in your contempt of these. No, not though you could confront him (which God forbid you ever should) with ten thousand of his own am[biguous?] s[ayings]. Yea, let God be true, and every man a liar.⁷⁵ He hath assured us the law is spiritual, and the commandment holy and just and good.⁷⁶ He hath likewise shown us a way whereby the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us without our

⁶⁵See BCP, Baptism questions.

⁶⁶See James 4:4.

⁶⁷Luke 18:11.

⁶⁸Luke 18:12.

⁶⁹Matt. 22:37; see also v. 38.

⁷⁰See Matt. 19:26.

⁷¹See Rom. 3:19.

⁷²1 Thess. 5:16–18.

⁷³1 Cor. 10:31.

⁷⁴See Eph. 2:1–3; source of this classic triad discussing sin.

⁷⁵See Rom. 3:4.

⁷⁶See Rom. 7:12.

pruning it down to the practice of modern Christians.⁷⁷ If we will hearken unto him more than unto man, we cannot but accede the law does in the rigour require perfection, or universal unsinning obedience; to which we must therefore come up, or own ourselves transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.⁷⁸ And cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.⁷⁹

[ix.] Nor is the doing them outwardly the doing them at all. God requireth truth in the inward parts.⁸⁰ And he that is in Christ is a new creature in the strictest sense. Old things are passed away in him and all things are become new.⁸¹ He has a new heart, a right spirit created in him, and has undergone an entire change.⁸² He is as different from what he was as light from darkness, life from death, the kingdom of God from that of Satan. But except a man be thus born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.⁸³ He cannot so much as discern there is any such thing as that kingdom of God, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.⁸⁴ But till he knows this experientially, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.⁸⁵ So far is he from not offending in any, that he offends in every point of the law.⁸⁶ So far is he from keeping the whole, that he does not fulfil the least part of it. Nor can he [p. 8] fulfil it in any, nor can he help breaking it in every particular, till he is renewed in the image of his Maker,⁸⁷ and so born of God as not to commit sin;⁸⁸ till Christ, the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth,⁸⁹ be of God made unto him wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.⁹⁰

[II.] This brings me to my second head, “We are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.”⁹¹ A most important truth, as that on which alone depends the salvation of all men. But which no child of Adam can receive till he is truly convinced of sin; till he receives the sentence of death in himself,⁹² that he may not trust in himself; till, in a word, he

⁷⁷See Rom. 8:4.

⁷⁸See James 2:10.

⁷⁹See Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10.

⁸⁰See Ps. 51:6.

⁸¹See 2 Cor. 5:17.

⁸²See Ezek. 36:26.

⁸³See John 3:3.

⁸⁴See Rom. 14:17.

⁸⁵See 1 Cor. 8:2.

⁸⁶See James 2:10.

⁸⁷See Col. 3:10.

⁸⁸See 1 John 3:9.

⁸⁹See Rom. 10:4.

⁹⁰See 1 Cor. 1:30.

⁹¹Cf. Rom. 3:24.

⁹²See 2 Cor. 1:9.

owns and feels that all his desert is hell.

[1.] Before a man is thus deeply sensible of his misery, all attempts to remove it must prove vain and ineffectual. Before he can take one step towards his divine Physician, he must know and confess and groan under his disease. He must acknowledge it is by him incurable, and in a just despair go out of himself for a remedy. “Come unto me,” says the God of our health, “all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”⁹³ He calls none but the weary and heavy laden because he knows none else will come. Such only do I invite in his name; such as are not startled or offended at being told they deserve not one, but ten thousand hells, even as many as their own infinite sins and transgressions.

[2.] Every sinner deserves to be damned; every man is a sinner; therefore every man deserves to be damned. Which of the premises can be denied without denying the Scriptures? “The wages of sin are death.”⁹⁴ “The wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness of men, and there is no one righteous; no, not one.”⁹⁵ “The Scripture hath concluded all under sin.”⁹⁶ To convince the world of this is the first office of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁷ And when a man is truly convinced of sin, then and not till then, may he be convinced of righteousness also. “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. For there is no difference. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.”⁹⁸

[3.] I shall deliver this offending doctrine of justification by faith only in the words of our own excellent Church as they are plainly set forth in the Homily of salvation.⁹⁹

Because all men be sinners and offenders against God, and breakers of his law and commandments, therefore can no man by his own acts, works, or deeds, seem they never so good, be justified or made righteous before God; but every man of necessity is constrained to seek for another righteousness or justification to be received at God’s own hand; that is to say, the forgiveness of his sins and trespasses. And this justification or righteousness which we so receive of God’s mercy and Christ’s merits embraced by faith, is taken, accepted and allowed of God for our perfect and full justification.

