SERMONS UPON THE EPISTLE OF SAINT PAUL TO THE

GALATIANS

JOHN CALVIN

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Sermons upon the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians.

by John Calvin

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The prayer which M. John Calvin made ordinarily before the beginning of his Sermons.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE Sir William Cecil,

Knight, Baron of Burleygh, Lord High Treasurer of England, Master of the Queen's Majesty's Courts of Wards and Liveries, Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, and one of her Highness's most honorable Privy Council, continued health, with prosperity and increase of honor.

Your Lordship's great goodness diverse times showed towards me, abiding still fresh in my remembrance, to my no small comfort, calls upon me continually to show some token of thankfulness for the

same. For needs I must confess that it hath uttered itself many and sundry ways, and that, (if I may with your Lordship's good leave say as I think,) not without a certain friendly or rather fatherly care of my well-doing, especially in that long continued suit of mine in the Exchequer, where your just favor (I mean in respect of the just case, and not of any desert of mine) procuring me credit and help to the furtherance of my matter, hath been the very maintenance and safety of my right, which else had been trodden underfoot by the over mightiness of mine adversaries. And here it behooveth me also to acknowledge, the upright administration of Justice extended with favor in that so intricate case, both by the Judges and Chancellor, and by all other the Queen's Majesty's officers of that Court. For after many hearings of the matter with great patience and circumspection, and with showing of such records for both parties, as were known or thought to make for the manifesting of the case: at length when the matter could not prove too speedy end by reason of certain difficulties and incidents falling thereinto: about the first entrance of your honor into the office of High Treasurer, it was by consent of the Court put in compromise to such persons as both parties are very well contented with. By means whereof being discharged of my former continual cares, travails, expenses, and troubles, I had the freer liberty to follow this mine accustomed exercise of translating, which me thought was to me a singular benefit. And my rehearsing of these things is not to diminish the thank which I owe to your honor, by interlacing of other men's doings: but to show to how many I am beholden through your goodness, and that I am loath to be unmindful of my duty towards you or them, so far as opportunity may well serve to witness the same.

Now then, to the intent I might the better accomplish this my desire towards your honor, I bethought me of the counsel of the wise Philosopher Seneca in his books of Benefiting, the effect whereof

consisteth chiefly in these three points: namely, that the thing which is done or bestowed to utter thankfulness withal, ought to be very good, very durable, and very acceptable to the party that is to receive it. That the two former points are in this work, which I (upon trust of your Lordship's former goodness and accustomed favor) do take upon me to dedicate to your name, and that the third point also shall accompany it: the reasons that persuade me are these. The things that of their own nature tend only to the welfare and benefit of man, must of necessity be very good: and of the things that are good, those are always best, which may redound to the commodity of most persons, and which being once possessed, cannot be taken away against the will of the possessor: Seeing then that the foundation of this work is a parcel of holy scripture, and that (as says Saint Paul) all Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to amend, and to furnish men with righteousness, that they may be perfect and forward to all good works: inasmuch that it is the power of God tending to the welfare of all that believe, both Jews and Gentiles: and therewithal contains promises not only of this present life, but also of the life to come: it cannot but be of the selfsame nature, property, and operation that the rest of the scriptures are, because (as says Saint Peter) the scripture came not by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the holy Ghost. And hereupon springeth another commendation to the proof of the goodness of this work, that the Author thereof is God the sovereign goodness itself, and not man. To be short, the same reasons may serve also to prove the durableness thereof. For besides that God himself protests that his word shall endure forever, and that the very heavens shall perish before any one jot of his sayings take not effect: inasmuch as this book contains not worldly uncertain and perishing, but heavenly, assured and everlasting benefits: nor things available to few, but profitable to all unless they themselves be to blame: and moreover that God is the Author thereof: it must by all

likelihood needs continue with other of the same sort, at leastwise among the godly, not for a day or two, but so long as men shall have need to be edified and strengthened in Christ.

Which thing will appear yet more plainly, if besides these generalities which it hath common with all the residue of holy scripture, we consider the work more peculiarly and nearly in itself, which consisteth of two parts, to wit, of Text, and of exposition of the Text. The substance of the text of this whole Epistle to the Galatians, is this: that when God hath once vouchsafed to enlighten men with the true knowledge of his gospel, it behooveth them to stand steadfast in the truth which they have embraced, & to show by their godly conversation that they be the children of light, so as they neither turn back again as renegates or as swine to the mire, nor be carried too and fro with every blast of doctrine like wavering reeds, or like little children that are soon weary of the things that they have, and fond of every new thing that they see. Hereoutof spring other more particular points, concerning free justification by faith, concerning Christian liberty, concerning the abolishing of Ceremonies, concerning the force and effect of the law, and concerning the pure conversation of Christian life. For the order which the writers of holy Scripture observe well-nigh in all their Preachings and exhortations, is first to lay the foundation of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and afterward to build up the works of charity and true holiness of life, without the which, faith is not only naked, but also dead. Thus much concerning the Text and the contents of the same. The exposition whereof being uttered in Sermons by that learned and godly minister of Christ Master Calvin (whose own doings tending always to the benefit of God's Church, may yield him far more credit than any commendation of mine can do) containeth not any diverse or contrary matter, but the same things laid forth in more ample and

plain manner, applied to common capacity, even of such as are of meanest understanding: by means whereof a greater number may reap profit and commodity by them. In respect whereof they be right necessary to be set before our eyes, and to be beaten into our minds at all times, and chiefly in these days, wherein it is to be seen that many, yea, and which is the more pity, too many, being after a sort overglutted with the long continuance of the heavenly Manna, begin to loathe the sweet food of their souls, and to long again after the flesh pots and garlic of Egypt. In so much that some thinking it enough to be bare hearers or idle professed and disputers of the Gospel, without yielding any fruit beseeming their profession, verify the saying of the Prophet Isaiah in honoring God with their lips, whereas their heart is far off from him, and show themselves to be but sowers unto corruption, as says Saint Paul in this present Epistle. Some not professing only, but also glorying in Papistry, the sink of all sin and wickedness, think themselves well apaid that they may be enemies in heart and religion, to God and all godliness and godly men: And othersome being as it were of no religion, and therefore imagining all things to be lawful which they like of, are carried headlong into all manner of looseness by their blind and unbridled affections, and like brute beasts could find in their hearts that all cleanness of mind and body (without which, no man shall ever see God) were so utterly abolished, as the very name of it might never be heard of: whereas in the mean while those few whom the fear of God and the desire of heavenly immortality draws to a more heedful wariness of eschewing the things that may impeach God's glory and the free proceeding of his Gospel, or hinder and offend their neighbor, are in the eyes of some persons not only despised but also blamed: verily as who should say it were a fault to endeavor to be faultless.

Forasmuch therefore as this work (like as all others of the same author) tendeth to the benefit of the Christian common weal, by putting us in remembrance of our duty both to God and man, the continual minding and practicing whereof is the ground of all good order, and the very pathway to perfect felicity: I doubted not but it should be the better accepted of your honor, whose whole care and travail is continually employed to the welfare of this Realm, through the maintenance of sound Religion and the conservation of public tranquility, by the protection and appointment of our most gracious sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth, whom as God hath made the Mother of his Church among us, the comfort of all Christendom, and the very pillar, life, and soul of our English commonwealth: so I beseech him that we and our posterity may long enjoy her blessed reign. To the furtherance of which things I have here presently bestowed (and by God's grace shall not cease hereafter to bestow) my faithful travail, that the wavering sort may in all goodness be confirmed, the weaklings strengthened, the ignorant instructed, the negligent warned, the forward encouraged, the slothful pricked forth, the corrigible amended, and the willful and stubborn sort left utterly without excuse. And so praying to God for the long and prosperous continuance of your good Lordship: and of all other noble Counsellors and men of Honor, by whom God advanceth the glory of his Gospel among us: I refer this labor of mine with all humbleness to your favorable acceptation.

Written at my lodging in the forestreet without Cripplegate the 14th of November, 1574.

Your honor's most humble always to command, Arthur Golding.

The Argument of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians:

IT is well enough known in what part of the lesser Asia the Galatians dwelt, and how far their Country reached, but as concerning their original, and the place from whence they came first, the ancient Authors are not all of one mind. They all agree that they were Gauls, yea and thereof they bore their name: for they were called Galgreekes, of a word compounded of Gal and Greek. But the thing that hangs in doubt, is out of which quarter of Galland they came. The Geographer Strabo thinks that those Gauls which were called Tectosages, came out of the Country of Province, and othersome say they came out of Gaul Celtike, which is the commoner opinion. Howbeit for as much as Pliny makes the people of Amiens to be next neighbors to the Tectosages: and all Authors well-nigh agree that the Tolistobogians were their companions which dwelled about the Rhine: I take it to be most likely that they were of Gaul Belgike which is the lowest Country upon the river of Rhine towards the English Sea. For the Tolistobogians held the Country that is now called Cleveland and Brabant. The common error (in mine opinion) grew upon this, that a company of the Tectosages being cast upon the Country of Province, took possession of it, and retaining still their old name, conveyed over the same to the Country which they had conquered. And that is the thing which Ausonius the Poet of Bordeaux means when he says, unto the Tectosages, which were first named Belgians. For he called them Belgians, and does us to understand that they were erst named Tectosages in stead of Tectosages. Whereas Caesar places them in the black Forest, which in those days was called Hercinia, or Hertswald: I believe it happened by shifting of places, because they were retired thither out of their own Country: which thing may be gathered by Caesar's own

saying, where he makes mention of them. But we have spoken enough of their original for this time. Pliny reports of the Galatians which dwelt in that part of Asia, which was called after their name, that like as they were divided into three principal peoples, that is to wit, the Tectosages, Tolistobogians, and Trocmannes: so also they had three head Cities. Now for as much as they were there among neighbors of small prowess, and nothing well trained to the wars: they sped their business so well in times past, that the greater part of the lesser Asia became tributary to them. But in the end they grew out of kind, and by little and little lost their courage, giving themselves over to pleasures and wantonness. By means whereof Cneus Manlius the Roman Consul vanquished them in battle without any great ado, and subdued them to the Empire, under which they were in the time of Saint Paul. Now although he had taught them the Gospel faithfully: yet crept there in false Apostles in his absence, which corrupted his good seed by their false and wicked doctrine: for they taught that the keeping of Ceremonies was still necessary. It might have seemed at the first blush to have been a matter of no great importance: but Saint Paul debates of it here as of the chief article of the Christian faith. And good reason, for it is no small mischief, when the light of the Gospel is quenched, when men's consciences are clogged, and when all difference is taken away between the old and new Testament. Furthermore, he saw there was a wicked and mischievous opinion interlaced with those errors: which was, that men may deserve or earn righteousness: and that is the cause why he contends with so great vehemence and force.

