

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ESSENCE OF THE JUSTIFICATION

Justification dissolves the condition that sin created in man, which made him the “old man.”¹ It inaugurates in him the newness of the Life of holiness, manifesting the Justified into a new Creation. These two aspects of Justification, the forgiveness of sins and the creation of the newness of Life in Christ, is witnessed by Holy Scripture, especially in the Epistles of St. Paul. One may find verses in which the negative side of Justification is emphasised, but the double aspects of Justification is also underscored by the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church. The accentuation of the positive side of Justification does not contradict the fact that, even after the entrance into the newness of Life and the condition of Sanctification, the “carnally minded”² are not wiped away completely as some fragments remain within the Justified as the “desire to sin” (“concupiscentia”). This one understands when one takes into consideration that the “desire to sin” is not a mortal illness within man, but the last recovering part of one who has only just regained good health after a long period of illness. This “desire to sin” does not have the same nature of guilt as it did before. It is changed into a centre of maturity, growth and perfection. On the contrary, however, one must never forget that the inauguration of the Sanctification of the inner man must not be understood as transmission into a higher level of perfection within Sanctification, but as a Regeneration in the condition of infancy in Christ from which the Justified man is Called, through continuous and ceaseless struggles, to increase and perfect himself within the Justification.

Consequently, Justification that occurs in one moment, does not exclude the successive development of Sanctification and the increase of the newness of Life in Christ. Hence, the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church speak of the forgiveness of sins as being given equally to all and of the communion of the Holy Spirit as giving Gifts according to the faith of each person. The increase and progress in the newness of Holy Life depends on the struggle of each individual.³ The natural example of being “graft[ed] in,”⁴ offers some analogies through which the meaning of Justification and the growth of Holiness is clarified. In the “grafting in” of the new Life in all Justified men, it is necessary for the development of unsleeping, ceaseless struggle in order to increase and develop the seed of new Life, through which its natural qualities will not be demolished, but will become noble and holy. Accordingly, everyone who is Justified is Called. Therefore, following Justification one has to struggle against the residue of the “carnal minded,”⁵ and cultivate the seed of the new Life in Christ. In this struggle those who rush towards Perfection, do not cease to work for their Salvation. Inspired and being strengthened by the Holy Spirit in the hope that they have already been Justified, they can look up to the Heavenly Father as being “sons by adoption.”⁶ And it is true that, according to the assurance of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, those who have reached a higher level of Holiness, “cannot sin”⁷ anymore. Since they are travelling the path of higher virtue, not only are they required not to commit “sin which does not lead to death,”⁸

¹ Rom. 6:6. Ephes. 4:22. Col. 3:9.

² Rom. 8:6, 7.

³ Cf. Plato of Moscow, *Orthodox Teaching*, p. 94.

⁴ Rom. 11:16-24.

⁵ Rom. 8:6, 7.

⁶ Ephes. 1:5. Gal. 4:5. Rom. 8:23.

⁷ 1 John 3:9.

⁸ 1 John 5:16.

but also to avoid falling away irreparably into sin, making “it impossible” “to renew them again to repentance.”⁹ There is double assurance for all the Justified: first of all that God “is faithful and just to forgive”¹⁰ them; and secondly that they must always be watchful¹¹ not to fall from God’s Grace and Salvation.

1. The Two Sides of Justification

Through the Return and Justification, the new birth or Regeneration of the new personality is accomplished.¹² This is the beginning of Sanctification. It creates within us a new nature and develops our true personality, establishing us as temples of the Holy Spirit.¹³ It is the true Redemption of Christianity as well as the new Creation in Christ. Regeneration and Sanctification must have the double nature and even after the forgiveness of sins, they must assure the appearance of new Life. Justification, Regeneration and Sanctification are inseparable from one another. They are not divided in time. They coincide in such a way, that the newness of Life in Christ is implanted with forgiveness and the beginning of Sanctification. Therefore, no one should consider Justification as the absolution of the sinful deeds of the Justified man¹⁴ because, since they were done, they cannot be undone, for that which has occurred cannot be changed into that which has not occurred. Justification wipes out whatever has been caused by sin. Sinful deeds cause guilt and conditions that intensify the pre-existing condition of the ancestral guilt of the “old man.” Although on one hand Justification wipes out the guilt, on the other it wipes out the condition. Thus Justification consists of two elements: the forgiveness of guilt, being the negative side and the abolition and removal of the old condition, which is the beginning of the newness of Life in Christ through the restoration of the supernatural Union between the Justified man and God. This is the positive side. The first element is external. God covers the sinful deeds and by forgiving them, He no longer considers them. The second element, which is inseparable from the first, is the recreation of the sinner and his entrance into the sphere of Sanctification. The Grace of God, which is granted in Justification, creates not only simple psychological but real ontological change in man. We are not only considered simply Just by God, we become Just and receive Power to live according to Christ.¹⁵

This Truth is based on the Teachings of Holy Scripture, which speak of the wiping out¹⁶ and of the washing away of sins, Sanctification and Justification,¹⁷ of Regeneration, through which we are born of God,¹⁸ of the newness of Life that is offered to us,¹⁹ of the new Creation,²⁰ of Transfiguration of the Image of God which is in us,²¹ of our condition as co-

⁹ Heb. 6:4-6.