For the more full understanding hereof it is our duty ever to remember the great mercy of God, how that (all the world being wrapped in sin by breaking of the law) God sent his only Son our Saviour Christ into this world to fulfil the law for us, [p. 9] and by

⁹³Matt. 11:28.

⁹⁴Rom. 6:23.

⁹⁵Rom. 1:18.

⁹⁶Gal. 3:22.

⁹⁷See John 16:8.

⁹⁸Rom. 3:23–24.

⁹⁹I.e., *Certain Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the Time of the late Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory; and now Thought fit to be Reprinted by Authority from the King’s Most Excellent Majesty* (Oxford: Thomas Guy, 1683), Homily III, “A Sermon of the Salvation of Mankind . . .,” Parts I–II, pp. 12–16. We indicate elisions longer than a couple of words. The scripture references in the margins of the Homily are inserted editorially in brackets.

the shedding of his most precious blood to make a sacrifice and satisfaction or amends to his Father for our sins, and assuage his wrath and indignation conceived against us for the same.

[...] This is that justification which St. Paul speaketh of when he saith, “No man can be justified by the works of the law, but freely by faith in Christ Jesus.” And again, “We believe in Christ that we be justified freely by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law, because that no man shall be justified by the works of the law” [Gal. 2:16].¹⁰⁰ [...]

God, in the mystery of our redemption, hath so tempered his mercy and justice together, that he would neither by his justice condemn us [...] without mercy, nor by his mercy deliver us clearly without justice or payment of a just ransom. [...] And whereas it lay not in us to pay it, he provided a ransom for us, which was the most precious body and blood of his most dear and best beloved Son Jesus Christ; who besides this ransom fulfilled the law for us perfectly. And so the justice of God and his mercy did embrace together and fulfilled the mystery of our redemption.

Of this justice and mercy knit together speaketh St. Paul [in] Romans 3, “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.” [Rom. 3:23–25]. And chapter 10 [v. 4], “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.” And chapter 8 [vv. 3–4], “For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.”

In these places the apostle touches three things which must go together in our justification. Upon God’s part his great mercy and grace; upon Christ’s part justice, that is the satisfaction of God’s justice, or the price of our redemption by the offering of his body and shedding of his blood with fulfilling of the law perfectly and throughly; and upon our part true and lively faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, which yet is not ours but by God’s working in us. [...]

St. Paul declareth here nothing upon the behalf of man concerning his justification, but only a true and lively faith, which nevertheless is the gift of God. And yet this faith doth not shut out repentance, hope, love, and the fear of God in every believer that is justified. But it shutteth them out from the office of justifying. So that although they be all present in him that is justified, yet they justify not all together.

Neither doth faith shut out our own good works necessarily to be done afterwards of duty towards God [...]. But it excludeth them so that we may not do them with this intent, to be made just by doing them. For all good works that we can do be imperfect, and therefore not able to deserve our justification. But our justification doth come freely by the mercy of God, and of so great and free mercy that, whereas all the world was not able of themselves to pay any part towards their ransom, it pleased our heavenly Father of his infinite mercy, without any our deserving, to prepare for us the most precious jewels of Christ’s body and blood, whereby our ransom might be fully paid, the law

¹⁰⁰Thomas Cranmer, author of the first several homilies, provided his own translation of all Scripture quotations. CW substitutes the wording of the AV or the BCP psalter.

fulfilled, and his justice satisfied. So that Christ is now the righteousness of all them that do believe in him. [...]

[...] That no man can be justified by his own good works, that no man fulfilleth the law according to the strict rigour of the law [p. 10] St. Paul proveth in his epistle to the Galatians, saying thus: “If there had been any law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” [Gal. 3:21]. And again he saith, “If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” [Gal. 2:21]. And again, “You that are justified by the law are fallen from grace” [Gal. 5:4]. And to the Ephesians, “By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast” [Eph. 2:8–9]. And to be short, the sum of all Paul’s disputation is this, that if righteousness come by works, then it cometh not by grace; and if it come of grace, then it cometh not of works. And to this end tend all the prophets as St. Peter saith, “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” [Acts 10:43].

