

## SOME REFLECTIONS ON *SOLA FIDE*

THOMAS R. SCHREINER\*

### I. INTRODUCTION

During our annual meeting, as we reflect on what the scriptures teach about the church, it is fitting to ask this question: what makes churches evangelical?<sup>1</sup> Not a belief in inerrancy, as important as that is, for Jehovah's Witnesses believe in inerrancy. Not belief in the Trinity, as central as that is, for Roman Catholics confess that there are three persons and one God. What makes churches evangelical is the evangel, the gospel. And I would suggest that the motto *sola fide*, justification by faith alone, is entailed by the gospel. I don't have time to explore this matter deeply or to defend the validity of my observations. So, I am offering preliminary observations and reflections on justification by faith alone, which is an essential part (but not the whole) of the gospel we confess as evangelicals. At points, then, my ruminations are more devotional than scholarly.

Three matters will be considered: First, is it helpful to use the slogan *sola fide* since slogans are often misunderstood? Second, Frank Beckwith's rejection of justification by faith alone will be sketched in and scrutinized briefly. Third, a pastoral word on *sola fide* will be offered.

### II. SLOGANS AND *SOLA FIDE*

*Sola fide* is often misunderstood, as if it denies the importance and necessity of good works, which might lead some to say that the slogan should be abandoned. Why appeal to a slogan that needs to be qualified and explained carefully so that it isn't abused? Such an objection, however, actually applies to every theological truth. We don't surrender the term "Trinity" even though it is often misunderstood. What we mean by the word "Trinity" must be carefully explained and qualified. Still, we don't abandon the word "Trinity" just because it may be misinterpreted. In the same way, we should not surrender the formula *sola fide* even though it is sometimes misunderstood or even wrongly explicated by its adherents, for the slogan expresses a vital theological truth, which is worth cherishing and guarding.

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\* Thomas R. Schreiner is the James Buchanan Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Biblical Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40280.

<sup>1</sup> Virtually all the material in this article comes from my forthcoming book, *Faith Alone—The Doctrine of Justification: What the Reformers Taught and Why It Matters*, which will be published by Zondervan in 2015. This book is part of a series of five books on the five *solas* to be published by Zondervan. The material here is used by permission.

Anthony Lane rightly says that doctrines are maps and models, not mathematical formulas.<sup>2</sup> We must avoid, then, a simplistic appeal to *sola fide*, which condemns without conversation or understanding those who reject the term. We must ask what those who reject *sola fide* intend when they question its adequacy, for they are usually concerned that those who trumpet *sola fide* dismiss or relativize the importance of good works.

How important is *sola fide*? It is important because we are reminded that salvation is ultimately God's work, not ours. We are justified by faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. *Sola fide* reminds us that we don't save ourselves; salvation is of the Lord. Still, justification by faith alone isn't *the* gospel, though it is one element or entailment of the gospel, and hence is of vital importance.<sup>3</sup> Those who reject the motto aren't necessarily proclaiming a different gospel. It is quite possible that they are responding to a misunderstanding of the phrase or they have heard an inadequate presentation of what faith alone means, and they rightly disagree with the explanation they have heard. Slogans are helpful, for they briefly summarize our theology, so that we don't have to explain constantly everything we mean all over again. But slogans are also dangerous, for we may be in a conversation or a debate where the two parties are unknowingly operating with different definitions and concepts. Before we indict someone else we must be sure that we have heard what they are truly saying.

Perhaps the classic post-Reformation book on justification by faith was written by John Owen (1616–1683).<sup>4</sup> Owen wrote this work in 1677, and hence it represents a mature Protestant position, where the Reformed standpoint is summed up and defended after many years of debate with Roman Catholics and various other opponents, such as the Socinians.<sup>5</sup> Despite Owen's contention for justification by faith alone, he wrote out of a catholic and charitable spirit. He recognized that someone might experience or enjoy a truth in their heart and life, which they don't recognize as doctrinal truth.<sup>6</sup> Owen rightly says that some may actually enjoy justification by faith alone, even though they don't subscribe to it doctrinally. People's hearts may be better than their heads. Nevertheless, the truth of the doctrine must be proclaimed, cherished, and guarded, and that brings me to the next matter, which is an abbreviated case study of sorts—the matter of Frank Beckwith's return to Roman Catholicism.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony N. S. Lane, *Justification by Faith in Catholic-Protestant Dialogue: An Evangelical Assessment* (London: T&T Clark, 2002) 128–32.