¹⁰ 1 John 1:9.

¹¹ Matth. 26:41. Mark 14:38. Luke 12:37. 1 Thess. 5:6-8. 1 Peter 5:8. Rev. 3:2-3; 16:15.

¹² Martensen, *Dogmatique*, p. 613.

¹³ 2 Corinth. 6:16.

¹⁴ Martensen, *Dogmatique*, p. 617.

¹⁵ Leeming, *Principles*, p. 4.

¹⁶ Acts 3:19.

¹⁷ 1 Corinth. 6:11.

¹⁸ John 1:13; 3:3-9. 1 Peter 1:23.

¹⁹ John 6:57; 10:28, 29. Gal. 2:20.

²⁰ Ephes. 2:8-10; 4:24.

²¹ 2 Corinth. 3:18. Rom. 8:29.

heirs of Christ,²² as sons of God,²³ as temples of the Holy Spirit,²⁴ as members of Christ's Body²⁵ and as "partakers of the *Divine Nature*."²⁶

Regeneration is the element that makes Justification a distinguished moral Miracle. Through it the "old man" is put to death and the seed of the newness of Life in Christ is planted upon his relics and developed in cooperation with the Grace of God, thereby making the Justified man a new Creation. The greatness of this new Creation can be understood when one takes into consideration that the first Creation was brought into being from nothingness, whereas with the new Creation it is essential to wipe out the old Creation, defeating corrupted nature, in order to build the glorious and eternal new Creation upon its ruins. Obviously for this reason, St. John the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, characterised the Baptism of the New Testament as being performed by "the Holy Spirit and Fire."²⁷ In reality, the Grace of the Holy Spirit, which overshadows the inner man through the effectiveness of His Fire, burns up the rottenness of sin and breathes the Life-giving Breath through which man is able to stand up in the newness of Life, becoming a "partaker of the *Divine Nature*."²⁸ Precisely this fact gives a supernatural nature to Justification.

If we compare Justification in Christ to primeval justification, which the first Adam lost because of the offence, we find the former to be more superior than the latter. This new Justification begins, moves and is perfected by the incorporation of the Justified man within Christ, with Whose Death and Resurrection²⁹ he is "united together."³⁰ He is also a living member receiving Life through the Grace of God, which Justifies and Sanctifies him. As a living member of Christ's Body, he is raised to an honour and holiness that is obviously higher than and superior to those which the first Adam enjoyed in Paradise. For those who are Justified in Christ grow "to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"³¹ and "beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."³² And it is true that in this present life Justification, which hides our Life in Christ and keeps us so that at His Appearance we "also will appear with Him in glory,"³³ does not render us the full harmony of our spiritual and bodily powers from the first moment, nor the possibility of avoiding death, general mortality, the illnesses of the body, nor the "carnal minded[ness]"³⁴ or the putting to death of sinful desires.³⁵ Our incorporation in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, obviously presents us closer to God, the results of which will be revealed at the glorious Manifestation of Christ, proving us to be as Christ shining "as the sun in the Kingdom" of our Father.³⁶

²² Rom. 8:17. Tit. 3:7.

²³ John 1:12. Gal. 4:6-7. Rom. 8:17.

²⁴ 1 Corinth. 3:16-17; 6:19. 2 Corinth. 6:16.

²⁵ 1 Corinth. 6:15; 10:17; 12:27. Rom. 12:4, 5.

²⁶ 2 Peter 1:4.

²⁷ Matth. 3:11. Luke 3:16. Acts 2:3-4.

²⁸ 2 Peter 1:4.

²⁹ Rom. 6:3-11.

³⁰ Rom. 6:5.

³¹ Ephes. 4:13.

³² 2 Corinth. 3:18.

³³ Col. 3:4.

³⁴ Rom. 8:6, 7.

³⁵ Col. 3:5.

³⁶ Matth. 13:43.

2. The Teachings of Holy Scripture On Justification

We must never forget, that in the Teachings of Holy Scripture, some terms are used regarding the forgiveness of sins, which consists of the negative side of Justification, and meaning the real wiping out of the sins. Thus the verbs “to blot out”³⁷ the iniquities or sins, as well as the verbs “to forgive,”³⁸ “to cancel,”³⁹ “to take away,”⁴⁰ “to remove,”⁴¹ “to wash,”⁴² “to cease” and “to clean”⁴³ are used.