This faith holy Scripture teacheth us is the strong rock and foundation of the Christian religion. This doctrine all ancient authors of Christ’s church do approve. This doctrine advanceth and setteth forth the true glory of Christ, and beateth down the vainglory of man; this doctrine whosoever denieth is not to be accounted for a Christian man, nor for a setter-forth of Christ’s glory, but for an adversary to Christ and his gospel, and for a setter-forth of man’s vainglory. [...]

Justification is not the office of man but of God, for man cannot make himself righteous by his own works, neither in whole nor in part. For that were the greatest arrogance and presumption of man that Antichrist could set up against God, to affirm that a man might by his own works take away and purge his own sins, and so justify himself. But justification is the office of God only, and is not a thing which we render unto him, but which we receive of him, by his own free mercy and by the only merit of his most dearly beloved Son, our only Redeemer, Saviour and Justifier, Jesus Christ.

[4.] This is the doctrine of Scripture and our own Church concerning justification which she thus sums up in her Articles:

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ through faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.¹⁰¹

Of works done before justification, her judgment is this:

Works done before the grace of Christ, and inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasing to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace; or, as the school authors say, to deserve grace of congruity. Yea rather, because they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done,

¹⁰¹See BCP, Articles of Religion, Article XI, “Of The Justification of Man.”

we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.¹⁰²

[5.] Neither can those “good works which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, put away our sins and endure the severity of God’s judgments.”¹⁰³ It cost more to redeem a soul, more than all good works of all men; so that man must let that alone forever. That we must leave to God. It is God that justifieth.¹⁰⁴ It is the blood of Christ that cleanses from all sin.¹⁰⁵ It is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.¹⁰⁶ And he that doth not acknowledge this, and doth not utterly renounce his own righteousness as filthy rags,¹⁰⁷ and seeks to be justified freely by grace through faith,¹⁰⁸ that man is in his sins and in his b[lood] [p. 11] to this hour. Unless he relies, not on anything he is or does but, on the death of Christ alone, as the one sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world;¹⁰⁹ unless in the m[oment?] of justification he puts himself upon a level with vilest sinners, looking like them to receive a free pardon from the mere mercy of God in Christ Jesus; unless he can submit to be justified as ungodly,¹¹⁰ he never can be justified at all. For he is of those who justify themselves; of those who, following after the law of righteousness, have not attained to the law of righteousness, because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works of the law.¹¹¹ While gross but self-condemned and believing sinners, who followed not after righteousness, attain to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.¹¹² They are accepted while the self-righteous one is cast out. Verily, verily, Christ saith unto him, publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you!¹¹³

[6.] The sum of all is this: They that be whole need not a physician, but they that be sick. Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.¹¹⁴ He is the Friend and Saviour of sinners. Not indeed of those who continue in sin, but of those who feel the weight of it, and groan to him for deliverance.¹¹⁵ Whosoever is saved by him, is saved as a sinner. His mouth is first stopped, he becomes guilty before God, and submits to be justified freely by his grace

¹⁰²Ibid., Article XIII, “Of Works Before Justification.”

¹⁰³Ibid., Article XII, “Of Good Works.”

¹⁰⁴See Rom. 8:33.

¹⁰⁵See 1 John 1:7.

¹⁰⁶See John 1:29.

¹⁰⁷See Isa. 64:6

¹⁰⁸See Eph. 2:8.

¹⁰⁹See BCP, Articles of Religion, Article XXXI, “Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross.”

¹¹⁰See Rom. 4:5.

¹¹¹See Rom. 9:31–32.

¹¹²See Rom. 9:30.

¹¹³See Matt. 21:31.

¹¹⁴See Luke 5:31–32.

¹¹⁵See Rom. 8:21–22.

through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.¹¹⁶ He counts all things but loss that he may win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the redemption which is of God by faith.

Whosoever is justified is justified by a simple act of faith in Christ Jesus, without any reference to works past, present, or to come. Indeed, till a sinner does exert this act of faith he is in a state of condemnation. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.¹¹⁷ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.¹¹⁸ Verily, verily, Christ saith unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come unto condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.¹¹⁹ In the moment wherein a self-despairing sinner looks up with faith to Christ Jesus, in that selfsame moment the power of the Lord is present to heal him.¹²⁰ His sins are forgiven, his person is accepted, his faith hath made him whole.¹²¹ He was a sinner, but he is washed, but he is justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.¹²²

[III.] What the faith is, through which we thus receive the atonement and apply Christ and all his merits to our soul in particular, was the third thing I proposed discoursing upon.