<sup>3</sup> For the nature of the gospel, see especially D. A. Carson, "What is the Gospel?—Revisited," in *For the Fame of God's Name: Essays in Honor of John Piper* (ed. Sam Storms and Justin Taylor; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010) 147–70.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, Explained, Confirmed, and Vindicated*, in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 5 (ed. William H. Goold; Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1965) 2–400.

<sup>5</sup> For an essay that sums up well the political and theological context in which Owen wrote, see Carl R. Trueman, "John Owen on Justification," in *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, Explained, Confirmed, and Vindicated* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2006) iii–xxii.

<sup>6</sup> Owen, "Justification by Faith" 164.

## III. FRANK BECKWITH'S RETURN TO ROME

Roman Catholics quite often say that the Bible speaks only once about whether justification is by faith alone, and it specifically rejects it. James 2:24 says, "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone" (ESV). It is somewhat ironic that Protestants who proclaim *sola scriptura* are countered by Catholics on the basis of Scripture. To put it another way, the NT never says we are justified by faith alone, but it does say that we aren't justified by faith alone, so why do we claim that justification by faith alone is biblical?

We are reminded that *sola fide* can't be sustained, nor should it be defended, if we understand it simplistically. Formulas and slogans are often misleading and distorting, and we must beware of using the slogan *sola fide* as a mantra, as if the slogan itself captures the truth of the gospel. It is apparent from James that there is a sense in which *sola fide* is dramatically wrong, for it is contradicted by the words of Scripture itself.

We might be tempted, as a result, to give the whole thing up. We Protestants, after all, are the ones who trumpet *sola scriptura*, so why do we hold onto *sola fide* when the Scriptures speak directly against it? Are we as Protestants guilty of holding onto a tradition which, after all these centuries, is not in accord with what the Bible truly says?

Here the matter of being simplistic arises again. The most persuasive advocates of *sola fide* were quite aware of what James taught and never denied the contribution of James.<sup>7</sup> Still, they believed it was warranted to speak of justification by faith alone and to draw a bright red line between faith and works in justification. The bright red line doesn't mean that faith and works never meet, as if they are foes in the boxing ring. It does mean, however, that faith and works are to be distinguished, and that there is a sense in which it is biblically right, indeed biblically required, to say that we are justified by faith alone. Showing this from Scripture isn't verified by parroting a slogan nor by citing proof texts. We need to delve into Scripture, history, and tradition to adjudicate this question wisely.

1. *Beckwith's story.* We need to keep this in mind when we consider the fascinating case of Frank Beckwith. Beckwith was born in 1960 and raised as a Roman Catholic, but in 1978 he was born again as a teenager and became an evangelical Christian. Beckwith is a well-known philosopher and ethicist, lecturing, debating, and writing to defend a Christian worldview. He was certainly one of the luminaries in evangelical scholarship. As evangelicals we are deeply grateful for his scholarship, especially his work in philosophy and ethics. In 2007, however, while Beckwith held the position of president of the Evangelical Theological Society, he astonished many by reconverting to Roman Catholicism. As a result, he stepped down from

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<sup>7</sup> Many in NT scholarship believe Paul and James contradict one another and that they teach two different ways of justification. Those in the Lutheran tradition who espouse this view say that we should favor Paul over James. See Jüngel, *Justification* 19–20; Martin Hengel, "Der Jakobusbrief als antipaulinische Polemik," in *Tradition and Interpretation in the NT: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis for His 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne with Otto Betz; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 248–65.

his post as president of the Evangelical Theological Society and devoted himself afresh and anew to the Roman Catholic Church.