Some verses manifest the forgiveness of sins as being “covered”⁴⁴ or as not being “remembered”⁴⁵ or not being “imputed.”⁴⁶ However, it is obvious that the above must be taken into consideration as the same meaning as in Acts 3:19, where it is clearly stated that Repentance and Return are before Justification and that the forgiveness of sins is their direct consequence. In other parts of Holy Scripture the positive side of Justification is stressed. Thus our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, speaks of the Regeneration of man: “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God,”⁴⁷ conjoining it to the Mystery of Holy Baptism. Hence, St. Paul the Apostle calls the Mystery of Baptism: “the Washing of Regeneration and Renewing of the Holy Spirit, Whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that having been Justified by His Grace we should become heirs according to the hope of Eternal Life.”⁴⁸ Elsewhere he teaches us by saying: “... do you not know that as many of us as were Baptised into Christ Jesus were Baptised into His Death? Therefore we were buried with Him through Baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of Life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His Death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His Resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”⁴⁹

From the above biblical verse, we are convinced by St. Paul’s teaching that during the Mystery of Holy Baptism on the one hand, the putting to death of the “old man” takes place, while on the other, our Regeneration and the newness of Life occurs. This is clearly manifested, as the Holy Apostle assures us, when we were “made alive together with Christ,”⁵⁰ being “crucified with Him,”⁵¹ having been “united together in the likeness of His Death”⁵² and when he proclaims that God “has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the Kingdom of the Son of His Love.”⁵³ However, Redemption and exit

³⁷ Psalm 50(51):1. Is. 43:25; 44:22. Acts 3:19.

³⁸ **Matth.** 6:12, 14; 9:2, 6; 18:27, 35. **Mark** 2:5, 7, 10; 3:48; 4:12; 11:25-26. **Luke** 5:20-21, 23-24; 7:47-49; 11:4; 17:3; 23:34. **John** 20:23. **Col.** 2:13. **James** 5:15. **1 John** 1:9; 2:12.

³⁹ Mich. 7:18.

⁴⁰ John 1:29.

⁴¹ Psalm 102(103):12.

⁴² Is. 1:16. Psalm 50(51). Acts 22:16.

⁴³ Psalm 50(51):2. Jek. 36:25. 1 John 1:7, 9.

⁴⁴ Psalm 31(32):1.

⁴⁵ Jer. 38:34. Heb. 10:17.

⁴⁶ 2 Corinth. 5:19.

⁴⁷ John 3:5.

⁴⁸ Tit. 3:5-7.

⁴⁹ Rom. 6:3-6.

⁵⁰ Ephes. 2:5.

⁵¹ Rom. 6:6.

⁵² Rom. 6:5.

⁵³ Col. 1:13.

from darkness is obviously inseparable from entrance into the Light. And, as correctly pointed out, with the rising of the Light, the darkness dissolves. Likewise and within man, as long as the Light of Divine Grace shines upon him, the darkness of sinful passions is dissolved and consequently the newness of Life is introduced to him.⁵⁴ This Teaching is also stressed by St. John the Apostle, Evangelist and Theologian, who presents a supernatural change, being “passed from death to Life,”⁵⁵ in every one who believes. The newness of Life in Christ cannot be established within us except and only when death, which was caused because of sin, is put to death.

Justification in Christ is inseparably joined to Sanctification, as manifested by St. Paul when he teaches us: “But you were Washed, but you were Sanctified, but you were Justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”⁵⁶ This reveals that not only has God forgiven our sins, but that He has Sanctified and Justified us. In other words, He has made us Just.⁵⁷

3. The Teachings of the Holy Fathers On Justification

The Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church, in agreement with Holy Scripture, proclaim that man “descends in the water dressed with his sins” and being “dead in sins, he then rises, being made alive in justice.” As the Holy Apostles on the Day of Pentecost “participated in Fire not catastrophic but saving, which vanishes the thorns of sins, and makes the soul bright,” likewise “it comes now” upon those who are to be Baptised and “the thorns of their sins to take away, their souls to make precious field and even to brighten,” because “the Baptism is not only for the forgiveness of sins, but for Grace of adoption.”⁵⁸

St. Basil the Great determines the Mystery of Holy Baptism as “the freedom of those in captivity, forgiveness of wages, death of sin, regeneration of soul, bright vestment, seal, charisma of adoption,” wherein man “without mother is reborn and being old and mortal, according to the desires of the deceit, he becomes young again and relives and turns into a true flower of youth.” He is “Regenerated” without being consumed. He is “reformed” without being crushed. He is “healed” without feeling pain.⁵⁹ Elsewhere he observes that: “Two goals are to be achieved in Baptism in order to abolished the body of sin ... to live in the Holy Spirit and to have His fruits in holiness, the water offers the image of death, as in the burial the body is buried; the Holy Spirit moves the Life-giving Power, and from the death of sin He Regenerates our souls to the new Life.”⁶⁰

St. Gregory the Theologian of Nazianzus briefly refers to Holy Baptism as cleansing “the depths,” being “the assistance to the first birth, working new beings instead of old and holy instead of the resented, without fire refining and rebuilding without crushing.”⁶¹

⁵⁴ Androutsos, *Dogmatique*, p. 232.