[1.] Our Church describes it thus:

The true, lively and Christian faith, [...] the sure and substantial faith which saveth sinners, [...] is not only a common belief of the Articles of our creed, but it is also a true [p. 12] trust and confidence of the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and a steadfast hope of all good things to be received at God's hand. [...] It is not in the mouth and outward profession only, but liveth and stirreth inwardly in the heart. [...] It is the sure ground and foundation of the benefits which we trust to receive of God, a certificate and sure looking for them.¹²³ [...] It is no dead, vain or unfruitful thing, but a thing of perfect virtue, of wonderful operation or working and strength, bringing forth all good motions and good works.

[2.] The faith which justifies is not purely an assent to things credible as credible. It is not

¹¹⁶See Rom. 3:19, 24.

¹¹⁷See John 3:18.

¹¹⁸See John 3:36.

¹¹⁹See John 5:24.

¹²⁰See Luke 5:17–20.

¹²¹See Luke 7:44–48, 17:19.

¹²²See 1 Cor. 6:11.

¹²³The paragraph to this point is CW's condensation of *Certain Sermons* (1683), Homily IV, "Of the True and Lively Faith," Part I (pp. 19–21). The next sentence is the last line of the second paragraph of Homily IV, Part II (p. 23).

that speculative, notional, airy shadow which floats in the heads of some learned men.¹²⁴ It is not a lifeless, cold, historical faith, common to devils and nominal Christians. It is not learnt of books or men. It is not a human thing, but a divine energy. We believe according to the working of the mighty power of God.¹²⁵ The faith by which we are saved is not of ourselves. It is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast.¹²⁶ We can as well reach heaven with our hands,¹²⁷ as believe by any act or power or strength of our own. There is required a stroke of omnipotence.¹²⁸ It can only be wrought in the soul by him who made it. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, must shine in our hearts to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.¹²⁹ Faith does not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. No man can call Jesus the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.¹³⁰

[3.] When Peter made that confession of faith, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Peter, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.¹³¹ So our Lord himself assures us no man can come unto the Son except the Father draw him.¹³² No man cometh to the Father, but by the Son.¹³³ They only believe, to whom it is given to know the mind of Christ.¹³⁴ Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the hearts of men, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man but the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.¹³⁵ God hath hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.¹³⁶

¹²⁴See JW to William Law, May 14, 1738, *Works*, 25:541.

¹²⁵See Eph. 1:19.

¹²⁶See Eph. 2:8–9.

¹²⁷I.e., by climbing; see Amos 9:2.

¹²⁸An echo of Henry Scougal, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (London: Smith and Jacob, 1677), 75.

¹²⁹See 2 Cor. 4:6.

¹³⁰See 1 Cor. 12:3.

¹³¹See Matt. 16:16–17.

¹³²See John 6:44.

¹³³See John 14:6.

¹³⁴See 1 Cor. 2:16.

¹³⁵See 1 Cor. 2:9–14.

¹³⁶See Matt. 11:25–27.

[4.] These and numberless other scriptures demonstrate the impossibility of believing till God hath given us the Spirit of revelation.¹³⁷ We can never know the things of God till he hath revealed them by his Spirit, till we have received the Spirit of God that we should know the things which are freely given us of God.¹³⁸ For this cause Jesus is called the author of our faith.¹³⁹ And we are said to receive the Spirit by the hearing of faith,¹⁴⁰ because we receive in one and the same moment power to believe and the Holy Ghost, who is therefore called the Spirit of faith.¹⁴¹ And a true faith we cannot have till God gives unto us the Holy Ghost purifying our hearts by faith.¹⁴² [p. 13]

[5.] We need no further testimony to prove that faith is wrought by him from whom every good and perfect gift cometh.¹⁴³ God is plainly the cause of faith; what are its effects? They are, briefly, these: peace, love, joy; victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; fellowship with God; the indwelling of his Spirit; present salvation and everlasting life.

[i.] Being justified by faith we have peace with God (attested by that inward peace which passes all understanding).¹⁴⁴ And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.¹⁴⁵ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.¹⁴⁶ Whom having not seen we love. In whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.¹⁴⁷ Receiving it now in part, for by grace ye are saved through faith, and he that believeth hath everlasting life.¹⁴⁸

[ii.] Faith works by love.¹⁴⁹ The love of God is shed abroad in all believers' hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them.¹⁵⁰ This love they show by keeping his commandments; which no one except believers can keep.¹⁵¹ But they are delivered not only from the guilt but also from the power of sin.¹⁵² The law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus hath made them

¹³⁷See Eph. 1:17.