Wherefore seeing we be warned what will follow upon the matter that is treated of here: let us read it with diligence. If a man should judge the case by the Commentaries of Saint Jerome and Origen: he would marvel why Saint Paul was so hot for any outward Ceremonies. But if a man look to the wellspring, he shall find that the

things were well worthy to be handled so sharply. And for as much as the Galatians suffered themselves to be turned out of the right way through overgreat simplicity or light belief, or rather through inconstancy and fondness: therefore does he rebuke them the more sharply. For I am not of their mind which think that Saint Paul's rough handling of them, was because they were naturally dull-witted, and hard of understanding. The Ephesians and Colossians had been tempted as well as they. Now if they had lightly given place to the trumpery of the false Teachers, as the Galatians did, think we that Saint Paul would have spared them? Then was it not the people's nature that made him so bold as to be in that chafe with them, but rather the unworthiness of the matter compelled him to do so. Now that we understand the cause why this Epistle was written, let us come to the order and manner of proceeding which he keeps in it.

In the two first Chapters, he endeavors to maintain the authority of his Apostleship, saving that towards the end of the second Chapter, he enters by occasion into the chief point, that is to wit into the question of Justification, howbeit that the peculiar place where he handles that matter of set purpose to the full, is the third Chapter. And although in those two Chapters, he seems to treat of many things, yet his drift is but to prove himself equal with the greatest Apostles, and that there is not any default in his own person why he should not be taken for an Apostle, and be as highly esteemed as the rest. Nevertheless it is good to understand to what purpose he labors so much to maintain his own reputation. For what matter makes it whether he be greater or lesser than Peter, or whether there be no odds at all between them: provided that Jesus Christ reign, and that his doctrine abide pure and uncorrupted? Seeing that all other must be diminished to the end that only Jesus Christ may grow: it is in vain to strive for the prerogatives of men. Furthermore it may also be demanded, why he compares himself with the rest of the Apostles?

For what odds was there between Peter, James, and John? What needed it then to set one against another after that manner, where there was so good unity and agreement? I answer, that the false Apostles which had abused the Galatians, had shrouded themselves under the names of the Apostles, as though they had been of their sending, to the intent to be the better welcome, and to work their matters the easier. It was a trim way to wind themselves in, and to purchase authority, to make them believe that they represented the Apostles, and that the Apostles spoke as you would say, by their mouth. And in so doing they defaced the name, power, and authority of the Apostle Saint Paul. For they alleged that he had not been chosen by our Lord for one of the twelve, nor been acknowledged for such a one by the rest of the Apostles, and that he had not received his doctrine, not only not of Jesus Christ himself, but also not of any of his Apostles. By this means not only Saint Paul's authority was diminished, but also he himself esteemed much inferior to them, as one that was no better than one of the common sort. If the matter had touched no more but their persons: it had been all one with Saint Paul to have been counted among the least disciples. But seeing that the doctrine was by that means discredited: he ought not to hold his peace, but rather to cry out against it. Lo what the wiliness of Satan is: when he dares not assail the doctrine openly, he labors to deface the Majesty of it by overthwart ways. Therefore let us remember that the truth of the Gospel was assailed in Saint Paul's person. For if he had suffered himself to have been bereft of the honor of Apostleship, it had followed that he had hitherto taken more upon him than became him: and so, that false bragging of his should also have made him to be suspected in all other things.

Again, upon that very point depended the authority of his doctrine, for so much as it had not been received as a thing proceeding from an Apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ, but as from some common

disciple. On the other side it had been darkened and defaced by the brightness of the names of great persons. For the false Apostles glorying of the titles of Peter, James, and John, took Apostolic authority to themselves also. Now if Saint Paul had not withstood such boasting earnestly and stoutly: it had been a yielding unto untruth, and a suffering of God's truth to be oppressed in his person. Therefore he strives in good earnest to show both the one and the other: that is to wit, that the Lord had ordained him to be an Apostle, and also that he was not inferior to any of the others, but had the like dignity and authority that the rest had, according to the name which he bore as well as they.

He might well have denied that those gallants were sent of Peter and his fellows, or that they had any charge or commission from them. But this defense is of far greater weight, when he says that he himself is of as great authority as the very Apostles. For if he had spoken any lowlier, it would have seemed that he had not been well assured of his case. Jerusalem was at that time, the mother of all Churches, because the Gospel flowed from thence into all the world, and it was as the chief seat of Christ's kingdom. All they that came from thence to other Churches, were honorably received, and good reason. Howbeit there were a number which were puffed up with pride because they had been familiar with the Apostles, or at leastwise had been trained up in their school: and therefore they could away with nothing which they had not seen at Jerusalem. All other manner of dealings which had not been used there, they not only rejected, but also boldly condemned. Such waywardness and peevishness is a dangerous plague when we will needs have the custom of any one Church to be received for a universal law. And that proceeds of an unadvised zeal, when we be so affectioned to some master or place, that without any judgment we will bind all men to that one man's mind, or all places to the ordinances of that only one place, as to a

common rule. Surely there is always ambition mingled with that manner of dealing, or to speak more rightly, such overgreat waywardness is always full of vainglory. But to return to these false Apostles, if their foolish fondness had led them no further than only to assay to bring in the use of the Ceremonies everywhere, which they had seen kept at Jerusalem: they had done ill enough already. For there was no reason why they should of a custom make by and by a common rule. But there was yet a further mischief: namely their wicked and harmful doctrine, whereby they meant to bind men's consciences, and to ground righteousness in the keeping of Ceremonies. Now we understand why Saint Paul speaks so earnestly in defense of his Apostleship, and wherefore he sets himself against the other Apostles.

He pursues that matter till toward the latter end of the second chapter, where he openeth a gap to treat of his peculiar matter: that is to wit, that we be justified freely before God, and not by the works of the Law. For the reason whereupon he groundeth himself, is this: If the Ceremonies be not able to justify a man, then is not the keeping of them necessary. Howbeit, he treateth not only of Ceremonies, but of works in general: for otherwise it were but a very cold discourse. If any man think that this is a drawing aloof from the matter: Let him consider two things. First that the question could not otherwise be resolved than by taking that general principle, that we be justified freely by the only grace of God: which principle excludes not only Ceremonies but also all other works. And secondly that Saint Paul stood not so much upon the Ceremonies themselves, as upon the wicked opinion that followed them: that is to wit, of purchasing salvation by works. Therefore let us mark that the holy Apostle dealeth not impertinently, in beginning his matter so far off, but that it stood him on hand to touch the wellspring of the whole matter, to the end that the readers might understand that the thing

which he dealeth with here is no trifle, but of most importance above all others: to wit, by what means we obtain salvation. They then do mistake their mark, which imagine that the Apostle standeth upon the particular point of Ceremonies: for that could not be well dealt with alone by itself. We have a like example in the fifth of the Acts. There fell a contention and debate about Ceremonies, to wit, whether they were needful to be kept or no. For the resolving of this question, the Apostles set down the intolerableness of the yoke of the Law, and the free forgiving of sins. To what purpose do they that? For it seemeth to be an impertinent digression, and that they leap out of the propounded matter without reason. But it is not so: For the particular error could not be lively disproved, but by taking a general proposition. As for example: if it behooved me to reason in defense of the eating of flesh: I should not only make mention of meats, but I should also arm myself with the general doctrine, and show whether men's traditions ought to bind men's consciences: and by and by I would take this ground. That there is but one Lawgiver which hath power to save and to destroy. To be short Saint Paul conveyeth his argument here from the general to the particular negatively, which is a very ordinary manner of reasoning, and most agreeable to nature that can be. Furthermore if we go to the body of the Epistle, we shall see by what texts and reasons he proves this sentence, that we be justified by the only grace of Christ. This matter he handles to the end of the third Chapter.

In the beginning of the fourth, he treateth of the right use of Ceremonies, and wherefore they were ordained: and there he showeth also that they be abolished. For it behooved him to prevent this absurdity which would have run by and by in every man's head, To what purpose then were the Ceremonies ordained? Were they utterly needless? did the fathers lose their labor in keeping them? He dispatches both the one and the other in few words, saying that they

were not superfluous in their time, but that they be now abolished by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, because he is the very truth and end of them. And therefore he showeth that we must rest upon him. Also in that place he showeth wherein our state differeth from the state of the fathers. Whereupon it followeth that the doctrine of the false Apostles is lewd and dangerous, because it darkeneth the brightness of the Gospel with the old forborne shadows. He intermedleth certain exhortations with his doctrine, to move men's affections: and toward the end of the Chapter he beautifieth his discourse with a goodly Allegory.

In the fifth Chapter he exhorteth them to keep the freedom purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, to the end they should not yield their consciences in bondage to men's traditions: Nevertheless he therewithal admonisheth them also wherein that freedom consisteth, and which is the true and right use of it. And to the same end he showeth which be the true exercises of Christian folk, to the intent they should not lose their time in musing upon Ceremonies, and in the meanwhile leave the chief things undone.

FINIS.

The first Sermon upon the first Chapter.

1 Paul, an Apostle, not from men, nor by men, but by Jesus Christ, and by God the father, which hath raised him from the dead,

2 And all the brethren that are with me, to the Churches of Galatia:

3 Grace be with you and peace from God the father, and our Lord Jesus Christ,

4 Who gave himself for our sins, to deliver us from this evil world, according to the will of God our father.

5 To whom be glory forevermore, Amen.

Not without cause does Saint Peter earnestly warn us to watch against our enemy who goes about like a roaring lion, with his mouth always open to swallow up the prey that he finds. For although on one side our Lord Jesus Christ assures us that God his father has given him charge of us, and that the thing which he has in his keeping shall never perish: yet it does not follow that we should therefore fall asleep, and meanwhile have no care to call upon God, considering the need that we have to do so. For faith assures us of God's goodness in such a way that we must still have an eye to our own frailty and thereby be stirred up to pray God to give us invincible constancy. It is said that faith shall always get the upper hand of the whole world, but it follows not that we shall not have battle. Now, on our own side, we have no strength at all but we must borrow it elsewhere, and that we may do so, it stands us in hand to pray unto God. For, as I have said already, it lies upon us to be stirred thereunto, by reason of the great need that we have of it. And therefore here is a mirror offered unto all the faithful, whereby we may fare much the better, if we can put it to our use. For Saint Paul had preached through all the country of Galatia, which is a fairly large country, and there had reared many Churches. If ever man were filled with all the gifts of God's spirit to win men to the Gospel, we are sure that Saint Paul excelled all others, or at least all that were

of his company. And it is certain that he discharged his duty. Yet notwithstanding he had scarcely so soon turned his back, but by and by Satan gave a push to overthrow all, and to make a horrible havoc in the whole country: and he won so great a multitude there, that the Gospel was as good as quite abolished, even among those that had been taught so faithfully. Since we see such an example, ought we not to cast down our eyes, and to consider that God warns us to flee unto him, and to pray him to strengthen us, as we may hold out to the end? Which thing we cannot do except we be upheld by him. You see then that the faults which Saint Paul bewrays here in the people of Galatia must serve for our learning. For it is all one as if God should in their person show what our constancy would be, if he gave us it not.

