

# A RESPONSE TO ROBERT SUNGENIS'S *NOT BY FAITH ALONE*<sup>1</sup>

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Robert Sungenis grew up in a Roman Catholic home. As a young man, he converted to the Protestant faith and decided to go into the ministry. He then attended Westminster Theological Seminary, one of the leading Reformed seminaries in America, graduating in 1982. For ten years he was a strong proponent of Protestantism and Reformed theology.

In 1992 he reconverted to Roman Catholicism, and is now an active apologist for Catholicism. This book is his magnum opus.

This book is long and academic in nature. Evidently Sungenis was targeting a more scholarly audience. However, in an “Author’s Note to Readers,” we are told, “This book is designed to be read by both layman and scholar.”<sup>2</sup>

The book opens with a series of endorsements by Roman Catholics. The very first, by “The Most Reverend Fabian W. Bruskewitz, Bishop of Lincoln,” gives a flavor for the book. While I normally don’t quote endorsements, this one is exceptional. Bruskewitz writes in part:

Faith implies works. We know that the words we long to hear, “Well done, my good and faithful servant...come share your Master’s joy” (Mt. 25:21), will be spoken to those who have *done well*. Faith alone is not enough. The Protestant Reformation sowed confusion about the biblical theology of faith and good works and many today rely on this confusion to defend or excuse a failure to live holy lives of service and goodness.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert A. Sungenis, *Not by Faith Alone: The Biblical Evidence for the Catholic Doctrine of Justification* (Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing Company, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vii.

Robert Sungenis has systematically addressed the confusion and demonstrated what we have always known, namely the Sacred Scripture and the Catholic Deposit of Faith are in complete agreement about justification. I applaud this work, and recommend it for all who wish to know how and why the Bible teaches that we are not saved by faith alone.<sup>3</sup>

The book has just nine chapters covering a little over 600 pages (excluding the appendixes, bibliography, final prayers, and indexes). Thus each chapter is almost an entire book in itself. The nine chapters cover:

- Paul and justification,
- James chapter 2 and justification,
- Jesus' teaching on justification,
- Justification as an ongoing process,
- Justification is infused, not imputed, righteousness,
- Justification is familial restoration, not a mere divine decree,
- Predestination and free will are both aspects of justification,
- Only those who persevere will be finally justified, and,
- The history of faith-alone teaching is confusing and contradictory.

## II. FOUR PROOFS THAT PAUL DID NOT TEACH JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE

Though not always easy to follow, Sungenis attempts to prove in Chapter 1 that Paul did not teach justification by faith alone. I found four lines of proof cited.

First, Sungenis points out that though Paul used the word *alone* more than any other NT writer, he never used it in conjunction with faith.<sup>4</sup> Thus Paul never used the expression *justification by faith alone*. When Paul said that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law, he did not mean he is justified by faith alone.

Second, by "the works of the law" Paul does not mean to exclude all human works as conditions for justification. Rather, he is excluding

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., ix, ellipsis and italics his.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., see, for example, pp. 1-3, 114.

works that are done apart from the enabling grace of God.<sup>5</sup> Here Sungenis borrows a Reformed argument:

The conclusion must be that works are necessary for salvation, and, in fact, are one of the principle determining factors in whether or not one obtains salvation. We say this with the proviso that Paul outrightly [sic] condemns works done with a view toward *obligating* God to pay the worker with salvation. Man can never put God in the position of being in debt to an imperfect and sinful creature. The only way God can accept our works is through his grace. Works done under the auspices of God's grace, that is, works done that do not demand payment from God but are rewarded only due to the kindness and mercy of God, are the works that Paul requires for salvation.<sup>6</sup>

Third, Sungenis uses passages in which Paul speaks of the Judgment Seat of Christ and of the future judgment of Christians by works to prove that he did not teach justification by faith alone. For example, he writes, "Paul holds the necessity of works in such high regard that in Romans 14:10-12 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 he states that all people must eventually face God's judgment throne based on their works."<sup>7</sup> Since in his mind, the Bema is the same as the Great White Throne, he thinks he has proved that justification is by faith plus works.