¹³⁸See 1 Cor. 2:12.

¹³⁹See Heb. 12:2.

¹⁴⁰See Gal. 3:2.

¹⁴¹See 2 Cor. 4:13.

¹⁴²See Acts 15:9.

¹⁴³See James 1:17.

¹⁴⁴See Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7.

¹⁴⁵See Rom. 5:11.

¹⁴⁶See Col. 1:14.

¹⁴⁷See 1 Pet. 1:8–9.

¹⁴⁸See Eph. 2:8; John 3:36, 6:47.

¹⁴⁹See Gal. 5:6.

¹⁵⁰See Rom. 5:5.

¹⁵¹See 1 John 5:3.

¹⁵²See Col. 1:12–14.

free from the law of sin and death.¹⁵³ Sin shall not have dominion over them, for they are not under the law but under grace. They were the servants of sin, but they have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered them. Being then made free from sin, they became the servants of righteousness.¹⁵⁴ Jesus is their Jesus for he hath saved them from their sins.¹⁵⁵ He that believeth is born of God; and whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.¹⁵⁶

[iii.] Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world also—and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?¹⁵⁷ Nor can the prince of this world stand before him.¹⁵⁸ He takes unto him the shield of faith, and thereby quenches all the fiery darts of the devil.¹⁵⁹ He resists him steadfast in the faith, and the devil flees from him.¹⁶⁰ The seed of the woman continually bruises the serpent's head.¹⁶¹ And he is more than conqueror through Christ that loveth him and dwelleth in his heart by faith.¹⁶²

[iv.] This is the greatest and most glorious privilege of the true believer. “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.”¹⁶³ And hereby knoweth he that God abideth in him, by the Spirit which he hath given him.¹⁶⁴ He that believeth hath the witness in himself, even the Spirit of God bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God.¹⁶⁵ Christ is formed in his heart by faith.¹⁶⁶ He is one with Christ and Christ with him.¹⁶⁷ He is a real partaker of the divine nature.¹⁶⁸ Truly his fellowship is with the Father and the Son.¹⁶⁹ The Father and the Son are come unto him and make their abode with him, and his very body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.¹⁷⁰

¹⁵³See Rom. 8:2.

¹⁵⁴See Rom. 6:14–18.

¹⁵⁵See Matt. 1:21.

¹⁵⁶See 1 John 3:9.

¹⁵⁷See 1 John 5:4–5.

¹⁵⁸See John 12:31.

¹⁵⁹See Eph. 6:16.

¹⁶⁰See 1 Pet. 5:9.

¹⁶¹See Gen. 3:15.

¹⁶²See Rom. 8:38; Eph. 3:17.

¹⁶³1 John 4:15.

¹⁶⁴See 1 John 3:24.

¹⁶⁵See 1 John 5:10; Rom. 8:16.

¹⁶⁶See Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17.

¹⁶⁷See John 17:21–23.

¹⁶⁸See 2 Pet. 1:4.

¹⁶⁹See 1 John 1:3.

¹⁷⁰See John 14:23; 1 Cor. 6:19.

[IV.] Such are the privileges of all true believers. But alas where shall we find them? How are the faithful minished from among the children of men!¹⁷¹ When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith upon earth?¹⁷² We have lost the very notion of it, and [p. 14] denied it its first and peculiar office, namely that of justifying us before God. A preacher of justification by faith only is now looked upon as a setter-forth of new doctrines, and his audience are ready to cry out, Thou bringest strange things to our ears.¹⁷³ It is therefore wholly seasonable that I should therefore apply myself (as I proposed in the fourth part) first to them who deny this doctrine, and secondly to you who receive it.

[1.¹⁷⁴] And firstly, as to those that deny this doctrine, and ignorantly call it new, and pronounce the preachers of it schismatics. Would they look into their Bibles they would find it as old as Christianity; as old as the fall of man and his redemption in Christ Jesus, who was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world to take away the sins of the world.¹⁷⁵ But they do therefore err because they know not the Scriptures, neither the power of faith.¹⁷⁶ They find no such mighty efficacy in their own hearsay faith, and so cannot conceive how faith only should justify. That their faith cannot we readily grant. For if it could the devils, having the very same, would be justified too. But what must they do then in order to their justification? Why, they will take in good works to their cause (outwardly good, I mean) and the business is done. The works of a heathen and the faith of a devil will, in their judgment, make a man a complete Christian, and fully justify him in the eyes of God.