Although then that we have been faithfully instructed in the Gospel, yet must God be fain to work from day to day, or else we shall be so fickle-minded that we shall be carried away by and by, and for every little occasion. Furthermore (as I have said already) Satan is a dreadful enemy. And therefore it is not for us to be negligent, seeing he lies always in wait for us, seeking on all sides to invade us, and that if he spy never so little a hole, by and by he takes his advantage to enter: It shall not seem that there is any gap open for him, and yet we may be taken tardy before we be aware. Wherefore let us mark well the warning that God gives us in this text, and let us make our advantage of it. And on the other side we see how the Devil has at all times served his own turn with the name of God, and made thereof a false cloak to disguise the truth, and to turn it into a lie, or else to sow some discord, that by little and little the Gospel might quite fade away. The Apostles (as they that were chosen by our Lord Jesus Christ to bear abroad his Gospel, and to preach it through the whole world) were well worthy to have been reverenced everywhere, and to have been of such renown and authority, as the things that

proceeded from them should have been thoroughly received. For their calling was lawful: it was well known that they did not thrust in themselves of their own heads, but that the Son of God had chosen and appointed them by his own mouth, yea and made them as it were new creatures: being silly souls and ignorant folk, they were so changed, as it appeared well that their doctrine came altogether of heavenly miracle. For they had not learned aught but in God's school: and he had in one instant of time so endued them with his grace and power, that they became as instruments of the holy Ghost. Yet notwithstanding, the Devil missed not to abuse their name and title, to bring store of troubles and stumbling blocks into the Church. For such as went in their company, made their brags when they came in far countries, that they had been familiarly conversant with them: and yet for all that, some of them were full of vainglory and pride, and sought nothing but their own advancement. Others were self-willed, and could away with nothing but that which they had seen in the City of Jerusalem, and in the land of Jewry: and they would have had the whole world subject to their rule, and therewithal would have turned all things upside down, as they say. Others were led yet with a more wicked mind, so as they sought nothing else but to overthrow all that Saint Paul had builded. And all these (as I said before) boasted that they had not learned anything of him, but that they had been taught their doctrine by the Apostles themselves. Thus you see how Satan has always defaced God's glory, even under the shadow of the gracious gifts which he had bestowed upon his creatures. And in good sooth, we see how that under the names of the Apostles, and of the virgin Mary, the Idolatry is the same at this day in the Papacy, which it was among the Pagans under the names of their false gods: for there is nothing changed, but only the names of them. As for the superstition, it is as filthy and detestable in the Papacy as ever it was among the Heathen.

Here therefore we are warned to be wise, to the intent that if the Devil abuse God's name, we may be able to resist him, and to discern what authority men ought to have, and therewithal not to be overhasty of belief, nor over easy to be moved and shaken with every wind. For if we have not the constancy to walk in the doctrine that has been delivered to us, when we be once fully resolved that it is God's pure truth: it will happen to us as it did to the people of Galatia. You see then that the thing which we have to bear in mind is, in effect, that when God has given us the grace to understand his word, we must always go forward in it, and not be shaken like reeds, nor carried to and fro, nor led up and down like little babes: but we must have the wit and discretion to stick to the thing which we know to be offered us of God. Mark that for one point.

But by the way, since we cannot have such power in ourselves: let us pray with all lowliness and earnestness unto God, to reform us by his holy spirit, and to give us such steadfastness as we may never swerve aside, and that when we see all things turned upside down in this world, yet notwithstanding, this foundation may abide sure, namely that inasmuch as God who cannot lie has spoken to us, and showed us his will: we may safely stand thereupon without turning any way from it. However, since the Devil has many cunning tricks to thrust us out of the way, yes, and that (as I have erstwhile said) he will not stick to abuse God's name to wind himself in, and to get some access to us: it behooves us to understand that our reverencing of men must be in such wise, as God may in the meantime continue unimpeached, and that our Lord may have the whole mastery over us to himself, as he that is the teacher of the Church: and that our faith depend not, neither upon men's knowledge, nor upon any reputation that we have of their wisdom, power, or holiness: but that our Lord Jesus may always have the preeminence for us to rest and settle ourselves upon. For if our faith be not grounded upon God's pure truth, which

is unvariable: certainly, it will be but a losing. This is the thing that we have to gather of the example that is set down here concerning the Galatians. But by the way a man might think it strange, why Saint Paul should deal so roughly with them as we shall see hereafter, considering that the case stood not upon the open denying of God and the renouncing of the Gospel, nor upon the blaspheming of our Lord Jesus Christ, or the setting forth of any notorious idolatry: but upon the ceremonies of the Law. For they against whom Saint Paul strives in this Epistle maintained none other thing, but that the ceremonies of Moses' law were to be kept, and that men were bound to them under pain of deadly sin. Now, at the first blush it might be said that their case was favorable in that behalf. For the case stood not with them as it does with the Pope, who during his tyranny has forged many laws, and commanded this and that, bringing poor souls into bondage: but their saying was, that inasmuch as the law was not of men, but of God: therefore it was to be kept. Hereby it should seem that Saint Paul had no cause to be so moved against that opinion, although it were not altogether sound and good. Again, there is yet another reason: namely that we must not make so much ado about outward things, as whether one day is to be observed more than another, or whether Swine's flesh be not to be eaten as well as mutton. For whether a man observe any ceremonies, or whether he observe none, as for example, If he forbear the eating of Swine's flesh, or do any other like thing: is his so doing an utter forsaking of Christianity? No. Yet notwithstanding, that is all the quarrel that Saint Paul has: yes and thereupon he cries out, that the Galatians are backsliders, that they have forsaken our Lord Jesus Christ, and that they are become renegates. Some man would say, he uses overmuch vehemence: but herein we be still warned, that the devil will now and then find small trifles to draw us from the Gospel ere we be aware, and therefore it behooves us to be so much the better advised: for of ourselves we shall not be so, but must in very deed be fain to be

governed by God. And not without cause also is the spirit of wisdom fathered upon him, to the intent we should seek it in him.

Therefore let us resort thither: and if any man go about to bring in a thing that seemeth not to be of any great importance, let us bethink us what a tale it might draw after it. And for proof hereof, when we be once turned from the simplicity of the Gospel, we shall become like whoremongers: according as we have seen in the last Epistle, how Saint Paul says expressly, that the Devil uses Bawds' tricks and Ruffian tricks, when he comes to turn us from the doctrine of the Gospel. He will always make some goodly and fair protestation, like as when a Ruffian intends to deceive a young wife or a maid, he will not use any lewd terms or knavery, for he knows that she would abhor them: but he will mark by little and little how he may infect her with his deadly poison. Even so plays the Devil in that behalf. For if he should show his horns (as they say) at the first dash, and show himself openly to be God's enemy: every man would shun him, and we would abhor him. But he windeth himself slily in, and creepeth in at small crannies, so as we shall wonder that he could prevail with us in sundry things, and we shall still bear ourselves in hand, that we cease not to hold with Jesus Christ and his Church. And yet for all that we shall be turned away, and in the end we shall perceive ourselves to be quite cut off.

Therefore, when we read this example, that the Devil had marred and corrupted the Churches whereof mention is made here, under the shadow of the Ceremonies of Moses' law: let us bethink ourselves the better, and stand stiffly without turning aside by any means from the simplicity of the Gospel. Furthermore, since he has strived and disputed about the Ceremonies of the law: let us look well about us to profit ourselves by all that is here contained, and let us stand continually on our guard, that we may find out the crafts and wiles of

Satan. And whenever he shall go about to undermine us, let us look well to our business, and stand always to that which we have learned, so as we may be out of all doubt that we shall not find anything in the doctrine of the Gospel, which is not the pure word of God. For (as I said) that is the thing whereupon our faith must be grounded. And if any man will add never so little to it, let us not only suspect it, but also abhor it: for when there is such a mingle mangle made with God's pure truth, it can be nothing else but corruption. Now let us come to the order which Saint Paul keeps in handling the doctrine which we shall see point by point. That he may be the better heard and also received, he confirms his own authority, which some men had gone about to impeach. For behold, the policy of those dogs that encountered against him was to allege that the Apostles taught otherwise than he did. Now forasmuch as Saint Paul had not been conversant with our Lord Jesus Christ while he lived in this world: it was supposed at the first that the Apostles were a degree above him, and ought to be preferred before him. And on the other side, they inquired who had put him in that place, as though he had thrust himself in, and had done it rather of rashness than otherwise. Saint Paul, therefore, was fain to set himself against all this gear, and to show that he was truly sent of God. Furthermore (as I said first) the Devil stirred up others, who coming from Jerusalem, said that that was the mother Church, and the holiness of all Christendom: and they pretended to be zealous setters forth of the pureness of the Gospel. By reason whereof, it behooved Saint Paul to go forward in showing that he had not advanced himself, nor taken anything upon him of his own head, but had obeyed the calling of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had made him his Apostle. Yea and he compares himself with John and James and Peter, who were (as men termed them) the pillars of the Church, and so taken to be among all men, showing that he was no whit inferior to them. And why does he so? To the end his doctrine might be received: for that is the mark

that he aimed at. Afterward when he has prepared the Galatians to receive obediently the warnings that he gives them: then he debates the matter which was at that time in controversy, and shows that the Gospel is beaten down if we have not the freedom which is purchased for us by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ: which is, that the ceremonies of the law should not hold us any more in subjection or awe. For (as we shall see hereafter) if such subjection should be admitted, all the fruit of our redemption and of the salvation which is purchased for us by the Son of God, should go to wreck.