⁵⁵ 1 John 3:14.

⁵⁶ 1 Corinth. 6:11.

⁵⁷ St. John of Damascus, *To 1 Corinthians 6:11*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 95, 616.

⁵⁸ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, III, § 16; XVII, § 15; XX, § 62, in Migne, *P.G.*, 33, 441-443, 988, 1081.

⁵⁹ St. Basil, the Great, *To holy Baptism*, Homily 13, §§ 5 and 3, in Migne, *P.G.*, 31, 433 and 429.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, *About the Holy Spirit*, 15, § 35, in Migne, *P.G.*, 32, 129.

⁶¹ St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *To holy Baptism*, Homily 40, § 8, in Migne, *P.G.*, 36, 368.

Origen compares the **B**aptism of the Lord to that of St. John the Forerunner and Baptist, and observes that “it was not bodily the **B**aptism” of the Lord, “which fills the repentant with the Holy Spirit and vanishes through **D**ivine **F**ire all material and **consumes** the earthly.” He characterises “the bath through water” as a “symbol of cleansing of the soul, which washes away all stain of evil,” and as “the beginning and source of the **D**ivine **C**harismata,” “bath of **R**egeneration with **R**enewal by the Holy Spirit.”⁶²

St. John Chrysostom asks: “How and in which way **were** they born from God?” And he answers: “Through the **W**ashing of **R**egeneration and **R**enewal of the Holy Spirit.” “We were called sons, being born from **A**bove and as one may say, **R**egenerated.” Addressing the **C**atechumen **he** describes the **M**ysterious **A**ction of **B**aptism. **He** observes **that** **B**aptism “does not simply forgive our sins, neither simply cleans us from the iniquities, but as though we are born from **A**bove. For and from **A**bove **He** creates us and makes, not from earth forming us again, but creating us from a different element of the nature of water. Not simply **He** cleans the vessel, but completely refines it again.”. He also says that “Our nature which was **affected** by the virus of sin and received much smoke from our iniquities, lost its beauty. **God**, **Who** created it from the beginning, received it from **A**bove and refined it and **through it into the refining water** and sending the **Grace** of the Spirit instead of fire, afterwards made us new ... **He** brings us with great glory, crushing the old man, creating the new greater in glory.”⁶³

St. Cyril of Alexandria teaches that **B**aptism cleanses us from all stain. **I**t works us into holy temples of God and makes us “partakers of His **D**ivine **N**ature through the participation of the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁴

St. Augustine, explaining the words of St. Paul in Romans, **states**: “But to him who does not work but believes on Him **Who** **J**ustifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness”⁶⁵ **and he** observes that “God **J**ustifies the ungodly not only forgiving whatever he has done, **but granting** to him His **L**ove in order that he will turn away from evil and do good through the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁶

St. John of Damascus observed **d** that “because man is of two (elements) of soul and of body, God gave him double the purification, through water and the Spirit, and by the Spirit **He** renews in us the ‘in the image and likeness,’ by the water through the **Grace** of the Holy Spirit **He** cleans the body of sin and frees us from mortality.” He also adds that “through **B**aptism we receive the beginning of the Holy Spirit and the start of a new **L**ife of **R**egeneration begins and a **S**eal and a **P**rotection and an **E**nlightenment.”⁶⁷

⁶² Origen, *To John*, IV, 17, in Migne, 14, 257.

⁶³ St. John Chrysostom, *To John*, Homily 14, § 2, in Migne, P.G., 59, 94. Ibid, *Catechesis*, I, § 3, in Migne, P.G., 49, 227.

⁶⁴ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *To Luke* 22:8, in Migne, P.G., 72, 904. Ibid, *Against Julianus*, VII, in Migne, P.G., 76, 880. Ibid, *To Psalm* 50(51):12, in Migne, P.G., 76, 1096. Ibid, *To Isaiah*, VI, 2, in Migne, P.G., 70, 936.

⁶⁵ Rom. 4:5.

⁶⁶ St. Augustine, *Opus imperfectus contra Julianum*, II, 165, in Migne, P.L., 45, 1212.

⁶⁷ St. John of Damascus, *Catechesis*, IV, 9, in Migne, P.G., 94, 1121.