Beckwith defends his latest migration in a book recounting his story where he explains why he returned to the church of his boyhood days.<sup>8</sup> Naturally, his apologetics touches on a number of issues that divide Roman Catholics from evangelical Protestants. Investigating such matters would be most fascinating, but what interests us are Beckwith's reflections on justification. Beckwith realizes, as one who is fully conversant with evangelicalism, that one of the fundamental attractions of the latter is its teaching on justification by faith alone. Many nurtured in Roman Catholicism have wandered from the waters of the Tiber and have embraced the evangelical gospel which declares justification by faith alone. Many have rejoiced over the freedom that is theirs in Christ as they have realized that their right standing with God does not depend upon what they do but on the grace given to them in Christ Jesus. Justification, they discovered, is not based on human performance or the works we have done. Instead, it is a gift granted to those who trust in Jesus Christ and him crucified and risen. So, we are not surprised to find that Beckwith devotes more space to justification than to any other issue.<sup>9</sup>

2. *Beckwith's view of justification.* Beckwith acknowledges that his defense of his return to Catholicism isn't technical, and yet anything Beckwith writes is of immense interest and importance since he is well known for his intellectual acumen. I should say at the outset that Beckwith is unfailingly irenic toward evangelicals in the book and regularly expresses gratefulness for what he has learned from evangelicals. Hence, he identifies himself as an *evangelical catholic*. Still, he has embraced Roman Catholicism and its view of justification, and we are eager to find out why. My purpose here is not to provide a detailed rendition of Beckwith's reasons but to sketch broadly his perspective. First, says Beckwith, the view of justification articulated by the Reformers was not shared by the early Church fathers. They didn't espouse the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Second, justification was viewed as a process instead of as a singular event. In other words, justification and sanctification were not rigidly separated into two compartments. Justification was not merely conceived of as the imputation of righteousness but also as the infusion of righteousness. Third, the most natural way of reading the Scriptures shows significant problems with the Reformed understanding of justification. The NT clearly teaches that people will receive eternal life *based* on what they have done (cf. Matt 7:21–27; 16:27; 25:31–46; Rev 22:11–12, etc.).<sup>10</sup> There is no suggestion, says Beckwith, that works are merely an *evidence* for justification. Such a reading strains against what the verses plainly say.

Romans 4:1–8 is often brought in to oppose the Roman Catholic view, and Beckwith agrees that this text teaches that salvation can't be earned by keeping the Mosaic law.<sup>11</sup> But this text doesn't lead to the conclusion, Beckwith insists, that the

<sup>8</sup> Francis J. Beckwith, *Return to Rome: Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 84–116.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 97–99.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 99–108.

imputation of righteousness is all there is to justification, for we learn from James that Abraham was also justified later when he sacrificed Isaac (Jas 2:14–26). Plus, Gen 15:6 can't be the moment when Abraham was first justified since he already had faith when he obeyed the Lord and moved to Canaan (Gen 12:1–3; Heb 11:8). It is wrong-headed, says Beckwith, to separate infusion from imputation, for we also become a new creation at conversion (Gal 6:15). Indeed, Paul presents justification as past (Rom 5:1–2; 8:24; 1 Cor. 6:11), present (1 Cor 1:18; 15:2; 2 Cor 2:15), and future (Rom 2:13; Gal 5:5; 1 Cor 3:15; 5:5; 1 Tim 2:15; 2 Tim 4:8, 18), according to Beckwith. And Rom 2:6–10, 13 teaches that “works done in faith by God’s grace contribute to our inward transformation and eventual justification.”<sup>12</sup>

All this shows that the distinction between justification and sanctification can't be sustained, Beckwith continues, for a number of texts *include* sanctification in justification (1 Cor 6:11; 2 Thess 2:13; Rom 8:3–4; Titus 3:5–8; Rom 6:19–23).<sup>13</sup> And when we add James (2:14–26) to the mix, the conclusion seems clear: the Protestant view that justification should be restricted to imputed righteousness doesn't accord with the Scriptures. The epistle of James fits nicely with the Catholic view that justification includes the notion that we are infused with righteousness.