Now let us come to the order that Saint Paul keeps for the maintenance of his authority. He says that he is an Apostle, not on men's behalf, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ, and by God the Father, who has raised him from the dead. First of all, we have to mark here, that Saint Paul, to the intent to be received, grounds himself upon the ordinance and appointment of God. For surely no man ought to take upon him any honor in the Church, save he that is called, as I have declared already. Besides that, our faith should be very feeble if it should be settled upon men, how great excellency or worthiness soever were in them: yea though they were perfecter than Angels, yet were that nothing: our faith is so precious a jewel, as it must rest altogether upon God and his truth. Seeing it is so, if a man intends to be heard, it must not be alleged that he is witty and skillful, or that he has seen and heard much, and is a man of great experience: all those things are but smoke when it comes to the leading of us to the kingdom of Heaven. For there the matter stands not upon profound wit, and high and exquisite knowledge: all those things are but the sleights of Satan: Again, we know how it is said generally of all man's wisdom, that it is but stark folly, yea and that God laughs it to scorn, and abhors it, because it turns us away from the obeying of him. Therefore whenever the case concerns the teaching of us, all things that belong to man, or to any creature, must

be laid at water, that there may be a well-ordered government in the Church, and such a one as God allows. For if men advance themselves in that case, God is thereby plucked back, and in the end there will be nothing but utter confusion.

So much the more then behooves it us to mark well what Saint Paul shows us here, in that he does not allege or bring anything of his own for the establishing of his authority, but holds himself wholly to God's calling. Mark that for one point. And herewithal we have to note that Saint Paul boasted not himself at all adventures, as many harebrained ones do. For they could find in their hearts to preach with full mouth, that God has sent them, when as notwithstanding they be but fantastical fellows, and Satan's very Champion, serving to overthrow all. But by the way, Saint Paul in protesting his calling, meant also to show by whom he was called, as we have seen here before. And it was sufficiently known that he had been converted by miracle to the Gospel, that he had been taught upon the sudden, that God had by his means wrought after a strange and unaccustomed fashion, and not only that it had been openly revealed unto two or three men in the City of Antioch that Saint Paul was appointed to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, but also that he had good warrant of it in all places where he came, because God uttered his power most manifestly in him. So then when Saint Paul told them that he was an Apostle, he presupposed that it was already sufficiently justified, that God was the author of that office of his, and that the thing which he pretended was not a false surmise, after the manner of men, whom we see too much subject to vaunting of themselves. Therefore we must put a difference between Saint Paul and all such as falsely boast and brag themselves to be sent of God, as the Pope does, who to beguile the wretched world, and to maintain himself in his hellish tyranny, which he has usurped, says and oversays that he is the vicar of Jesus Christ, and the successor of his Apostles. And all the

cankerworms of his Clergy who name themselves Prelates, together with all the horned beasts and all the rabble of Maskers in the Papedom, will need challenge that honorable title: and (if a man list to believe them upon their single word) they are all of them descended of the Apostles. But yet for all that, it behooves us to consider what likeness and agreeableness they have to the Apostles: and also it stands them on hand to show by certain and infallible record that their calling is approved of God. In these days, the Pope and all his, are too openly proved to have falsified and corrupted the doctrine of the Gospel, and that the thing which they term the service of God is nothing but stark abomination: and moreover, that there is nothing among them but outrageous lies and falsehoods, yea and enchantments of Satan. All this is known well enough. But behold, their shield wherewith they cast the mist that covers all their filthiness, is that there has been a continual succession ever since the time of the Apostles, and that they represent them and are the Church, and therefore that whatever they put forth must be taken for good. Well, go to, if they who nowadays take that title upon them will be heard: they must look whether they have any resemblance of the Apostles, and whether they execute the duty of good and faithful shepherds. But seeing they are clean contrary to the order which our Lord Jesus Christ has set in his Church, what shall men say to them? Yea (say they) but we have a continual succession from the Apostles. That would be showed first of all. They will allege some records, howbeit very trifling ones. Yet notwithstanding, it may be said on the contrary part, that there were as good successors in the Church of Galatia as ever there was in Rome: and not only in some one Church, but in many, as well of Ephesus, of Colossus, and of Philippi, as of other places. And where is all this succession now? If any man think himself to have any privilege, and name himself Saint Paul's successor: it were meet he should go preach the Gospel, and therewithal show good evidence why he should be received.

Therefore, let us mark well at a word, that when there are men to preach the Gospel, and when there are Shepherds and Overseers, it is not meant that they should diminish the authority of God or prejudice aught that belongs to him, that is to say, that he alone should not be honored, and that our faith should not rest upon his word: but that by the means of men, we should always be held under his obeisance. Mark that for a special point. And above all things, our Lord reserves that right to himself: namely, that men should not thrust themselves in through their own presumption, but that they should be raised up and sent by him. Now therefore (as I have first said) there ought to be cause why, to the end we may discern and not believe at all adventure, nor at random. For Satan's champions can boast and crack enough and too much, and stand in their own conceit to the uttermost, to the intent to wind themselves in by their presumptuousness. But it behooves us to try what is in them, that we may be sure of God's calling. And how does Saint Paul speak of it here? Not on the behalf of men (says he), nor by men. When Saint Paul says that he is an Apostle, not on the behalf of men: it is a general point which ought to extend to all the ministers of God's word, and to all Shepherds of the Church. For (as I have said heretofore) whereas it pleased God that there should be Prophets in old time, and that afterward there should be shepherds to teach his people: he bereft not himself of his sovereignty: but rather it was to show, that men must not govern here after their own lust, and in the meanwhile be but as Ciphers in Algorithm themselves, saving only for maintaining still the title, but that we should all of us give ear unto him, so as the men whom he sets in office should be as instruments or vessels of his Holy Spirit. Now then we see whereat Saint Paul aimed, when he said that he was not sent on the behalf of men: for thereby he shows that he was authorized of God, and that he was his servant.

The second point where he says that he was not sent by men, belongs peculiarly to the Apostles. For although we be called of God, and that he allow of us: yet are we nevertheless called of men: and if that manner of calling were not agreeable to God's will, Saint Paul would not have used it. We know how Saint Paul proceeded in that case, namely how that in every place where he came, he ordained Ministers and Shepherds by election: and no doubt but that doing of his was lawful. Then let us mark well, that Saint Paul does not indiscreetly here condemn such as were called by men's means: but only treats of the thing that was peculiar to the charge of an Apostle. For that was the difference between the Apostles and such as had charge of particular Churches: according whereunto the same state remains at this day, and shall remain to the world's end. For the Apostles were not chosen by election of men, nor by the common policy of the Church: but by the very mouth of the Son of God. Inasmuch that when it behooved the Apostles to put another successor in the room of Judas, to make up the full number of twelve again: although they themselves were there present, and a great multitude of Disciples with them: yet dared they not make any election. When there was any choosing of a Shepherd for the Church of Jerusalem, or of Antioch, or of any other people, this fashion was used: that is to say, first they prayed unto God, and thereupon chose such a man as was found meet and convenient for that office. But as for the other, they referred it wholly to the will of God, and cast lots for it, as for a thing that passed their wit. The cause (as I said) was, for that it behooved the Apostles to be chosen by special privilege from above, because they were the persons by whom the Gospel was to be published over the whole world. Now as for Saint Paul, he was chosen afterward. But however it was, he had equal privilege with the residue, because there came a revelation from heaven, to show that he was admitted to the executing of that office: he was rapt up into

the third heaven, and we have seen that he was well liked of in all things.

Finally, that it might appear to be God's will to give him a larger commission, and to have marked him out for the Apostle of the Gentiles: he had the Holy Ghost immediately, which spoke and uttered the word from above. You see then that Saint Paul was not chosen by means of men. And yet notwithstanding, this manner of choosing (as I said afore) is no fault in those that are Shepherds and Ministers of the Church. But it was requisite that Saint Paul should be privileged, to the intent he might be comparable with Peter and John, and with all those that had been conversant and kept company with the Son of God, while he dwelled in this world, and was in this mortal life. Now we see in effect whereat Saint Paul aimed. And hereby we are taught that the reverence which we owe to such as carry abroad God's word and bear the name of Shepherds, serves not to bar God from being heard continually, nor to bar our Lord Jesus Christ from being the only Schoolmaster of the Church. It behooves us to bear this school point well in mind, or else our faith will always be subject to many varieties, and he that is cunningest among men, shall ever go away with the goal: and so shall we have nothing certain, but we shall be still changing from day to day, yea even every minute of an hour.

Therefore let us mark well, that if men allege the names of the Church, of Prelates, or of Bishops: we must always come back to this point, that they cannot climb any higher than to be the servants of Jesus Christ, and to be allowed by him. And how shall we know that they are allowed by him? First, if they have been chosen by lawful order, with calling upon the name of God. And secondly, if such be chosen as are fit, that have in them wherewith to execute their office. Lo, here the marks whereby we may know and be well assured that

they are such Shepherds as God allows and accepts. And herewithal it is not enough for a man to be called to that vocation: but he must also execute the charge that is committed to him, according as Saint Paul says not simply that he was ordained an Apostle: but in taking that name to him, he shows that he is sent to bear abroad the message of salvation, and to preach the Gospel to the world. Therefore they that will be taken for Bishops and Prelates must teach: and if they be idols and dumb dogs, it is certain that as they shamefully mock God's name and abuse his majesty, so also men may reject them and despise them, yes, and that they ought to be held as accursed, because they pretend God's name falsely. Thus you see what we have to mark upon this strain. Now Saint Paul says purposely, that he was sent of Jesus Christ, and of God his father who raised him from the dead. Whereas he says that he was sent of Jesus Christ, it is to bring us back to the thing which I have touched already: that is to say, that if we covet to obey God and to be subject to him, we must embrace our Lord Jesus Christ, and give ear unto him as to the only schoolmaster: and both great and small must submit themselves to him and to his doctrine: for he that honors not the Son, honors not the father, as it is said in the fifth of John. And this is well worthy to be marked: for every man will needs be thought to honor God, and to desire nothing so much as to hold himself under his yoke. But in the meanwhile, we see that the world fights against the Gospel, and no man can willingly find in his heart to yield to it. When it comes to the point that Jesus Christ calls us to him, every one of us plays the rebel: we are so wild that he cannot tame us: whereby our faithlessness is so plainly proved, and we show ourselves to despise God, how goodly protestations soever we have made before. For he sends us back to his Son, and wills us to stoop to him to do him homage. Yet notwithstanding, as we see and as experience shows too much, every man would shrink away from subjection to our Lord Jesus Christ. Saint Paul therefore shows what