Thus mighty are these men in the Scriptures.¹⁷⁷ And as deeply skilled are they in the doctrines of our own Church. Tell me, you that are of the Church, do ye not hear the Church? I know ye do, and to you I therefore appeal. Judge you which are the schismatics, we who maintain or they who deny justification by faith only? Indeed they are worse than schismatics who deny; for if they have ever subscribed our Articles, they are perjured schismatics. God forbid that I, or any of my brethren, should preach another gospel. For we have solemnly declared upon oath our belief of justification by faith only, and for us to hold another doctrine would be willful, flat, inexcusable perjury.¹⁷⁸

One infamous evasion I know there is, but hope we all have it in equal abhorrence, namely that every man may subscribe the Articles in his own sense. Suppose it granted that the 17th Article is purposely so worded as to take in persons of differing sentiments.¹⁷⁹ What is this

¹⁷¹See Ps. 12:1 (BCP).

¹⁷²See Luke 18:8.

¹⁷³See Acts 17:18–20.

¹⁷⁴The five paragraphs in this section are adapted from sec. II of CW's earlier sermon on Rom. 3:23–24.

¹⁷⁵See Rev. 13:8; John 1:29.

¹⁷⁶See Matt. 22:29.

¹⁷⁷See Acts 18:24.

¹⁷⁸CW is referring to the Oath of Allegiance sworn at the time of ordination; his certificate of having signed survives in MARC (DDCW 6/82).

¹⁷⁹While Article of Religion XVII, "Of Predestination," affirms unconditional single predestination, there had long been advocates of an "Arminian" reading of the Article (basing

to those Articles where the sense is plain, precise, and det[ailed]? As it is in that of justification, for the full understanding of which the Church refers us to her Homilies and thereby ties us down to the one sense therein delivered. Nor is it in the power of words more fully and plainly to express any truth than she has there expressed that everlasting truth: “We are justified by faith only without works.”

What then my brethren can we think of those who swear to those Articles in a sense altogether repugnant to the true intended one? Who declare upon oath their belief that “we are justified by faith only”—that is, say they in their hearts, not by faith only but by a popish jumble of faith and works. What horrid mockery is this of God and man! Can charity [p. 15] itself suppose that their mental reservation acquits them of perjury? Or does it not rather wholly aggravate it? I shall say no more of this wicked subterfuge than that it was taught by our modern Arius; that hereby he subscribed our Articles though he denied the Lord that bought him.¹⁸⁰ As might his elder brother have done,¹⁸¹ or any other heretic old or new.

Let not those therefore who deny this doctrine any longer call themselves of the Church of England. They may be of the Church of Rome, but cannot be of ours, who allow works any share in our justification with God. Papists indeed they are, though they may not know it, for they lay the wood, hay, stubble of their own works, not as the superstructure, but as the very foundation, of their acceptance with God. Pharisees are they, for they justify themselves. Perjured are they likewise, as many of them as have sworn to the truth of what they disbelieved. In short, they may call themselves anything but Church of England men and Christians. For such we can never allow them to be since, to repeat the words of our own Church, “Whosoever denieth this doctrine, is not to be counted for a Christian man, nor for a setter-forth of Christ’s glory, but for a setter-forth of man’s vainglory, an adversary to Christ and his gospel.”¹⁸²

[2.] This is our Church’s censure of all that bring any other doctrine than justification by faith only. She calls them antichrists who presume to say they can by their own works justify themselves. But alas, how are these antichrists multiplied upon earth! Our pulpits speak a quite differing language from our Articles and Homilies. The writings of our most celebrated divines are full of justification by faith *and* works.¹⁸³ The religion of Christ is utterly denied, exploded, and blasphemed. It were needless to name all these “Judas” Christians¹⁸⁴ (if I may so call them

election on God’s foreknowledge of human response)—such as given, for example, by CW’s mother Susanna (Annesley) Wesley; see her letter to JW, Aug. 18, 1725, *Works*, 25:179–80.

¹⁸⁰CW surely has in mind the Church of England theologian Samuel Clarke (1675–1729), who insisted in *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity* (1712) that emphasis on the equality of the three “persons” of the Godhead in creeds betrayed the affirmation of the monarchy of the Father in Scripture, and that Scripture should be considered more authoritative. Clarke was widely assumed to be adopting a model where only the Father was God eternal, with the Son and Spirit being brought into being by the Father, akin to that taught by Arius (c. 250–336), which was condemned by the Council of Nicaea. See Maurice Wiles, *Archetypal Heresy: Arianism through the Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 62–164.

