

papacy. Therefore, the true and proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel must be taught and preserved with all diligence. Whatever causes confusion between the Law and the Gospel should be diligently prevented (i.e., by which the two doctrines, Law and Gospel, may be confused and mixed into one doctrine). It is, therefore, dangerous and wrong to convert the Gospel (properly so called, as distinguished from the Law) into a preaching of repentance or rebuke. Otherwise, if understood in a general sense of the entire doctrine, the Apology says also several times that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Meanwhile, the Apology also shows that the Gospel is properly the promise of the forgiveness of sins and of justification through Christ, and the Law is a doctrine that reproves sins and condemns.

If the article of justification is to remain pure, the greatest attention must be given with special diligence. Otherwise, what comes before faith, and what follows after it, will be mixed together or inserted into the article of justification as necessary and belonging to it. For it is not one and the same thing to talk about conversion and to talk about justification.

Not everything that belongs to conversion also belongs to the article of justification. Only God's grace, Christ's merit, and faith belong and are necessary to the article of justification. Faith receives these blessings in the promise of the Gospel, by which Christ's righteousness is credited to us. From this we receive and have forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, sonship, and are made heirs of eternal life.

True, saving faith is not in people who lack contrition and sorrow and who have a wicked plan to remain and continue in sins. But true contrition comes first, and genuine faith is in or with true repentance.

Love is a fruit that surely and necessarily also follows true faith. The fact that a person does not love is a sure sign that he is not justified. He is still in death or has lost the righteousness of faith again, as John says (1 John 3:14). But Paul says [in Romans 3:28], "For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law." He shows that neither the contrition that comes first, nor the works that follow, belong in the article or action of justification by faith. Good works do not come before justification, but follow it. A person must first be justified before he can do good works....

The doctrines of the Law and the Gospel may not be mixed and confused with each other. What belongs to the one may not be applied to the other. When that happens Christ's merit and benefits are easily hidden and the Gospel is again turned into a doctrine of the Law, as happened in the papacy. For then Christians are deprived of the true comfort they have in the Gospel against the Law's terrors, and the door is again opened in God's Church to the

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity

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