a majesty there is in Jesus Christ: that is to wit, that we ought to tremble at his word, and to hold our peace whenever he speaks, and to receive without any gainsaying, whatsoever he teaches, or proceeds from him. And without that, it is certain that God rejects all the protestations that we can make of our desire to serve and honor him. Thus are we exhorted in this strain, to give ourselves wholly over unto our Lord Jesus Christ, seeing he is our only Shepherd, thereby to show that we be his true sheep, and that we hearken to his voice, and discern it from the voice of strangers. Now seeing that God shows himself in such wise unto us, as we know that our Lord Jesus Christ calls us to him: let every one of us follow him, and show that we are of his flock indeed. Thus you see what we have to bear in mind. However, forasmuch as there is such unthankfulness in a great number, that they cannot find in their hearts to submit themselves even to the Son of God: Saint Paul does here set down the name of God the father as an Overplus. True it is that the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells in Jesus Christ, and cursed be he that seeks any other God. But yet for all that, forasmuch as our Lord Jesus Christ appeared unto us in the shape of man, and was conversant in this world, and there despised, yea and abased even to a most shameful death, wherein he received all the curses that were due to us: therefore it is said that if we give not ear to the Son of God, the father is prejudiced thereby, according also as our Lord Jesus himself declares in that he says, "He that despises you despises me, and he that rejects me rejects the living God that sent me." Mark then whereunto the order tends which Saint Paul keeps: namely that if we do not willingly honor our Lord Jesus Christ, by accepting his doctrine for certain and infallible: God is set at naught, and we cannot say that our intent is to worship him, for he will reject all our doings. And why? For (as I said before) it is enough to prove us rebels, if we separate the Son from his Father. And Saint Paul adds expressly, that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, to the end that

his Apostleship should not be the less esteemed, and also that men should match him with the number and company of the other Apostles, according also as he was added to them after that Jesus Christ ceased to be any more upon earth. For (as I have touched already) the thing wherewith the false Apostles which came to overthrow all upbraided him, was this: How now [said they]? He has not been the Disciple of the Son of God as Peter and John were: he is a thing born out of season. And how can he show that he has received his doctrine of Jesus Christ? Saint Paul declares that if they will needs inquire of the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, his rising again ought not to have diminished it. Surely though our Lord Jesus Christ were brought low while he had the veil of man's nature upon him, whereby his glory was after a sort hidden: yet was he not abased in himself.

For we know that the Angels acknowledged him for their sovereign king, and although he was born in a stable and laid upon the ground as a creature destitute of all help: yet we see that the Stars of the sky bore record of him. To be short, the majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ was always sufficiently avouched, as long as he was in this world. But yet for all that, there was a much more excellent glory in his resurrection, according as it is said in the first to the Romans, that then he was shown to be the Son of God. And we also have seen in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, that as he suffered under weakness of the flesh, so he was raised again through the wonderful power of God's spirit. So then, Saint Paul shows, that although our Lord Jesus Christ be not conversant with us nowadays, yet must not his Majesty therefore be diminished nor defaced, that we should not yield him his due and deserved obedience, and receive his word reverently without all gainsaying. This warning is very behooful for us. For what a number of lightheaded persons do we see, which would have Jesus Christ to be here in visible shape? Their saying is,

that they would fain see Jesus Christ conversant here beneath, and that then they would at the first push accept whatsoever he spoke to them, so as there should need but one word of his mouth to ravish them, and there should need none other teaching, nor any other man to be much with us.

Yea, but the Son of God who came down, has performed his charge which was committed to him of God his father: that is to say, he has preached the Gospel, and sufficiently confirmed it by his death and passion. Afterward being risen again, he sent forth his Apostles. And now that he has all sovereign dominion, so as the Angels bow their knees before him, and that he has such a majesty as surmounts all glory both in heaven and earth: ought not all that which he has done, to suffice us thoroughly? When it pleases him to send us mortal men, and to send forth the message and inestimable treasure of his Gospel in brittle vessels, and yet notwithstanding will have us to receive them: is it not a mockery to say, that if Jesus Christ were with us and in our company, we would obey him? For if heaven and earth must be fain to quake under him, and his Majesty be known even to the Devils of hell: and yet for all that, we continue blockish, and pretend that he is too far off from us: yet notwithstanding our Lord Jesus shows sufficiently that he has not forsaken us, seeing we have the Gospel preached unto us: And that although he dwell not with us here below in visible shape, yet notwithstanding we shall be continually joined with him, and that forasmuch as he is our head, he will govern his body, and there shall be one inseparable bond between him and us. Now seeing it is so, we ought of right to yield him obedience, and his resurrection ought to touch us to the quick, and to work such a reverent awfulness in us, that whenever the name of our Lord Jesus Christ is spoken of, we may be sure that it is the name whereof the Prophet speaks, whereby all men ought to swear, and whereat they ought to bow their knees. Thus you see in effect

that the thing which we have to bear in mind, is, that we should not measure the Gospel after the respect and reputation of those that speak unto us, for why, they be frail men. Neither is that the thing whereon we ought to stay: for that were as much to say, as we should settle our salvation upon the credit of men, which might cause us to rest upon the world: but we must understand, that it is Jesus Christ who speaks. And how? In the Majesty that is given him by God his father: for the power of the holy Ghost was then showed to the full, when he was raised from the dead. Then seeing our Lord Jesus Christ has obtained such authority when he was lifted up into heaven, as to have superiority over all creatures: let us learn to submit ourselves to him, and let the same serve to hold us in awe, that his word may be received of us, and we assure ourselves that he governs us, and that it becomes us to suffer ourselves to be taught in his name, and to understand that although the word which is preached unto us proceed out of the mouth of men, yet notwithstanding it is by the authority of God, and our salvation must be grounded thereupon, as well as though heaven opened an hundred thousand times to show us the glory of God. Lo (say I), how it behooves us to be taught in this world, until God has gathered us into his everlasting heritage. And that is the thing which we have to bear in mind, concerning that the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ is expressly set down in this place.

Now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to vouchsafe to make us to feel them, that he may draw us to repentance the better, and that we may always hope that if we be once renewed by him, we shall thoroughly perceive that it is he who rules us by his holy spirit, so as having that record imprinted in our hearts, we may boast without hypocrisy that we are not tied to this world although we be in it, and that we dwell in it but as pilgrims and strangers, because we have a

better dwelling place in heaven, where our heritage is thoroughly assured unto us by faith, although we possess it not presently. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us but also to all people and nations of the earth, etc.

The Second Sermon upon the First Chapter.

3 Grace be unto you and peace from God the father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

4 Who gave himself for our sins, to deliver us from this evil world according to the will of God our father.

5 To whom be glory forevermore, Amen.

There is no person but desires their own welfare, and we are inclined thereto by nature. Nevertheless, we are very far misled in that regard and know not whence all welfare springs, much less the true cause of our happiness, namely that God loves us and that we are assured that He considers us His children. For without that, all the prosperity of the world is nothing; rather, it shall always turn to our harm because until such time as God receives us into His favor, we are all accursed, and the goods that we receive from His hand shall cost us dearly, for they do not belong to us until we are in the fellowship of His children. Therefore, we must above all things seek to be in the favor of our God and to be well assured in ourselves that He admits us to

be of His household and Church. And that is the cause why, after the Prophet has rebuked men's worldly desires, in that one would have abundance of wine, another abundance of corn, and every person has an eye to their own ease, it is said in the Psalm that nothing is better nor more to be desired than that God should show us the light of His countenance — that is to say, that we might take hold of His favor, not doubting that He will acknowledge us as His children, as I mentioned before.

And that also is the cause why, in the hundred and sixth Psalm, the Prophet craves above all things that God should be mindful of him with the favor that He bears towards His people. He knew well enough that he lacked many things, yet he overlooked all the rest because his heart carried and pulled him the other way, namely, to desire to be included in the number of God's chosen. Therefore, there is one kind of love which God bears towards all humanity, for He has created them after His own image, in which respect He makes the sun to shine upon all, nourishing them and caring for their life. But all this is nothing in comparison to the special goodness which He keeps in store for His chosen and for those that are of His flock. However, this is not due to any worthiness He finds in them but because it pleases Him to accept them as His own. And so you see why Saint Paul in all his Epistles brings us back to the grace of God and to the love which He bears towards the faithful, saying, "Grace and peace be unto you." Under the word "Peace," as I have said heretofore, he comprehends all prosperity, as if he should beseech God to provide us with all things which He knows to be expedient for us, to pour out His riches upon us, and to show Himself so bountiful towards us that we may have cause to magnify His goodness.

Yet notwithstanding, since all the goods of the world cannot but turn to our harm until we are in God's favor, Saint Paul maintains this

order of continually setting down God's grace or free favor before the benefits which He bestows upon us. Although then we must desire God to make us feel His goodness in all things which He knows to be meet for us, yet we must not forget the principal point, that is, that He should take us into His Church and assure us in our hearts that He bears us good will. When we once see that light, let it suffice us, as it is said in the Psalm, and let the same content us. But yet for all that, although God gives us leave to wish whatever is good for us, we must bridle ourselves in such a way that if He chooses to afflict us with many miseries, we nevertheless must make such account of His favor as to content ourselves with that alone, though all the rest be taken from us. I have told you already that even if we lived at our ease in all pleasures and delights, we would be unhappy until such time as we are fully assured in our consciences that God loves us and that we are in His favor.

You see then that we ought not to set our minds on any worldly goods except God's love goes before them. On the contrary, if God loves us and yet in the meanwhile chooses to test our patience by allowing us to linger in this world and by putting us under many afflictions, we must still make such account of His favor as to bear all things patiently, notwithstanding that they seem to be utterly against us. And it is all the more necessary for us to remember this lesson, seeing that we see people wandering after their own lusts. For most people have become so brutish that they desire nothing but to have the things that nature teaches them to like. They have no regard at all for God. One desires to eat, another to drink, and the third to have apparel; and these are desires that hover in the air. But the point at which we ought to begin is to know that God is the founder of all our welfare and that all the commodities which we have in this world and all the aids which we have to help us are benefits proceeding from His hand.