¹⁸¹I.e., the fourth-century Arius.

¹⁸²See extract of Homily III above.

¹⁸³CW indicated emphasis by writing the character for “and” larger than those around it.

¹⁸⁴The shorthand for Judas includes a mark that it is to be treated as an adjective.

whom our Church denies to be any Christians at all). But as God shall give me strength I mean to name them, and that upon the housetop, and to warn the people of God to beware of false prophets.¹⁸⁵

“This is not justifying faith,” says one of them, “to lay hold on the righteousness and merits of Christ for the pardon of our sins, that is to trust and confide only in that as the meritorious cause of our pardon.”¹⁸⁶ He goes on (this angel of the church of God¹⁸⁷) to do the devil’s work, pulling down that Church of which he is a pillar, and labouring to overturn what she calls the “strong rock and foundation of the Christian religion,”¹⁸⁸ justification by faith only. I tremble to think (and so should all his admirers) of that terrible sentence pronounced by the great apostle, “Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”¹⁸⁹ To preach justification by faith *and* works is, if we may believe an inspired apostle, to preach another gospel. And he repeats the doom of all such preachers, “As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”¹⁹⁰ [p. 16]

So speaks the great as[serter] of justification by faith only; who, as a wise master builder, laid this sure foundation of all good works and holiness, and assures us other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.¹⁹¹ On this very doctrine our Church was founded and flourished for 100 years. But alas, was the father of the Reformation to rise again and visit us, how would he take up the apostle’s words: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel!”¹⁹² “Oh foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth?”¹⁹³ “I am afraid for you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”¹⁹⁴ “Christ is become of none effect unto you. Whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace. [...] Ye did run well. Who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that called you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”¹⁹⁵

Would to God, my brethren, the following words were applicable to us all, “I have confidence in you through the Lord that ye will be none otherwise minded!”¹⁹⁶ Would to God

¹⁸⁵See Matt. 7:15.

¹⁸⁶CW wrote in the margin: [John] Tillotson, Sermon 173, “Of Justifying Faith,” 3rd vol. [of *The Works of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson* (London: Knapton et al., 1735)], p. 460 [i.e., 461].

¹⁸⁷I.e., a bishop.

¹⁸⁸See extract from Homily III above.

¹⁸⁹Gal. 1:8.

¹⁹⁰Gal. 1:9.

¹⁹¹See 1 Cor. 3:10–11.

¹⁹²Gal. 1:6.

¹⁹³Gal. 3:1.

¹⁹⁴Gal. 4:11.

¹⁹⁵Gal. 5:4–9.

¹⁹⁶Gal. 5:10.

that everyone who hath not made shipwreck of the faith would avow and preach and publish it upon the housetop. Suffer ye the word of exhortation from the least and meanest of your brethren. O consider, I beseech you by the mercies of God,¹⁹⁷ whether this be not the cause of all our vice and infidelity, our not holding the h[ea]d¹⁹⁸ (I speak of the generality), our not laying the foundation, our not adhering to our own principles.

We may date our apostasy from the time of the Grand Rebellion, unto which many were drawn who maintained justification by faith only.¹⁹⁹ For no better a reason than this we renounced the doctrine (though it still confronts us in our Articles and Homilies). But woe unto the men by whom the offence came. It had been better for them that a millstone had been hanged about their neck and they cast into the sea.²⁰⁰ Woe unto them who stumbled at this rock of offence,²⁰¹ and first dared teach justification by faith *and* works. Good had it been for those men had they never been born.²⁰² But let not us, my brethren, increase the unhappy number. Let not us deny the truth because some hold it in unrighteousness, professing to know God, while in works they denied him.²⁰³ Oh what an advantage did Satan then get over us! By filling the mouths of his children with “faith in Christ”—saving faith, justifying faith—he hath driven and kept it out of the hearts of almost all this nation.