Fourth, he takes passages that *JOTGES* readers would understand as dealing with temporal judgment for persistence in sinful deeds and suggests they show that those who persist in willful sin will be eternally condemned. For example, he cites Romans 8:13, "For if you live according to the flesh you will die," as proving that Paul taught justification by faith plus works.<sup>8</sup>

The weakness of all four of these arguments is striking. It reminds me that if one adopts a position based on tradition and accepts inherited views, his arguments not surprisingly will prove convincing only for those within that tradition. How anyone ever came up with these views in the first place is an amazing testimony to man's ability to distort the clear teachings of Scripture.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 18-46.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 46, italics his.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 47. See also pp. 38 n. 47, 41 n. 49, and Ch. 8, "The Final Justification," 479-516.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 87.

### III. JAMES 2 TEACHES JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS

It should be no surprise that James 2 is the subject of one of the chapters of the book.<sup>9</sup> It has long been the place where those who oppose justification by faith alone run for support.

Not surprisingly, Sungenis takes the salvation of 2:14 as referring to salvation from eternal condemnation. And, since he believes that eternal salvation can be lost, he sees the persons addressed in the passage as genuine believers. He takes the justification by works of Abraham and Rahab as referring to justification *before God*. In the second chapter of James he finds proof that believers who fail to continue to do good works will lose eternal salvation/justification.

It is unfortunate that though Sungenis cites Hodges, Chafer, Ryrie, and other Free Grace advocates at other places in the book,<sup>10</sup> the Free Grace view of James 2 is noticeably absent here.

### IV. JESUS TAUGHT JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH PLUS WORKS

In Chapter 3 Sungenis discusses Jesus' teaching on justification. Aside from John 5:24 (which Sungenis does not exegete; he merely raises objections to the faith-alone understanding of it), all the passages discussed here are from the Synoptic Gospels. A justification-by-works understanding of the Rich Young Ruler passage leads the way.

The approach of Sungenis to the Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector turns the passage upside down. Rather than the tax collector being justified by faith, he is justified by faith and works.<sup>11</sup> Rather than justification being a one-time event, it is an ongoing process. "Whether the respective tax collectors [he includes Zaccheus here] will continue to be faithful and endure to the end is a matter not addressed by Jesus. All in all, nothing in the passage proves a once-for-all justification by *faith alone*."<sup>12</sup> The point of Luke 18:9-14, according to Sungenis, is that proud faith and works will not justify, but humble faith and works will.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 117-75.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., see esp. p. 177, n. 2, p. 184, n. 13, and pp. 596-99.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 198, italics his.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 197.

This chapter demonstrates the tragic result when someone abandons the evangelistic purpose of John's Gospel and looks in the Synoptics for his view of justification. Had Sungenis concentrated on John's Gospel, and studied it without reference to Roman Catholic understandings of it, he would have concluded that Jesus taught justification by faith alone.<sup>14</sup>

## V. JUSTIFICATION IS AN ONGOING PROCESS

Chapter 4 is entitled, "Is Justification a One-Time Event or an Ongoing Process?" To support his view that it is an ongoing process, Sungenis cites the justification of Abraham, which he believes occurred in Genesis 12 and again in Genesis 15 and again in Genesis 22.<sup>15</sup>

Another line of support is two obscure verses in Psalm 106. Verses 30-31 read, "Then Phineas stood up and intervened, and the plague was stopped. And that was accounted to him for righteousness to all generations evermore." Citing the fact that the language in v. 31 is the same as that in Gen 15:6, he suggests that this proves that justification is not by faith alone and is not a one-time event. Phineas was continuing the process of justification by humbly doing good works.

Sungenis fails to note that these verses are not cited or alluded to anywhere in the NT, unlike Gen 15:6 (which is quoted three times in the NT). If these verses deal with forensic justification, it would seem reasonable for the NT to tell us so.

Sungenis also fails to note how some OT commentators (e.g., Gunkel) understand these verses. Some believe that *righteousness* here is experiential and that it alludes to the reward that Phineas received of the priesthood perpetually being in his line. Numbers 25:13 says, "And it shall be to him [Phineas] and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel" (see also vv. 7-12).