Beckwith says good works don't earn entrance into heaven, but we do live out the grace we have received.<sup>14</sup> They don't “get you into heaven” but “get heaven into you,” says Beckwith.<sup>15</sup> He says heaven is ours by grace, and good works “prepare us for heaven.”<sup>16</sup>

Beckwith also wonders whether the differences between Protestants and Catholics are that great. After all, the Reformed think “*good works are a necessary condition for true justification*,”<sup>17</sup> and is such a contention really that different from the Roman Catholic view? Furthermore, assurance of salvation depends upon good works for most Protestants, and so practically speaking they have no more assurance than most Catholics.<sup>18</sup>

Where does the Protestant understanding of imputation come from philosophically? Beckwith says it hails from *nominalism*, a philosophy that claims that there aren't essences but only names.<sup>19</sup> Nominalism explains how righteousness is imputed, for it posits no transformation in the sinner, contrary to the Catholic view.

3. *A brief response to Beckwith.* It isn't my purpose here to set forth a detailed response to Beckwith. Still, a few things should be said in reply. The view of the early Church fathers should be consulted, but their perspectives aren't determinative. Protestants, after all, believe in *sola scriptura*. The Fathers disagreed too much (just like church leaders in the present time) to constitute our final authority. Still, Beckwith's presentation is actually overly simplistic, for there is significant evidence, as

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 102.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 103–104.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 105.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 109, italics his.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 109–10.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 110–12.

Nick Needham argues, that many of the earliest Fathers believed that justification was forensic and not transformative.<sup>20</sup> They lack clarity about imputation, but we shouldn't be surprised, for the matter wasn't being debated. Many of their comments and reflections could be interpreted to support imputation, as Thomas Oden claims,<sup>21</sup> and even if Oden overemphasizes his point, things aren't nearly as tidy and simple as Beckwith claims.

Beckwith's analysis also suffers from the failure to make distinctions. Yes, of course, believers are a new creation and are sanctified. No reputable Protestant theologian denies this, but Beckwith glides from this to saying that justification therefore means the infusion of righteousness. Such logic is a serious mistake. Believers are sanctified and justified, but it doesn't follow from this that justification and sanctification mean the same thing, or that justification denotes the infusion of righteousness. Such a notion has to be demonstrated from studying the term and from an exegesis of key texts. Beckwith lists texts where justification is correlated with sanctification, new creation, etc. The close association of two truths, though, doesn't prove that they have the same meaning. An illustration might help here. When believers are saved, they enjoy both redemption and reconciliation, but it doesn't follow from this that redemption and reconciliation *mean the same thing*. Beckwith says that justification must involve transformation since believers are a new creation, but why should we think that the latter term provides the definition for the former? The meaning of justification must be demonstrated by examining the term in its usage and context.<sup>22</sup> Parallel words don't necessarily mean that the terms used are synonyms. No Protestant says that justification is all there is to salvation; at the same time, the idea of justification comes from the metaphor of the law court and doesn't signify the infusion of righteousness. Nor is there any evidence that justification is a process. Beckwith makes this astonishing claim without substantiating it exegetically. Paul says, "work out your salvation" (Phil 2:12 NAS), but such a thing is never said about justification.

Related to this is Beckwith's charge that imputation is nominalism if there is no infusion of righteousness. The accusation is gratuitous. Why? Because Christ's righteousness is truly imputed to believers. We don't have a fictional imputation here. Believers really are counted righteous in Christ. The nominalist charge only works if imputation doesn't truly occur. Beckwith assumes imputation isn't a reality if believers don't become inherently righteous, but why should we believe him when he says that? Such an argument assumes what must be proven. Instead, Scripture teaches that Christ's righteousness is credited to us when we believe in him, and we truly are righteous in Christ; that righteousness isn't fictional, for we are truly united to Jesus Christ, and since Christ is ours, his righteousness is also ours.

Beckwith is a bit confusing on the role of works. On the one hand, he says salvation is based on works, and on the other he says that good works prepare us

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<sup>20</sup> Nick Needham, "Justification in the Early Church Fathers," in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges* (ed. Bruce L. McCormack; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006) 27–37.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas C. Oden, *The Justification Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 46–49.