Then if we cannot direct our desires toward God, it is too perverse, yea and too beastly a thing, and yet for all that, the majority of the world is at that point. There are others who seem to take a better path and rule, but yet they also pervert all. They desire God to send them the things which He knows to be good and profitable for them, but in the meanwhile, they do not look to the fountain from which they should draw their first water, that is to say, to be reconciled to God. For all is one with them so long as God spares them and does not execute His rigor towards them. As for His love or hatred, they do not greatly care, as long as He deals with them according to the desires and appetites of their flesh. Now although such manner of people do seek unto God, yet do they set the cart before the horse. For they ought to set God's love in the first and chiefest place, and then to come down to the great number of benefits which He bestows upon us, and whereby He witnesses His goodness towards us.

Although then that many men do not hold themselves within the said measure, but make more unruly requests unto God than one person would do to another, so that one person craves riches, another honor, and none is contented with that which God sends, yet notwithstanding, even if men were well advised in their wishes and precise in desiring nothing but that which they have need of, yet if they forget God's favor, therein they show themselves not to have profited at all. Therefore, let us note how it is not without cause that Saint Paul has here set down two things jointly together: that is to wit, that God must first receive us into His favor so that we also may feel Him to be truly our father and accept us as His children, and then afterward He may cause us to prosper. Now, such manner of prosperity may (as I have said already) be well wished for, but in the meanwhile, the only goodness of God must be our solace. And when we are put to the suffering of many miseries in this world, so that things do not fall out as we would have them, yet we must be

contented with this, that God accepts us. And therewithal, he sets down the name of our Lord Jesus Christ because it is not possible that God should favor us but for His own Son's sake, in whom is His whole delight, according as it is said, as well in the sixteenth chapter of Saint Matthew as in the first to the Ephesians.

Then if we had nothing else to set before our eyes but the majesty of God, it would make us afraid, and we could not have any access unto Him because we are frail creatures, yes, and altogether sinful, creeping here upon the earth and deserving to be swallowed into the bottom of Hell. Therefore, it is very requisite that Christ should show Himself unto us, and that we should look upon Him, to taste what God's love is and to enjoy all the benefits which He bestows upon us. For they belong not to any other than to His only Son, who is the heir of all things, as the Apostle speaks of Him in the first chapter to the Hebrews. Seeing then that all the good turns which God does for us belong peculiarly to our Lord Jesus Christ, it behooves us to communicate with Him and to be made partakers of them by His means. Therefore, it is not without reason that Saint Paul says here, "from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ." Yes, and to the intent to give us the greater assurance that God will take us into His favor if we seek Him truly and unfainedly, though by the means of His only Son, he says that Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins.

Now it is certain that nothing puts us out of God's favor but our own sinfulness. For we see that His mercy extends even to the sparrows that fly in the air and to the brute beasts. For when God brings forth grass in the mountains and makes other fodder to grow for cattle, it is a token that He has a care of them. And truly, they are marks of His goodness, as it is said in the Psalms. How then should He not love those whom He has created after His own image and who approach much nearer to Him and to His nature, that is to say, men?

God, therefore, in respect of His creating us, receives and avows us for His own. But inasmuch as we are corrupted and our nature has become sinful, it causes God to hate us and to take us for His enemies, so that there is as it were a deadly feud between Him and us, until He has taken us again into His favor for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Therefore, to the end that we may not have any cause to doubt of God's love, Saint Paul here sets down before us the sacrifice whereby the remembrance of our transgressions is blotted out, so that God, having now forgotten all our wretchedness, beholds us as His own and as those on whom He has set His mark, and in short, as those whom He has created to be His children and heirs.

And hereby, we are warned that there is no other means to pacify our consciences and to make us able to call upon God in full liberty, but by applying to ourselves the sacrifice offered by our Lord Jesus Christ, wherein He has made full satisfaction for us, so that henceforth God receives us as His own children. And here first of all we see the force of the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that therein we find atonement between God and us, so that whereas we were erstwhile at odds with Him, and He must needs have, as you would say, abhorred us, now He vouchsafes to take us into His favor. And why? Because our Lord Jesus Christ has made amends for all our faults and misdeeds by the obedience which He yielded in His death and passion, inasmuch that the sacrifice which He offered was a full satisfaction for all our sins, and His bloodshed became likewise our cleansing, and has washed us clean from all the spots of our sins.

Thus you see how we may be sure that God receives us. And how may we have the boldness to call upon Him and to resort unto Him? Even by fixing our eyes upon the Sacrifice which our Lord Jesus Christ has offered. For if we have not that, it is certain that we shall always be

afraid when we think upon the majesty of God. For seeing we are wretched offenders, how should we not be afraid of our judge, who is armed to execute the vengeance that we deserve? Nevertheless, for as much as our Lord Jesus Christ has buried our faults, we may come unto God boldly and without any stop. However, it behooves us to mark therewithal that the sacrifice whereby our Lord Jesus Christ has reconciled us to God His father is so sufficient that it behooves us to lay up all our trust therein and not to seek any other means. According also as Saint Paul's intent here is to bring back the Galatians to the pure truth from which they had been led away and seduced—not that they had utterly renounced Jesus Christ, but that they had intermingled the ceremonies of the Law, thereby to obtain forgiveness of sins, as if there needed other helps thereto: according as in papistry it will well enough be granted that Jesus Christ is the redeemer of the world, but yet therewithal, every person seeks to compound with God and to make amends by themselves. Now the Galatians had already been imbued with the like error. For this cause Saint Paul shows them that sins are none otherwise wiped out than by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the intent that our faith may rest wholly there. Therefore, if we will be partakers of so great a benefit, we must give over all our vain hopes and all the illusions that the Devil puts in our mind when he turns us aside from our Lord Jesus Christ and from His only grace, by making us believe that we can come unto God if we bring some amends with us. To be short, until such time as we are sure that there is none other washing wherewith to scour out the spots of our iniquities but the blood which our Lord Jesus Christ has shed and wherewith we are rinsed through the Holy Ghost, it is certain that we can never come freely unto God, nor rest upon His favor and love, but shall ever be wandering in our own imaginations; and that shall be a due payment for our unbelief, in that we have not yielded our Lord Jesus Christ the honor that He deserved.

Thus you see in effect what we have to bear in mind here, where Saint Paul sets the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ before us, telling us that that is the thing wherein we shall find the amends of all our faults, so as they shall not be called any more to account before God. And he says purposely that Jesus Christ gave Himself to the end we should the more boldly take hold of His love. For we see here that when our Lord Jesus Christ did put forth Himself to make atonement between God and us, He spared not His own body and soul, insomuch that He endured extreme anguish in His soul, as He that was our substitute in the same, and bore the wrath of God on our behalf. And in His body also He endured all reproach and shame, and therewithal also the most horrible torments that could be devised. And all this, as I said before, shows right well that the love which He bore us was inestimable, since He forgot Himself after that sort for our sakes.

But yet notwithstanding, herewithal Saint Paul brings us always back to the will of God, to show that when our Lord Jesus Christ did in that wise perform all that belonged to our salvation, it was no hindrance but that God in the meanwhile uttered His mercy in the same, according as it is said in another text, that God so loved the world that He spared not His only Son but delivered Him to death for us. To the intent therefore that we should not think that the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to pacify God His father was after such a sort that He persuaded Him to alter His purpose (as men are inclined to such gross and earthly imaginations), Saint Paul (to show us that God was not reconciled unto us after the manner of men) tells us expressly that the cause why Jesus Christ was delivered for our sins was for that God had so ordained it. For if a man be angry with his child, some other man may step in to appease his wrath, and such a one shall supply the room of a third party. But the case stood not so with our Lord Jesus Christ when He offered Himself in Sacrifice to

do away with all our sins and to make a way unto God from whom we were shut out before. He came not as one that stepped in of His own head and as though God had not meddled with the matter. How then? God (as has been touched not long since) did both hate us and love us before the reconciliation [was made]. And why loved He us? Because we are His creatures. And again, although He saw we were so wretched and utterly forlorn and damned folk by reason of sin, yet notwithstanding He had pity upon us and would not have mankind to perish utterly. Thus you see how God loved us, notwithstanding that in the person of Adam we had fallen away from Him and utterly corrupted. Therewithal He did also hate us because He is the wellspring of all righteousness. Therefore, He abhorred the naughtiness that was in us, by reason whereof there needed an atonement to be made in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the sacrifice which He offered.

But yet must not that benefit be fathered upon any other than God. You see then how it was God's doing to send His only Son and to give Him over unto death for us. And why? To the end that all hatred between Him and us should be done away. This, in effect, is the thing that ought to be understood of Saint Paul's words when he says that Jesus Christ gave Himself to death for our sins, and yet notwithstanding that the same came not to pass without the will of God, who had determined the same beforehand in His own everlasting purpose. Here, first of all, we have to magnify the mercy that was shown us in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. For if God had proclaimed a pardon and told us that He would take us to mercy though we were unworthy of it, that had been very much, yea and it had been impossible for us to magnify such a gracious goodness as it deserves. But seeing He has lent us such a gage of His love as His own Son and gives Himself to us in His person, thereby showing Himself to be our father, it so far surpasses all that we have said that

if all our wits were employed to wondering at such a goodness, yet should we never come to the fullness thereof. Thus you see what we have to mark in the first place when Saint Paul speaks to us of God's will.

However, let us understand that even from the time that God had just cause to hate us and to abhor us, yes, and even from the time that we were His enemies (as the Scripture says), in very deed He never ceased to have some regard of us and to extend His pity so far forth as He would not have us to abide in our destruction; in so much that He has not thought it enough to declare the same by word of mouth but also has given us such a pledge as we see, that is to wit, that His own Son has answered for it. Now, seeing it is so that God has shown Himself so gracious and merciful before we were reconciled to Him, what will He do now when we have so sure a warrant, and that the Gospel also is preached unto us, to assure us that we are knit unto our Lord Jesus Christ by faith, as members of His body? Shall we now doubt of God's love towards us when we have so good a confirmation of it, as Saint Paul says in the fifth Chapter to the Romans? If so be that Jesus Christ (says he) came to put away all our sins at such times as there was yet deadly feud between God and us: ought not all doubting to be trodden underfoot, and we not be afraid in any wise to call upon our God, but assure ourselves of our own salvation, now when God has so confirmed it unto us, when He has admitted us into His favor, when He calls and allures us as gently as may be, and when He shows and certifies us that He does as it were hold open His arms to embrace us whenever we will come unto Him? Thus you see what we have to bear in mind in this strain.