In any case, it is surely improper exegetical technique to take an obscure verse that is not explained in context or elsewhere in the Bible and make your understanding of it one of the key proofs of your position. Whatever Ps 106:30-31 means, it cannot contradict Rom 4:1-8 or Gal 3:6-14 or any other text in the Old or New Testaments.

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<sup>14</sup> See, for example, John 4:10; 6:28-29; 11:25-27.

<sup>15</sup> Sungenis, *Not by Faith Alone*, 231-34.

In this chapter the author naturally must argue against eternal security. One way he does so is by giving 18 pages of Scripture without a word of explanation in the text, with lots of ellipses, and with only limited discussion in the footnotes.<sup>16</sup> For example, out of 83 passages he cites, only 28 have footnotes, leaving 55 without comment. This is hardly exegetical proof.

Sungenis does deal with Rom 5:1, a passage that contradicts the idea of justification as a process. There Paul uses a perfect passive verb to describe our completed justification: “Therefore, *having been justified* by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Sungenis has several explanations of this text. First, he suggests that Paul is merely saying that the readers were in a state of justification at that time, but “whether these people will remain in that state he does not address.”<sup>17</sup> Second, and this point seems to contradict his first point, the readers “are in the state of justification for the time being *only*.”<sup>18</sup> He feels that Rom 8:1 supports that understanding. In addition, he argues that the grammar shows this as well. “In fact, the Greek verb in the phrase, ‘having been justified’ is a *perfect passive* Greek verb which denotes a *completed* past event.”<sup>19</sup> Then he has a footnote at this point that seems to contradict what he just said: “The perfect tense, passive voice in Greek denotes an action in the past that is complete, *anticipating future results*.”<sup>20</sup> We learn nothing in the text itself about anticipated future results. We are just told that it “denotes a completed past event.”

Possibly the reason Sungenis does this is because the perfect passive in Greek denotes a past event which has an abiding result. If that abiding

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., see pp. 276-93. Passages printed included Matt 7:21-23; 10:22, 28, 33; 24:12-13; Mark 9:43; 10:21-23; 13:22; Luke 8:13; 12:43-46; John 12:47-48; 15:6; Acts 14:43, 46; 20:29-30; Rom 2:6; 8:12-13; 11:20-22; 1 Cor 3:17; 4:5; 6:8-9; 9:27-10:6; 10:11-12; 15:1-2; 2 Cor 5:20-6:2; 11:3; 12:21-13:5; Gal 5:19-21; 6:7-9; Eph 5:5-6; Phil 3:10-16; Col 1:21-23; 1 Thess 4:1-8; 2 Thess 2:13-15; 3:6, 14; 1 Tim 4:1; 5:15; 6:10-19, 20-21; 2 Tim 1:15; 2:12, 17; 4:10, 16; Titus 1:16; 3:10; Heb 2:1; 3:1, 6, 12-14; 4:1, 11-13, 14; 6:4-6, 11-12; 10:26-27, 35-38; 12:1, 3, 14-17, 25, 29; Jas 1:14-16, 21-22; 2:13-14; 4:4; 5:9; 1 Pet 4:17-18; 5:8; 2 Pet 1:9; 2:20-22; 3:14-17; 1 John 2:24-26, 28; 2 John 8; 3 John 9-11; Jude 5; Rev 2:5, 10, 16, 23, 26; 3:3, 11, 16, 21; 16:15; 22:12, 19.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., italics added.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 259, italics his.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., n. 40, italics added.

result contradicts his position, it makes sense for him to fail to mention it in the text. And it also makes sense for him to soften the idea in the footnote by speaking of “*anticipated* future results.” Which grammarian speaks of “*anticipated* future results” for a perfect tense in Greek is not stated. No biblical examples are given of other perfect tenses where the continuation of the verbal action is contingent on other factors.

## VI. JUSTIFICATION IS INFUSED, NOT IMPARTED, RIGHTEOUSNESS

In Chapter 5 Sungenis argues that justification is not imputed righteousness, but infused righteousness. He then draws the seemingly contradictory conclusion that God justifies a person as long as he is righteous in his behavior.