4. The Remaining Relics of Desire After Justification

We must not forget that the desire (“*concupiscentiam*”), which, after receiving Holy Baptism, appears to remain within the Regenerated man, was not something evil⁶⁸ from the beginning, for its “*root is from nature; to desire is natural.*” “*Greed, if not controlled,*” changes into sin, whereas desire by nature “*is not a sin, but when it falls into greed, and abandons the laws of the lawful wedding, and turns to alien women, then it becomes adultery, not because of the desire, but because of the greed within it.*”⁶⁹

St. Augustine stressed that “*the desire is natural*” and confessed “*that man was born with it.*”⁷⁰ Theodoretus of Cyrus, interpreting Romans 6:12, observed that “*He orders us ... not to obey the desire which greedily enlightens the desires of the body,*” “*... for the movement and the annoyance of the passions are natural for us, but the act of those which are disapproved, depends on one’s will.*” Since desire is natural, whatever made it sinful is the unrestrained, which came from the first offence.⁷¹

According to the above the first-created, before the Offence “*were not flamed by the desire, not being besieged by other passions, neither had any need of clothing.*” After the Offence, “*the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are contrary to one another.*”⁷² “*He now calls flesh the mind, because it deals with the things of the flesh*” and “*struggles against the higher thoughts of the soul, and divides her*” through the “*lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life,*” which “*are not from the Father, but from the world.*”⁷³ This desire radiates in all directions through sin, which is within us and expands the division in the inner man, pushing him “*not to do the things (he) wishes,*” but the evil which he does not want and to conduct “*in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh.*”⁷⁴ Elsewhere St. Paul stressed that: “*... we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do well. For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?*”⁷⁵ Thus the terms “*desire*” and “*desire of the flesh*” and “*concupiscentiam*” took on the bad meaning of the unstoppable sinful desire of the old man, “*who follows behind the flesh in desire to soil him*” and to enslave the soul to “*the lust of uncleanness*”⁷⁶ of the flesh. This sinful desire, since it enslaved man’s mind to the “*carnal*

⁶⁸ Dositheus of Jerusalem, *Confession*, ch. 6, p. 31.

⁶⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *To Statues*, Homily 19, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 49, 195. Ibid, *To Romans*, Homily 13, § 1, in Migne, *P.G.*, 60, 507-508.

⁷⁰ St. Augustine, *Contra Julianum*, I, and VII, in Migne, *P.L.*, 44, 89.

⁷¹ Theodoretus of Cyrus, *To Romans*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 82, 168.

⁷² Gal. 5:17.

⁷³ 1 John 2:16.

⁷⁴ Ephes. 2:3. Gal. 5:17.

⁷⁵ Rom. 7:14-24.

⁷⁶ 2 Peter 2:10.

minded[ness],⁷⁷ is in “*enmity against God*”⁷⁸ and leads to death, because it made the mind thick” and the “*earthly urge*” drags the will into the slavery of sin because “*of the desire of unlawful deeds.*”⁷⁹

The term “*desire*” also has a good meaning, signifying the Sanctified desire for good things and virtues of the soul. Thus our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, “*with fervent desire*” had wanted to eat the Passover meal with His disciples before He Suffered.⁸⁰ St. Paul wrote to the Philippians: “*For I ... having a desire to depart and be with Christ,*”⁸¹ “*endeavoured more eagerly to see the faces with great desire*”⁸² of those who love Christ in Thessalonica. The Psalmist’s “*soul breaks with longing*” for God’s “*judgment at all times.*”⁸³ It is obvious that in the Holy Mystery of Baptism and in the Regenerated man one might expect not the uprooting and vanishing of desire, but its relaxation and Sanctification. In the Regeneration of the Baptised, one enters into the condition of Sanctification as an infant in Christ and as one recovering from a long and mortal illness. It is natural for one to bear the scars of a cured illness, which in good time and through spiritual struggle will be healed completely, growing in all holiness and being perfected in Christ. It is also natural that the old desire, although at the time of Baptism casting aside its sinful nature, has some remaining tendency that is a healthy sensitivity rather than a sinful condition and a sign of guilt.

St. Augustine correctly distinguished between the desire, the force or the event of the desire (“*actus*”) and the guilt (“*reatus*”). Concerning the Action of the Holy Mystery of Baptism upon it, he supported the opinion that Baptism leaves it to exist as an act or impulse (“*quod actum*”), which is not considered as guilt.⁸⁴ Clarifying his opinion elsewhere, he observed that the desire is sinful among those who are not Baptised, whereas it expels its sinful nature from those who accept Baptism. However, according to St. Augustine, the desire is like a wound from an arrow: the arrow has been removed but the wound remains.⁸⁵

Desire in the Regenerated man is not an illness of the soul, but some kind of simple sensitivity, which has been cured. According to St. Paul the Apostle, “*because through Baptism*” we are “*Crucified with*” Christ,⁸⁶ buried with Him and Regenerated in Him,⁸⁷ the Mystery of Holy Baptism is called “*the Washing of Regeneration*” and “*the Renewing of the Holy Spirit.*”⁸⁸ For this reason we must never forget that the nature of the “*carnal minded*” person who is still under sin and not yet Baptised, differs from that of the Baptised and Regenerated. For the one who is not Regenerated and not Justified, the carnal mindedness and the desire are symptoms of illness that still exists. The “*carnal minded*” desire of the non-Baptised, in quantity and in quality, differs from that which exists in the Justified man in

⁷⁷ Rom. 8:6, 7.