<sup>22</sup> I defend this claim in the exegetical section of my forthcoming book on *sola fide*.

for heaven. But he needs to be clearer at this vital point. If justification is based on works, then the difference between Catholics and Protestants is stark. Works don't just prepare us for heaven; they function as one of the bases for entrance into heaven. Evangelical Protestants have rightly maintained that works can't be a basis for our right standing with God, for God demands perfect obedience, and hence our imperfect obedience can't be a ground for justification. It is better to construe our works as a necessary evidence for eternal life. Beckwith says that Catholics have no more reason to lack assurance than Protestants since we both think works are necessary. But the difference between works as a basis and works as evidence is significant. Words matter, and they mean something theologically and practically. Actually, Roman Catholic theology agrees! For it proclaims that we can't have assurance of salvation unless it is given by special revelation. In contrast to this understanding, Reformed Protestants believe that Scripture teaches that those who are justified can and should have assurance. There is a long theological tradition of Catholics and Protestants disagreeing on assurance. And I can say as one who was raised Catholic that there is a practical difference as well. We understand, if justification is based on works, why Roman Catholics teach that one can't have assurance. At the same time, we understand why Protestants enjoy assurance, for their salvation depends fundamentally on Christ's righteousness and forgiveness. Our works, since they are imperfect, could never be the basis of our justification, but they do constitute evidence that we are trusting in Jesus Christ. This debate isn't merely a theological one. When the great Presbyterian NT scholar J. Gresham Machen was dying he said, "I'm so thankful for active obedience of Christ; no hope without it."<sup>23</sup> Machen thought of his sins as he was dying, and he realized that he deserved God's judgment. But he faced death joyfully and confidently because he trusted in Christ's righteousness rather than his own.

A word should also be said about Gen 15:6. Beckwith points out that Abraham believed in Genesis 12 when he left his homeland and traveled to Canaan, and hence Gen 15:6 can't be his initial justification, for we know Abraham trusted God in Genesis 12. Hebrews 11:8 confirms that Abraham's obedience in Genesis 12 stemmed from his faith, for we read, "by faith Abraham obeyed." Beckwith raises a fascinating issue here, but it isn't clear that the text points to a process of justification. I would suggest that Gen 15:6 explains the reason Abraham was right with God, namely, his faith. Such a statement doesn't mean that every time someone exercises faith the process of justification continues. What is clarified is that a right relationship with God is ours through faith instead of by works. Ongoing acts of faith don't continue a process of justification, but they do verify the authenticity of the first act of faith.

4. *Conclusion.* Frank Beckwith's gifts as a scholar are apparent, and the impact of evangelicalism on his life is apparent to this day. Still, his understanding of justification isn't convincing. He wrongly maintains that the early church concurs with

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<sup>23</sup> See Ned Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (1954; repr. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 508.

his notion of justification, but the evidence isn't compelling, and there is significant evidence that many of the early Fathers understood justification to be forensic. Beckwith also mistakenly merges words together, as if the close association between new creation, sanctification, and justification demonstrates that justification includes the notion of transformation. Nor is his charge that imputation is nominalism compelling, for Christ's righteousness is really ours when we are united to him by faith. Finally, he wrongly interprets the biblical evidence to say that justification is on the basis of works; works function as the necessary evidence but never as the basis of our right standing with God.

#### IV. A CONCLUDING WORD

I will close with several observations. First, faith isn't merely a mental agreement—an intellectual assent to certain teachings or doctrines. Faith is never less than mental assent. At the same time, saving faith is more than mental assent. Saving faith embraces, leans on, and trusts in all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Justification is by faith alone because it relies in and rests upon Christ alone, crucified and risen for our deliverance from the wrath of God. Justification is by faith alone, for faith finds its joy in Christ alone, seeing him as the pearl of great price, the one who is more desirable than anything or anyone else. Faith rests in the Beloved, realizing that there is no salvation or peace or joy anywhere else.