But be not ye ignorant of his devices.²⁰⁴ This place was always a bulwark against his inroads, [p. 17] a rampart against vice and infidelity. Ye are the salt of the earth. But if the salt hath lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?²⁰⁵ Ye are the eyes of this people. But if the light which is in us be darkness, how great is that darkness!²⁰⁶ Here is the fountain. And if that be pure, the river of the flood thereof shall make glad the city of our God.²⁰⁷ Oh that our glorious title might but ever be that of true Church of England men! Oh let not the enemies of our Church triumph in our having fallen from the d[octrines of the] R[eformation]! Let it not be said concerning our desolate mother, there is none to guide her of all the sons which she hath brought up.²⁰⁸ Never will she lift up her drooping head again, till we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord—the Lord our righteousness.²⁰⁹ Christ made unto us of God wisdom, righteousness,

¹⁹⁷See Rom. 12:1.

¹⁹⁸The shorthand is simply the consonants “h” and “d” conjoined. It might indicate a single word, or might be a phrase like “holy doctrine” or “holy disciplines.”

¹⁹⁹CW refers to the Puritan revolt and Interregnum of 1641–60.

²⁰⁰See Matt. 18:6–7.

²⁰¹See 1 Pet. 2:8.

²⁰²See Matt. 26:24.

²⁰³See Rom. 1:18–23.

²⁰⁴See 2 Cor. 2:11.

²⁰⁵See Matt. 5:13.

²⁰⁶See Matt. 6:23.

²⁰⁷See Ps. 46:4.

²⁰⁸See Isa. 51:18.

²⁰⁹See Jer. 23:6.

sanctification, and redemption.²¹⁰ Righteousness first and then immediately sanctification. First let us insist that we are justified freely, that is forgiven and accepted for Christ's sake, not our own; justified in our sins and in our blood; justified as ungodly by faith only without works. And then upon this sure foundation let us build the gold, silver, precious stones of good works, and inward holiness. Oh let us not corrupt the gospel of Christ by allowing works the least share in our justification with God. Corrupt it, said I? Rather let us not overthrow it. For by not acknowledging Christ to be the sole ground of our acceptance, we tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant, wherewith we were sanctified, an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace.²¹¹

God hath much against us because we have left our first love, even that pure love which is wrought by faith. Let us remember therefore from whence we are fallen, and repent and do the first works, or else he will come unto us quickly, and will remove our candlestick out of his place, except we repent.²¹² Year after year hath he come to his barren fig tree, seeking fruit and finding none. And behold, even now the word is gone forth, Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?²¹³ Behold, even now he is coming to take away the kingdom of God from us, and to give it to another nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. Oh, who will stand before him in the gap to turn away his righteous indignation lest he should destroy us?²¹⁴ Who will become protecting angels to a guilty land? Unless that iniquity is come in like a flood, who is there to lift up a standard against it?²¹⁵ Who will rise up with God against the wicked? Who will take his part against the evil doers?²¹⁶

Members of the brotherhood of faith,²¹⁷ upon you I call, that ye come to the help of the Lord, to h[old the] l[ine] against the self-righteous. Ye masters in Israel, lead the way. Be determined not to know or preach anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified.²¹⁸ Preach the gospel in simplicity. Insist on justification by faith only, even by faith in the blood of Jesus, that only name given under heaven whereby we may be saved.²¹⁹ Else I call heaven and earth to record against you this day!²²⁰ As many of you [p. 18] as bring another doctrine, I call the church of God in all ages, the noble army of martyrs, especially those of our own nation who have sealed this truth with their blood—these and the whole church militant and triumphant I call to testify against you, that ye have erred from the faith and trampled upon the everlasting gospel.

²¹⁰See 1 Cor. 1:30.

²¹¹See Heb. 10:29.

²¹²See Rev. 2:4–5; Gal. 5:6.

²¹³See Luke 13:6–9.

²¹⁴See Ezek. 22:30.

²¹⁵This appears as an insert on the verso of the facing page. See Isa. 59:19.

²¹⁶See Ps. 94:16.

²¹⁷See 1 Pet. 2:17, 5:9. Or “My brethren in the faith.”

²¹⁸See 1 Cor. 2:2.

²¹⁹See Acts 4:12.

²²⁰See Deut. 30:19.

Behold, I am now free from the blood of every man. Look ye to that! I have declared the truth.²²¹
I have borne my testimony. I have delivered my own soul!

[the following benediction was written at a later time or with a different pen.]

Now to God the Father, who first loved us and made us accepted in the Beloved; to God the Son who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to God the Holy Ghost who sheddeth abroad the love of God in our hearts, be all praise and all glory in time and in eternity!²²²

Source: Methodist Archive and Research Centre, MA 1977/597/9.

²²¹See Acts 20:26–28.

²²²JW, *A Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day of the Week* (London: James Hutton, 1738), 83.