⁷⁸ Rom. 8:7. James 4:4.

⁷⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *To Genesis*, Homily 15, § 4, in Migne, *P.G.*, 53, 123. Ibid, *To Romans*, Homily 13, in Migne, *P.G.*, 60, 516. St. Ecumenius, *To Romans*, in Migne, *P.G.*, 118, 473.

⁸⁰ Luke 22:15.

⁸¹ Phil. 1:23.

⁸² 1 Thess. 3:17.

⁸³ Psalm 118(119):20.

⁸⁴ St. Augustine, *De nupt. et concup.*, I, c. 25, in migne, *P.L.*, 44, 450. Ibid, *Contra duas epistolarum pelag.*, I, c. 13, § 27, in migne, *P.L.*, 44, 563. Ibid, *Contra Julianum*, VI, c. 17, § 51, in migne, *P.L.*, 44, 853. Ibid, *Opus imperfectus contra Julianum*, IV, 61, in migne, *P.L.*, 45, 1375.

⁸⁵ Ibid, *De Trinitate*, XIV, c. 17, § 23, in migne, *P.L.*, 42, 1054.

⁸⁶ Rom. 6:3-6.

⁸⁷ Col. 2:12.

⁸⁸ Tit. 3:5.

whom it remains as a remnant of a cured illness. The desire or **carnal mindedness** has expelled its miasmatic power.

The cured will of the **Justified does** not have absolute authority over all the movements of the body and soul, but in vain the “*old man*” conspires against the new man in Christ. Man’s new will, which is strengthened, can gain victory over the rebellious activities and is not polluted **or** enslaved by the “*old man*.” The desire of the flesh lost its miasmatic and poisonous attributes, which were moved from the inner to the external **man**.⁸⁹ **However**, it is possible in times of weakness to fall **into** various sins. These **occur** daily **but are** weak and unable to drive us away from God **or** to wipe away the newness of **Life**. **The Justified will** always turn to **Repentance** and, through the Mystery of Holy Repentance and Confession, **will cleanse their souls** from any stain of sin **committed** after **Regeneration** and **Justification**.

The desire of the flesh has limited sphere and influence. Through **the restriction exercised** upon the **Justified**, **it offers opportunities** for **glory, humbleness** or repentance. It offers **opportunities** for glory, because **through necessity, as one** resists sin, **one** achieves new triumphs against evil, **making one** stronger in virtue and **becoming** more loving to God. It also offers reasons for humility, because **through daily** sins it creates within us feelings of repentance **leading to watchfulness, and instilling a fear of** not **repeating** the same sins and **thereby returning** to our “*own vomit*,” as St. Peter said: “*For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’*”⁹⁰

Consequently, the desire of the flesh **that** remains within the **Justified** man, since he does not relax **his guard**, is unable to pollute him, and even **becomes** the reason for him to cultivate virtues, gaining victory **over sinful** passions and desires of the flesh.⁹¹

5. The **Positive Side of the Justification as a Starting Condition**

It is necessary to **single out** another aspect of the positive side of **Justification**. **Just as the** abolishment of the sinful condition in the **Work of Justification**, does not at once **bring** the “*perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*,”⁹² **neither does** **Regeneration** and the beginning of the newness of **Life** in Christ. **Man’s** **Regeneration**, which takes place **at his Justification, is at first** “*as to babes in Christ*.”⁹³ He is called, through his persistence in faith and through his struggles, to put the last **remnants of carnal mindedness** to death, to exercise love and all virtues, **increased** through many trials and tribulations,⁹⁴ and become a perfect man in the Lord Jesus.

⁸⁹ Moehler, “Symbolique”, v. I, p. 157.

⁹⁰ 2 Peter 2:20-22.

⁹¹ Moehler, “Symbolique”, v. I, p. 157. Damalas, *About Principles*, pp. 151 and 188.

⁹² Ephes. 4:13.

⁹³ 1 Corinth. 3:1.

⁹⁴ James 1:2, 12. 2 Tim. 3:12.

The newly born in Christ bears within him the seed of the newness of Life and the new Creation, as the seed of a tree bears within it the whole tree, or a new born baby bears the strength of the mature man. The newborn in Christ is required to continue increasing and progressing in the condition of Justification because, although from the first moments of Justification the immortal seed of Sanctification and the newness of Life in Christ was sown within him, he is called to cooperate with Divine Grace in order to become perfect in Holiness.