If God infuses righteousness into people, then they would be righteous. How could a person God made righteous become unrighteous? Essentially Sungenis holds the view that Christians now are like glorified saints, righteous not only in their position, but also in their experience. But glorified saints will never sin (1 John 3:2). Sungenis fails to explain how an experientially righteous person sins at all.

Now someone could respond that there is a type of experiential righteousness in the NT that is less than perfection. That is true. However, that experiential righteousness is not *infused* by God. If it were, it would result in sinlessness.

The author makes a fascinating observation about Zane Hodges, suggesting that he is rare in that he is “at least being true to the implications of a *faith-alone* theology.” He writes:

Dispensationalist Zane Hodges, the major spokesman for an opposing tangent of Evangelical thought, has declared that the faith which appropriates the righteousness of Christ cannot be qualified [by works] in any manner without falling into a salvation by works. Hodges is at least being true to the implications of a *faith alone* theology, in that if one makes faith to be the sole instrument of justification then it must truly be alone, without works to qualify it.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 356. See also p. 569 where he criticizes those who speak of the need to have a certain quality of faith. He rightly indicates this confuses people.

He recognizes that the Free Grace position is unique and uniquely consistent! From his Westminster Seminary background, he sees in the Reformed position a faith-alone position that isn't truly faith alone.

Sungenis, like Reformed theologians, is quick to point out that works could never occur apart from the grace of God.<sup>22</sup> *Unlike* Reformed theologians, he feels free to speak of the fact that the one doing the good works indeed cooperates synergistically with God in his justification.<sup>23</sup>

## VII. JUSTIFICATION IS FAMILIAL RESTORATION, NOT A MERE DIVINE DECREE

In Chapter 6 Sungenis rejects the idea that justification is a forensic declaration of righteousness. Instead, justification becomes a fellowship concept. He speaks of "initial justification,"<sup>24</sup> a concept not found explicitly anywhere in the Bible. Of course, if justification can cease, then there must be initial justification, and then there is potential ongoing and final justification for those who endure to the end.

Sungenis uses Luke 15 and the Parable of the Prodigal Son as partial support for this idea.<sup>25</sup> Of course, if that parable concerns fellowship and not justification, then the point is lost. Sungenis fails to recognize or point out that the term *justification* is not used in the chapter. While it is true that the term *just* or *righteous* appears earlier in the chapter in v. 7, it is most natural to understand this as experiential righteousness, that is, those who are still walking in fellowship with God.

In this way of thinking "inheritance" is equal to justification.<sup>26</sup> Thus one who loses his inheritance loses his justification. Of course, if inheritance is a rewards concept, then his argument evaporates.

Sungenis argues that faith plays no role in law: "Faith is not at all involved in the courtroom."<sup>27</sup> However, he seems to arrive at this conclusion by means of circular reasoning. First he admits that faith is required for justification. While he rejects justification by faith alone, he argues for justification by faith plus works. Second he says that justification is a

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 302.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 302-307.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 384.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 385.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 413.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 399.



family issue, not a legal one. Finally, since he has removed any legal element from biblical justification, he is able to suggest that faith “is not at all involved in the courtroom.”

I wonder if eternal condemnation in his view is not a legal concept? If it is, then faith is involved in the courtroom at least in terms of condemnation. While I didn't find an instance where Sungenis uses the word *legal* in Chapter 8 as he discusses the final judgment, it is clear that in his view lack of faith will result in a negative legal verdict at the Great White Throne.<sup>28</sup> He repeatedly calls this *judgment*. He speaks of *the Judge* at this *judgment*. How could it not be legal? Yet if condemnation is legal and is directly related to lack of faith, then faith is indeed a courtroom issue for lack of faith results in failing to obtain what he calls “final justification.”