Faith, secondly, recognizes that all the glory belongs to God alone. Faith saves, not because of our faith, but because of the one in whom we trust. The person in whom we trust saves us, and he is shown to be merciful and mighty, just and loving, so that his judging and saving righteousness are satisfied at the cross. We thus see from another angle why our faith isn't our righteousness, for such a scenario focuses on our faith instead of the one in whom we trust. This is not to deny for an instant that we must believe and persevere in the faith. Human beings aren't automatons or non-entities. Still, our faith doesn't ultimately save us, for salvation is of the Lord. It is the Lord who justifies us, and it is the Lord who is justified and vindicated in the justification of sinners. God is revealed to be the Holy One of Israel and the loving Savior of his people. The praise, honor, and glory belong to him alone for our salvation.

Finally, justification by faith alone can be considered from yet another angle. *Sola fide* makes sense of both Christian experience and Christian history. It makes sense of Christian experience, for we are all conscious of our ongoing sins and flaws. Such an admission doesn't deny the newness of our lives in Christ. We are a new creation in Christ Jesus and have been redeemed from our sins. We live in a new way because of the grace of God, so that we experience during our earthly sojourn love, joy, and peace. By the power of the Spirit we put to death the works of the flesh. We are no longer the old self we were in Adam but are new persons in Jesus Christ, and hence we put off the old person and put on the new. We can and do live in a way that is pleasing to God.

At the same time, we continue to be plagued by sin. Even our best actions are tainted by pride. We aren't entirely free of impatience, anger, bitterness, self-pity,

resentment, lust, etc. Indeed, sometimes these sins manifest themselves in our lives in remarkable ways. Our righteousness, even after we are Christians, can't qualify us to enter the new creation and God's presence, for, despite all the changes in us, we are still defiled by sin. How comforting to know that our righteousness doesn't lie ultimately in ourselves but in Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen one. He is our righteousness, and thus our hope for life isn't anchored to our achievements but to his grace. Faith doesn't save because it constitutes our righteousness. It saves because it unites us to Jesus Christ who is our righteousness and our only hope on the day of judgment.

The theology of justification also makes sense of the church of Jesus Christ. On the one hand, God has worked in the church throughout history. By his grace he has changed lives, so the church has been the channel of God's love and mercy and justice in the world. What stories will be told, stories that are hidden from us now to a large extent, of what the church has accomplished throughout its history! The church has fearlessly, courageously, and lovingly proclaimed the good news about Jesus to the ends of the earth, facing disease, death, and enemies. The church has stood up for truth and justice when the rest of the world has pursued the gods of economic prosperity, material comfort, and sexual pleasure.

And yet the record of the church, just like the record of our own lives, is mixed. The church has also been guilty of horrifying sins. It hasn't always stood for truth and for what is right. In the annals of the church's history, racism, political intrigue, persecution, and sexual abuse are also part of the story. Anyone who doubts such is blind to the history of the church. The church has been changed by the grace of God, but it is also a pilgrim people marked by imperfection.<sup>24</sup> It isn't yet without spot or blemish, and sometimes the blemishes are deeply embarrassing. But the righteousness of the church is found in Jesus Christ. He has washed us clean with the blood of his Son so that we can be citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.

I have worked in churches and Christian institutions of higher learning all my life. What a privilege and joy it has been. My colleagues and students have been a joy to work with, and when I hear stories of the difficulty others have in their working environment I give praise to God for the colleagues and students with whom I work. Still, it hasn't been paradise on earth. There is gossip, insensitivity, ambition to get to the top, intellectual pride, and political maneuvering. My interaction with some of the finest Christians I have ever known convinces me of justification by faith alone.

Finally, I know myself, at least to a limited degree. God by his grace has changed me and made me a new person. Because of the power of Christ and the transforming work of the Spirit, I have new affections and have lived a totally different life than I would have otherwise. And yet I still struggle with pride, bitterness, resentment, lust, etc. The fight with sin is not over, and I have had far too many defeats. My confidence on the last day will not rest on my transformation. I have too far to go to put any confidence in what I have accomplished. I rest on Jesus

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<sup>24</sup> Allen, *Justification and the Gospel* 153–78.

Christ. He is my righteousness. He is the guarantor of my salvation (Heb 7:22). I am justified by faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.