Since the faithful was “buried with Christ in Baptism”⁹⁵ and “united together in the likeness of His death,”⁹⁶ “he was united with Him through faith” and consequently, because of his Communion with Christ Whom at his Baptism he had “put on,”⁹⁷ he becomes one with Him and is Sanctified. But this new condition of Sanctification must be shown in the life of continuous Holiness, which cannot be understood without continuous struggle by the one who is Justified. He must struggle to become completely free from carnal mindedness and to submit himself day by day to Justice. As before his Justification he submitted to evil, which brought him to the slavery of sin, likewise having been freed completely from the bondage of sin, he is called to increase in justice and goodness, in order that he will do so as though he is enslaved to Justice. In other words, he will do so naturally, without any effort and automatically, as breathing and living within the atmosphere of virtue. The essence of Sanctification consists of continuous Regeneration and the complete reformation of the whole man. According to this, Divine Grace, dwelling in man, makes “the spiritual mind”⁹⁸ of the Holy Spirit permanent within him and replaces the “carnal mind” of the flesh, establishing within him faith and love, creating an aversion to evil as well as a repugnance and hatred of sin.

The Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church stress that “the forgiveness of sins is given to all equally, the Communion of the Holy Spirit is granted according to one’s faith. If you do little, little you will receive; if you work hard, your reward will be great.” The Work of Divine Grace in Justification is equal within all men. The further increase and progress within the new condition, in which the Justified entered, depends on and results from his own efforts and struggles.⁹⁹

St. John of Damascus observed that “the forgiveness of sins is given to all the same through Baptism, the Grace of the Spirit according to the analogy of the faith and cleanness. Now through Baptism we receive the beginning of the Holy Spirit and the start of another Life begins within us the renewal and seal and keeping and enlightenment. It is necessary that by all means to keep safely each other from the pollution of evil deeds, in order not to turn to our own vomit as the dog and become again slaves to sin.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Col. 2:12.

⁹⁶ Rom. 6:5.

⁹⁷ Gal. 3:27.

⁹⁸ Rom. 8:6.

⁹⁹ St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis*, I, § 5, in Migne, P.G., 33, 377. Frangopoulos, *Christian Faith*, pp. 171-174.

¹⁰⁰ St. John of Damascus, *Exposition. About faith and baptism*, IV, 82, 9, in Migne, P.G., 94, 1121.

6. The Positive Side of Justification as the “Grafting In” of the Newness of Life

The phenomenon of the “*grafting in*,” which St. Paul uses in his Epistle to the Romans,¹⁰¹ in relation to the Calling of the nations and the replacement of Israel by them, offers similarities and analogies that clarify the meaning of Justification and Regeneration. The “*grafting in*” refers to when the node of a cultivated tree is grafted onto a wild tree and grows into a strong new plant. However, if the grafted node is not carefully nurtured, the branches of the original, natural plant will regenerate and cause the graft to become weak and withered. Nevertheless, the node is not expelled and as soon as the wild branches are pruned back, it recovers and grows without necessity of re-grafting.

In a similar way this occurs in Justification. The seed of the newness of Life is grafted in the faithful by Divine Grace. It is necessary for the faithful to remain alert, in order to avoid the influence of the “*old man*” who hides within his soul. But even if the Justified neglects the Work of his Salvation, the node of new Life in Christ is not removed nor dies, but remains. In the event of the recovery of the indolent faithful, it is unnecessary for him to be re-Baptised, because the neglected nodule of the newness of Life in Christ recovers its Life-giving powers of Perfecting and Sanctifying him. Although in Justification the carnal mindedness remains without guilt and different in its nature, at the end it is also put to death while the Justified is Sanctified from his roots. Hence St. Paul using the example of the ‘*grafting in*’ presents it as working “*contrary to nature.*” According to St. Paul, the “*wild olive tree*” is grafted “*into a cultivated olive tree,*” the root of which “*is Holy,*” and in it the “*wild olive tree*” becomes a “*partaker of the root and the fatness of the olive tree.*”¹⁰²

In Regeneration and Sanctification, the natural character of the Justified, man is freed from his bad nature while his personality remains within its natural attributes even after his Sanctification. The Grace of God does not remove but restores nature. The wild fig tree, which was previously without fruit, becomes fruitful but never changes into an olive tree or a vine. Nature is Sanctified but never falsified. The natural character of each man remains, even though Sanctified by the operational Grace of the Holy Spirit. Through the mystical pains of Regeneration “*Christ is formed in us.*”¹⁰³ Christ takes a specific form in each and every individual separately, for “*in Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in Baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God.*”¹⁰⁴

7. The Dangers and Struggles After Justification

According to the above, it is obvious that even after man’s Justification and the Regeneration in Baptism, all who are Baptised are called to struggle against the remnants of carnal mindedness, being alert and awake, so as not to be deceived by the “*old man.*” They must cultivate the seed of the newness of Life in Christ that the Holy Spirit implanted in their souls in order to progress in holiness and virtue. Seeing that the faithful are confronted by temptations from the vanity and desires of this world in their struggles to grow in

¹⁰¹ Rom 11:16-24.

¹⁰² Rom. 11:16-17

¹⁰³ Gal. 4:19.

¹⁰⁴ Col. 2:11-12.