### VIII. PREDESTINATION AND FREE WILL ARE BOTH ASPECTS OF JUSTIFICATION

In Chapter 7 Sungenis wades into the whole issue of God's sovereignty and man's free will. Most *JOTGES* readers will agree with this statement by Sungenis:

Using Augustine's argumentation, Aquinas agrees that unless man has a free will, all commands, exhortations and prohibitions would be in vain. If man acts of necessity, then all basis for reward and punishment and all principles of moral philosophy are overthrown.<sup>29</sup>

Sungenis concludes this chapter by saying, “If we are faithful to Scripture, however, we must conclude that it teaches both predestination and free will. Sometimes Scripture speaks as though man does everything and at other times as if God does everything.”<sup>30</sup> Of all his chapters, this is the one where the most agreement is likely to be found.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 481-82.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 446.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 473.

## IX. ONLY THOSE WHO PERSEVERE WILL BE FINALLY JUSTIFIED

With Chapter 8 we come upon an Arminian version of the perseverance of the saints. In this case, some saints persevere and obtain final justification. Others do not, lose their justification and eternal life, and end up in the lake of fire.

Interestingly, Sungenis argues that the purpose of this final judgment is two-fold: "In *all* the passages that specify a judgment for deeds, the primary purpose of the judgment is to determine the eternal destiny of the individual and only secondarily to determine the degree of reward or punishment."<sup>31</sup>

If you can overlook the fact that Sungenis believes in possible loss of justification, what you find in this chapter is just what a five-point Calvinist would say. They too speak of final justification. They too believe in one final judgment, not two. They agree that all who fail to persevere in both faith and good works end up in the lake of fire. And some, though not all, Reformed people suggest that a secondary purpose of this final judgment is to determine degrees of reward or punishment.

Of course, throughout this chapter Sungenis suggests that the Bema and the Great White Throne are one in the same. And he sees all people, just and unjust, evaluated at the same time in this one and only judgment.

At the end of this chapter, his fourth "summary point" about justification and judgment concerns assurance. I have heard precisely this same sentiment from five-point Calvinists as well. He writes:

If he is living a good Christian life, loving God and his neighbor as he should, the Christian can have confidence that God will justify him. *He cannot, however, have absolute assurance that he will be saved* precisely because he may fall into sin, depart from the faith, and remain unrepentant until death.<sup>32</sup>

His final summary point concerns the role of Purgatory in justification. After suggesting God must prepare us for kingdom citizenship via

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 486, italics his. See also, pp. 496-97, 515.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 516, italics added. In an earlier chapter (p. 214) he wrote, "The teaching is clear. Salvation is not based merely on an act of faith at the beginning of one's life but on continual faith and obedience throughout one's life."

trials and sufferings in this life, he says: "God will also purge any remaining corruption from us in post-mortem purgatorial fires."<sup>33</sup>

## X. THE HISTORY OF FAITH-ALONE TEACHING IS CONFUSING AND CONTRADICTIONARY

The author naturally feels that history is on his side. The title of Chapter 9 is "Will 'Faith Alone' Be All Alone?" Of course, history does not determine truth; exegesis does. However, like many five-point Calvinists, Sungenis considers it important to show that the history of the church supports his view, not the faith-alone view.

Sungenis supports his contention about history in a unique way. Rather than simply quoting church fathers and Roman Catholic theologians through the years, and showing that the Catholic (and Eastern Orthodox) writings far outweigh Reformed writings, he shows that faith-alone proponents are confusing and contradictory. While the former might have swayed more people, this latter approach has the advantage of casting doubt on anything that is so diverse and confusing.

Sungenis writes:

To close this study we will now analyze *faith alone* theology from a historical perspective... This chapter is designed to reveal the extremely diverse and often very confusing notions of justification prevalent in historic Protestant theology, including current Evangelical and Fundamentalist thought.<sup>34</sup>

He spends 38 pages discussing Luther, 19 pages addressing Calvin, and then a few pages each on Osiander, Arminius, Anabaptists, Pietists, Methodists, Jonathan Edwards, Herman Bavinck, John Gerstner, and Norman Shepherd. He also discusses the Lutheran and Catholic Dialogue on justification, Anglicans and Catholics, the Lordship Salvation Controversy,<sup>35</sup> ECT, *Five Views on Sanctification*, and the new perspective on Paul (which he calls, "Another View of Justification").<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. See also Appendix 8, "Patristic Evidence for Purgatory and Prayers for the Dead."

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 517, italics his.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 595-99.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 602-604.