Furthermore, let us mark also the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that seeing He has given Himself after that sort for our sins, He will

not suffer His death and passion to be unprofitable, nor the sacrifice which He has once offered to be void and of none effect, without bringing forth fruit in us. But as He has offered Himself once for all, so also will He be our continual Mediator and Advocate, to the end we may be partakers of the cleanness which He has purchased for us, that being rid of all our foulness we may appear clean before God, and speak unto Him with open mouth. Lo how we ought to gather together all the things that are shown us here for the establishing of our faith, and that we may freely resort unto our God, not as strangers to Him, but as His own children and familiar friends.

And herewithal let us learn also to shake off all the illusions and fancies of Satan, who seeks by all means to turn us away from our Lord Jesus Christ, or else to darken the grace which we should find in Him; and when he cannot abolish it utterly, he snarls us and puts new means into our heads whereby to purchase favor at God's hand.

But let us cut off all such things, and so fasten all our wits upon our Lord Jesus Christ, as He alone may suffice us, and we utterly dislike whatever shall come in our head to purchase grace and favor with, assuring ourselves that there is not any other thing that may cause God to receive us to mercy than the sacrifice whereby all righteousness and cleanness was purchased for us.

Furthermore, under these words of God's will, it behooves us to comprehend a free goodness, to exclude all that men are wont to make themselves believe of their own merits; for in that sense also are those words taken in the Holy Scripture, so that (as I have told you before) the thing which is termed here by the name of Will is termed elsewhere by the name of good pleasure. Saint Paul, therefore, not only shows that the wellspring of our Redemption and Salvation consists in the ordinance and everlasting purpose of God

the Father, but also intends to beat down all pride and presumption, by showing that we must yield the whole praise of our righteousness to the free favor of God, which had no regard at all of our deservings. For let us examine ourselves: and what shall God find in us but utter wretchedness? And that is the very cause why God vouchsafes His mercy upon us. So then let us assure ourselves, that henceforth we may freely lift up our eyes to heaven, and prefer our prayers and supplications unto God, because He has prevented us, according as it is said in Saint John, that He had not tarried till we loved Him (for that was impossible because we be wholly bent unto evil, and are utterly given over to it), but had loved us even though we were His enemies. And so you see that the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ was to the end to reconcile us to God His Father, as we have showed already. That, therefore, is in effect the thing that we have to bear in mind. Now Saint Paul adds immediately, that it was to deliver us from this wicked world. Here he shows why we are called to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: and also why He has set so great store by us, as to redeem us as He has done; namely, to the end we should not abide in our filth and uncleanness but be withdrawn away from it by Him. In very deed that is not the cause of our salvation, but the end and mark whereat God looked in ordaining us to salvation. The thing, therefore, which it stands us on hand to have an eye to when our redemption is spoken of, is that we must begin at the free favor which God bore unto us, when He determined in His everlasting purpose that we should be brought back again unto Him by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, that was the principal cause. Another cause thereof is Jesus Christ, in whom we find all that is requisite for our assurance. For there we see our sins blotted out, inasmuch as He is ordained to be our surety and has made such amends for us, as nothing can stop us from coming to God.

That is the second point which we have to remember here. Now the means whereby we are made partakers of our Lord Jesus Christ is our embracing of the promises of the Gospel by true faith. For the faithless have no profit at all by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, but rather are so much the more damnable, because they reject the means that God had ordained, and their unthankfulness shall be so much the more grievously punished, because they have trodden underfoot the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was the ransom for their souls. Therefore it stands us on hand to receive the promises of the Gospel by faith, if we desire that Jesus Christ should communicate Himself unto us, and that He should bring us to the possession and enjoyment of the benefits which He has purchased for us: so as they belong not to any other than such as are members of His body, and are grafted into Him, and receive Him by faith, according as it is said in the first Chapter of Saint John, that God accepts and avouches those for His children, which believe in His only Son.

Thus you see what we have to remember in the third place when we come to the scanning of our salvation. Now remains that God be glorified in us, as good reason is that He should be. And in that respect also, Saint Paul in the third to the Romans says that whereas God has given us the means in our Lord Jesus Christ to find favor at His hand by the forgiveness of our sins, and therewithal sent us the Gospel to put us in possession of the same benefit: His so doing is to the end that He only may appear to be righteous and be glorified therefore, so as we should yield Him all praise and acknowledge ourselves beholden to Him for all things. Nevertheless, the glorifying of God consists not only in our confessing with our mouth that He is the author of our salvation, and that the same comes of Him alone, and of His mere goodness and free grace, but also in becoming new men through His Holy Spirit, so as His image shines forth in us, and

we endeavor to give over ourselves wholly to His service. It is said that God has not called us to filthiness and uncleanness, but that His meaning is to make us holy to Himself. Now then seeing the case stands so: it is not for naught that Saint Paul adds here, that Jesus Christ has delivered us from this wicked world by offering Himself for us, and that He has wiped out the remembrance of our sins before God His Father, to the end we should not lie any longer plunged in our own filth and uncleanness, but be as it were separated from the world, to the intent to become the heritage of God, and to dispose our whole life to such obedience, as it may be seen that like as He has adopted us to be His children, so we also have loved and honored Him as our father.

And out of all doubt, when as it is said that we must be taken out of this wicked world, it is a benefit which we ought to be abashed at. For under the word World, is comprehended all that belongs to man in his own nature. The world of itself has in it neither vice nor corruption: but all the evilness of it comes of the sin that dwells in us. So then, whereas it is said that the world is wicked, according also as Saint John in his canonical Epistle says that all the world is steeped and plunged in naughtiness: that wickedness is neither in the Sun, nor in the Moon, nor in the earth, nor in the water, nor in any of all the things that are contained in them: but in that we be so perverted, that we have infected all things here below with our uncleanness: and that as long as men continue in themselves and in their own nature, they be but filthiness, so as they must of necessity displease God.

For surely there can be no agreement between righteousness and unrighteousness. But in us, there is nothing to be found but unrighteousness. Therefore we must either be withdrawn from ourselves, or else we shall never be able to come nigh unto God.

What shall then become of all the blind wretches, which bear themselves in hand that they be able to work wonders with their free will, their virtues, their wisdom, and I wot not what else? According as we see that men do always like well of themselves, and although they are convicted to have nothing but filthiness in them, and that they are so loathsome as it is pitiful to see it, and they themselves ought to be ashamed of it: yet they will still challenge somewhat to themselves, and always deceive themselves with their own fond imaginations. And yet notwithstanding when men have well tried themselves, all that they can find in them shall be condemned under the term of naughtiness or wickedness: insomuch that it is showed thereby that there is nothing but corruption in us, and that if we presume to press unto God as we are of ourselves, He must needs drive us a great way off.

Therefore mark this for a ground, that here all pride is beaten down, to the intent that men may learn to leave their boasting in anything, save in the free goodness of God, and be so abashed in considering their own shame, that they may condemn themselves with their own mouth, and not tarry till God give sentence against them, but become their own judges. This is it in effect which we have to mark. And now we see how it behooves us to walk warily and carefully; that we may be assured that the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ belong to us. For if we will needs give bridle to our lusts, it is certain that our Lord Jesus Christ will disclaim us. True it is that our Salvation rests always upon the only goodness of God, and that we must not intermeddle our own works when we intend to have the certainty of faith, but rather renounce ourselves. Nevertheless, however the case stands, our Lord Jesus Christ has not come to give us occasion to abuse the grace that He has purchased us, for that were a mocking of Him to His face. If we should go wallow again in our own filthiness after that He has washed us in His blood, were it

not a willful defiling of the thing that is most holy, yea and which makes all the whole world holy? Now forasmuch as we are all of us corrupted, and the whole world is subject to cursing, and all of us are condemned: there is not anything to sanctify us again, but only the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And how great and intolerable a treachery were it, if we as much (as in us lies) should fall to besmirching of ourselves again in our own filthiness? Then let us mark well, that to enjoy the fruit of the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must not take liberty to do evil, nor to live after our own appetites and lusts: but we must always come to the separation whereof Saint Paul speaks here, which is to be withdrawn from this wicked world, and not to break asunder the things that are knit together with so holy a band, nor to disannul the order of God. The faithful therefore must give themselves to all pureness of life, and consider that the redeeming of them by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the sacrifice of His death and passion, is upon condition that they should forsake themselves, according also as we hear how our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, that those which will be His disciples, must abase themselves and follow Him. What have we then to do, and what ought to be our travail all the time of our life? We must do our endeavor to withdraw ourselves from the defilements of this world, that we may cleave unto our God in pureness of life. True it is that this thing is not perfected in us until we be quite withdrawn from the world: but yet that is the mark that we must aim at, and whereunto it behooves us to draw more and more. Then like as the faithful resort continually to God's mercy, grounding themselves thereupon, and are not otherwise righteous than by the forgiveness of their sins: so also it behooves them to keep on to the end which Saint Paul sets down to us here, which is to be separated from the world. And those two things are well worthy to be marked. Some fantastical persons have imagined such a perfection, that when we be once regenerated in our Lord Jesus Christ, we have no more need of the forgiveness of

our sins. Insomuch that they say we keep the world still to their Apsie, when we preach that we cannot become righteous but by faith, nor come in God's favor but by His forgiving of our sins, and by His covering of them through His own goodness. But that is a devilish pride, and yet among Papists there is no more praise than that given unto God's goodness.

So then let us abhor such harebrains, and all their blasphemies, when they go about to bewitch us so far, as to make us believe that we have no more need to be pitied of God, nor to have our sins forgiven us. But let us trust unto it, that it stands us on hand to sigh and groan all our life long, and that there is none other hope to assure us of our salvation, but first to yield ourselves guilty, and then to be out of all doubt that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ does continually wash us pure and clean. Mark that for one point. And therewithal let our endeavor always be to be separated from this wicked world. And how? Even by praying unto God to touch us first with His Holy Spirit, and afterward to increase His gifts in us, and to mortify the lusts of the flesh. And since we feel such a battle, so as we be fain to enforce ourselves, or else that we do but limp and halt in going unto God, insomuch that we make many a false step, and oftentimes happen to trip and stumble. Let us mourn continually seeing we fail at all essays. Thus you see how we may be delivered from this wicked world. Namely, not by being set utterly free from sin, like also when Saint Paul says that God has delivered us from our sins to the intent we should live perfectly, and undefiled before Him, it is not for that there can be found any such pureness in any man so long as he is in this world: for all our thoughts do continually rebel against God, yea and even the most righteous men of all shall evermore find themselves behindhand, and perceive that they do still drag their legs after them.