Justification, “for the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh,”¹⁰⁵ they must remain steadfast and watchful so as not to fall away from Salvation, working out their “own Salvation with fear and trembling,”¹⁰⁶ “for all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the Will of God, abides forever.”¹⁰⁷ They must have unshakeable faith that in Baptism the “old man” was put to death while the new Life of Holiness was renewed and they must never doubt the Kindness and Love of the Heavenly Father and the sufficiency of the Sacrifice of Christ for the Salvation of the whole world. Man’s free will must also offer its part in achieving the Salvation in Christ.

Thus, all who have been Justified, those who struggle, have a certain sense of security or insecurity - the sense of security being strengthened as they realise that God, Who Justifies and Sanctifies them, is faithful, whereas the sense of insecurity is created by the realization of the weakness of man’s nature and the possibility of falling from Salvation. However, no one should consider this insecurity as troubling enough to cast the peace of Christ away from the soul of the faithful, plunging it into a deep, desperate anxiety. On the contrary, it secures the Justified by preserving them in continuous Communion with God, from Whom they receive help and Grace, protecting them from any kind of fall, and in addition, it becomes the centre of spiritual work.¹⁰⁸ Thus any anxiety is cast away from the soul of the Justified by the secure hope that the Mercy and Love of God will never abandon them. Because of this insecurity, one is always compelled to wakefulness and alertness, pushing aside laziness, unconcern and indifference that can lead one to mortal sleep. “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”¹⁰⁹

This insecurity is reduced when the faithful progress in holiness and are raised to higher levels of virtue, where the remnants of carnal mindedness are completely put to death and wiped out within. The temptations, too, are put aside and one does not waver between good and evil, as in the beginning of one’s new life. The efforts to achieve greater progress in holiness never ends because “the boundaries of holiness are not of this world, but in after life.”¹¹⁰ St. John Chrysostom assures us saying: “Such is the Grace of God. It does not end, it does not know finishing, but moves always towards greater things.” “When we die, then we understand these things more clearly and we enjoy greater things.” And the Justified become “partakers of the Divine Nature.”¹¹¹ We must never, however, forget that the Holiness of God is infinite, and no matter how much the faithful struggle to “become holy, according to Him Who called him to ‘be holy,’¹¹²” they will always lack in holiness, since they are far more limited and having flesh in this life, it becomes naturally impossible to vest themselves completely with Divine Holiness. Hence, even those who reached higher levels of holiness, preserve within them the understanding of their imperfection and confess with St. Paul that “it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.”¹¹³ And elsewhere: “Not that I have already attained, nor am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁵ Gal. 5:17.

¹⁰⁶ Phil. 2:12.

¹⁰⁷ 1 John 2:16-17.

¹⁰⁸ Damalas, *About Principals*, p. 188.

¹⁰⁹ Matth. 26:41.

¹¹⁰ Oosterzee, *Dogmatics*, p. 661.

¹¹¹ 2 Peter 1:4.

¹¹² 1 Peter 1:16.

¹¹³ Gal. 2:20.

¹¹⁴ Phil. 2:12.

The answer to the question: “*can those who are reborn from God fall from Grace?*” is given by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews: “... *it is impossible for those who were once Enlightened, and have tasted the Heavenly Gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God and the Powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*”¹¹⁵ When one recalls that even the Angels who were created Holy, fell, how can it be possible to exclude the fall of any Justified man?

St. Basil the Great considers **the prayers for the Just as being** of great importance **so** that his will and **intention** may remain straight and steadfast, being assisted by God’s **Guidance and** in order that he will not flee from the **Truth**, nor be harmed by the enemy of the **Truth** who twists the **Doctrines**.¹¹⁶

St. John the Apostle, Evangelist and Theologian, assures us that “*whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.*”¹¹⁷ Firstly, the **Justified** manifests measures of **the condition** of **Regeneration** and **Sanctification** **that** are permanently within the **Justified** man. Secondly, the terms “*he does not*” and “*he cannot*” must not be taken **as** an absolute meaning, but in a relative way, in **that** “*he does not*” manifest “*that which does not exist from the intention*” **whereas** “*he cannot*” **signifies** not “*the natural weakness*” **nor** “*that the nature is unable to sin, but that since he who is born from God, keeps the Grace of birth through a clean life, he cannot sin.*” And it is true that those who have moved to **a** higher level of **Sanctification** do not feel the impulse or pressure **of carnal mindedness**. Within them there is established a strong and stable habit **of** good and aversion towards evil, **so** that one may say **they** are morally unable to fall. Nevertheless, since one **carries weak** flesh, it is not possible to **exclude any** fall or to be alienated from **Salvation**.

¹¹⁵ Heb. 6:4-6.

¹¹⁶ St. Basil, the Great, *To Psalm 7*, § 6, in Migne, *P.G.*, 29, 241.

¹¹⁷ 1 John 3:9.