Concerning Lordship Salvation, Sungenis discusses Zane Hodges, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Charles C. Ryrie, and John F. MacArthur.<sup>37</sup>

His comments about MacArthur's *The Gospel According to Jesus* are fascinating. He wrote:

MacArthur spent almost all of his 300-page work exegeting passages from the Gospels, systematically going through many of the teachings of Jesus which specified that works indeed play a large part in our standing and relationship with God. This is not surprising. Catholic theology has always maintained that the Gospels deny *faith alone* theology most emphatically.<sup>38</sup>

A bit later he added this remark:

Like most Reformed theologians, MacArthur has found himself trying to walk the razor-thin edge between the gospel of Hodges and the gospel of Rome. For them [Reformed theologians] it is easier to live in the dichotomous world of "faith alone but not a faith that is alone," yet we find many of them are accused by their Reformed brethren of falling off the edge.<sup>39</sup>

Frankly, Sungenis is correct that there is a debate going on among the faith-alone people. If we are honest, we are a minority even among the faith-alone folks.

The fact that there are diverse views within the faith-alone camp should in no way dissuade people from embracing it. While it is true that the Catholic position has less variance within it, that is not such a good thing. The reason for the agreement is that people within the Church of Rome accept tradition as being on par with Scripture. God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb 11:6). We are to search the Scriptures, not tradition and Scripture, to see if something is true (Acts 17:11).

Each of us should be so committed to Scripture that even if we were the only person on earth who believed it taught justification by faith alone, we would stand firm in that belief. It should not matter to us what percentage of people in Christendom hold the faith-alone view. The only thing that matters is what God says.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 597-98.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 597.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 597-98.

## XI. APPENDIXES

There are 21 appendixes included in the book. While most of them are only mildly interesting, two are especially helpful.

Appendix 20 gives the 33 anathemas from the Council of Trent concerning justification. Canon 9 reads,

If anyone shall say that by faith alone the sinner is justified, so as to understand that nothing else is required to cooperate in the attainment of the grace of justification, and that it is in no way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will: let him be anathema.<sup>40</sup>

Canon 20 reads,

If anyone shall say that a man who is justified and ever so perfect is not bound to observe the commandments of God and the Church, but only to believe, *as if indeed the Gospel were a mere absolute promise of eternal life, without the condition of observation of the commandments*: let him be anathema.<sup>41</sup>

Appendix 17 has Latin in the title which bears an important message: "The Official Interpretation of 'Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus.'" The Latin means, "Outside the Church *There Is* No Salvation." The Catholic position is similar to that of many Protestants today. Vatican Council II says,

Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their action to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation.<sup>42</sup>

The difference is that they say, "no one will be saved who, knowing the Church to have been divinely established by Christ, nevertheless refuses to submit to the Church or withholds obedience from the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ on earth."<sup>43</sup>

After the Bibliography, but before the Indexes, comes a section with six "Final Prayers."<sup>44</sup> The last one is to the Lord Jesus. *The other five are*

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 690.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 691-92, italics added.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 682.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 681.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 737-38.

to *St. Gregory the Great*, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, *St. Francis de Sales*, *St. Michael the Archangel*, and “*Mary, Mother of God*.” I found these prayers quite alarming. Clearly the book must be addressed almost exclusively to Catholics, since including prayers to deceased people and even to an archangel is quite offensive to Protestants.

Here is the prayer to Mary:

Mary, Mother of God, we pray that you will beseech your Son, who alone provides grace and wisdom, to help us in our efforts to further the cause of the Church. *May your holiness and faithfulness be brought to God on our behalf*, so that he may have mercy and patience with us as we endeavor to honor his name.<sup>45</sup>

## XII. CONCLUSION

This book is overly long. However, it is a resource worth having since it is by a Catholic who is well trained in Reformed thought.

I would think that pastors, elders, deacons, Bible study leaders, Sunday school teachers, and all who share God’s Word with others would find in this book plenty of fascinating illustrations of how even highly educated and quite intelligent people can be badly confused.

I recommend this book, especially for anyone who ministers in heavily Roman Catholic areas.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 737, italics added.