But yet however the world goes, we perceive on the other side, that our Lord Jesus Christ has already delivered us by faith out of the bondage of the Devil, and will maintain us against all assaults. If we fall to examination, and every man try what is in himself, we shall find that when on the one side there is any good desire in us, so as we seek to honor God, on the other side, our own nature leads us the contrary way, so as we would fain keep aloof from Him: insomuch that the faithful must needs feel both those two motions in themselves, namely that when on the one side (as Saint Peter cheers us) the Holy Ghost counsels us to give ourselves to all holiness of life, on the other side, we feel ourselves to be plucked back by many wicked affections, so as we cannot come near unto God as we fain would do. And that is the cause why Saint Paul in the 7th Chapter to the Romans sighs and confesses that he is unhappy, because he cannot do the good that he is desirous to do, nor utterly eschew the evil that he hates and abhors. Thus you see that the thing which we have to mark concerning the deliverance that is mentioned here, is that our Lord Jesus Christ has not so regenerated us already by His Holy Spirit, as to set us in full freedom to walk as we would wish, and to run so swiftly and with so cheerful a courage as were requisite. But His delivering of us is to make us hold on our way still towards our mark, that is to say, to make us yield ourselves wholly in obedience unto God, and to withdraw ourselves from our corruptions, and to forsake them more and more, until the time of full perfection be come, which is when our Lord God shall have thoroughly repaired His Image in us.

Now by the way, although the Galatians were partly slipped away, and had given ear to the busybodies that had disguised the Gospel, and made such a mingle-mangle of it, that Jesus Christ was as good as overwhelmed and buried: yet notwithstanding Saint Paul matches them still with the faithful, for whom the sacrifice was offered,

according also as he places them in the Church of God. He speaks not to the Renegades that had forsaken Jesus Christ. True it is, that he will soon show them their fault: but yet for all that, he does not intend to exclude them utterly from the hope of salvation. For there were no cause for him to write to them, if it were not to draw them back again, and to win them and to bring them again into the good way. Forasmuch then as Saint Paul labors to bring back the Galatians into the way of salvation (as need was:) therefore he admits them still to the inestimable benefit that is purchased for us by the Son of God, and reckons them still as separated from the world, knitting them to the fellowship of those whom God accepts and avows for His children. And that is, because there was yet some seed of the Gospel in them, and although they were snarled in some errors, yet they had not utterly forsaken God, nor gone quite away from the Gospel. For that consideration therefore, Saint Paul holds them back, and reckons them still in the number of the faithful. And so although we be not worthy of it, yet will God reckon us as of His household for His word's sake which is preached among us. No doubt but it shall be to our sorer damnation, if God calls us, and we answer Him not. But if we have any good desire to come unto Him, and yet have still many vices and infirmities in us: He accepts us as His own, for His word's sake. And we are called His Church, not for that we are worthy of that title, but because as the City of Jerusalem was called the holy City in respect of the promises, namely that the Gospel should come from thence, and that the Redeemer of the world should be manifested there: so by like reason we are called the faithful, and the children of God, and are mustered in the array of His Church, when the Gospel is preached among us, and men consent thereto, although it be not with such reverence and perfectness as were meet.

Nevertheless, however the case stands, Saint Paul's using of such mildness towards the Galatians, is not to flatter them in their vices,

nor to soothe them up with fond flattery after the manner of many men, whom we see desirous to be flattered after that sort: but we shall see anon how he rebukes them as sharply as may be, insomuch that he calls them witless. And how can these things agree together? It is for that on the one side, he intends to advance the grace of God, which had been opened in that Church: and that on the other side, he was fain to scour away the vices that were in it, as need was. We see then hereby, that when God has planted His Church in any place, it follows not by and by therefore, that all things are to be commended there, and that there is nothing but all godliness in it, as the Papists imagine, who under the name of the Church would fain cover all their abominations, yea even the most horrible and devilish abominations in the whole world. As how? The Church says they cannot err: she is the bride of Jesus Christ: she is the pillar of truth. Yea, but in the meantime look upon the Churches of Galatia. What says the Holy Ghost of them by the mouth of Saint Paul? Among them there were Renegades that had renounced the Gospel: there were as foul and outrageous heresies among them as could be. Then let us understand, that we must never be so tied to men, as not to condemn their faults when they come to the scanning: but that all things must be made subject to God's word, and everything be condemned that is not agreeable thereto, so as nothing may hinder God from having His authority continually, and from putting all things underfoot which agree not with His word, but that men do condemn them, and utterly abhor them. Furthermore, let us not cease to draw those continually unto God, which have any entrance already. And although we perceive them to be weak or stepped aside out of the way: yet let us always set forth God's grace, that it may grow and be strengthened more and more in them, until we be all gathered thither as we be daily called, that is to wit, to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our faults, praying Him to make us perceive them more and more, and that we may be so touched to the quick, as we may mistake of them, and so embrace His grace, as it may be more and more increased in us, and we be held up and sustained in our weakness by His hand, until He has brought us to the holy perfection of the heavenly kingdom, which is purchased for us by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so let us all say, Almighty God our heavenly Father. &c.

The Third Sermon upon the First Chapter.

> 6 I marvel that you are so suddenly carried away from Him who had called you through the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel.
>
> 7 Which is none other thing but that there are some who trouble you, and would overthrow the Gospel of Christ.
>
> 8 But if I myself or an angel from heaven tell you otherwise than I have told you: cursed be he.

We see here more openly the thing that I have touched already this morning: that is to wit, that Saint Paul spares not the Galatians, although he does not intend to shut them out of the gate of salvation. For inasmuch as his meaning is to bring them back to repentance, it is good reason that he should set the grace of God before them, as a thing common to them. But yet for all that, he flatters them not, but

rather rebukes them for their faults, and especially for the overgreat lightness that was in them in giving ear to deceivers, which came unto them to disguise the doctrine of the Gospel. And to make them perceive their own unthankfulness the better, he says that he wonders to see them carried away so soon and so easily from the heavenly calling, and how it comes to pass that they could be so quickly thrust out of the way, and continue yet still in their doing, seeing that they had already felt and tried God's grace in our Lord Jesus Christ. For inasmuch as he labored to bring them back again, he does not say at the first dash that they had turned away from the Gospel, but that they had been overcome by that temptation. And afterward he adds, that the same was nothing else but that those busybodies intended to overthrow the truth of God. For there is but one pure doctrine of the Gospel, like as there is but one Jesus Christ, upon whom the same is grounded, so as it is not in us to forge a new Gospel, but whenever anybody goes about to mingle anything with the pure seed which we have of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is nothing else but an overthrowing of God's building. This in effect is the thing which is contained in this first sentence of Saint Paul's. But here he might seem to be over sharp and rough in finding fault with the feebleness of the Galatians, seeing they never meant to forsake the gospel, nor yet Jesus Christ who had been preached among them.

Howbeit Saint Paul passes not for their opinion, but has respect to the matter in itself, which is, that as soon as men turn aside from God's truth, by and by they forsake Jesus Christ, and make themselves strangers to him.

Many men would think this strange, according as we see there are many that would fain mingle the light and darkness together. And especially the confusion that is in Popery is a very notable example

hereof: for there you shall hear men make wonderful protestations of holding still the Christian faith wherein they have been baptized.

But yet for all that, it is apparent that all is turned upside down: for all superstitions reign there: and besides that, there is too manifest Idolatry, yea and that as gross as ever was any among the heathen. By reason whereof all reverence of God is as good as quite abolished there, because every man makes himself a Saviour instead of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But now will the Papists lustily reply, that they be no backsliders, nor have forsaken Christ. Yea, but our Lord Jesus Christ is no Ghost, he cannot transform himself after the appetites of men. To be short, he cannot be separated from his Church.

Whenever the Papists utter this saying: they rob Jesus Christ of all authority. For (say they) if there were but one Mediator, what should become of the He-saints which are patrons, and of the She-saints which are our Advocates?

If any man speaks to them of the sacrifice whereby our Lord Jesus Christ has once purchased perfect righteousness for all the faithful: What (say they) and must not Mass be said every day, and Christ be offered up anew there, to appease God's wrath?

If a man tells them of the free forgiveness of sins: and what shall become (say they) of our own satisfactions, whereby we deserve to have pity at God's hand? Again, if a man says to them, that all our goodness comes of our regeneration through God's spirit, and that there is nothing but spotlessness and rebelliousness in us, till God have changed us: how so (answer they) and what shall then become of our own free will?

To be short, Jesus Christ shall be named often enough, and men will reserve unto him the title of Redeemer. But in the meantime his office shall be parted, and put to the spoil, and every man shall catch a portion of it to himself.

Besides this, they imagine that the Saints and Angels of heaven are as patrons to them, and finally they have infinite ways (to their own seeming) whereby to come unto God. But hereupon we may well conclude, that the holy Ghost does justly avow them to be backsliders, and to have given over Jesus Christ, and to have become strangers to him.

For they falsely abuse his name. Jesus Christ is not variable, according as we have seen how Saint Paul in the second to the Corinthians said, that we shall not find yea and nay in him, but that he will continue always at one stay.

To be short, whatsoever the Papists babble concerning Christianity, is altogether hypocrisy and leasing, and they do but falsify the name of God's son, and abuse it wickedly. For they make a mummer of it, or rather an Idol.

You see then why Saint Paul blames the Galatians for being so carried away. Now if a man demand the reason how: it was in that some would have made them to observe the ceremonies of the law as things necessary: and yet had God commanded them.

Yea verily, howbeit that was but with a temporal condition for the people of old time, so as they must of necessity have all ceased at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Forasmuch therefore as the Galatians mingled the old figures and shadows of the law, with the clear light of the Gospel: Saint Paul, being not able to suffer it, says

that they were turned aside from God, yea and utterly fallen away from him.

But there is yet a worse thing than that: namely that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was thereby disannulled, because men do always bear themselves in hand, that they deserve and earn righteousness before God, to be in his favor for their serving of him: and so when these deceivers had brought in the said error, that men ought to keep the old forsworn figures: it was all one as if they had thrust a meritorious service upon God [whether he would or no].

But our salvation must be of free gift, or else Jesus Christ is nothing worth. I term it salvation of free gift because it is given us simply of God, so as we bring not anything with us to the attainment thereof but only an eager desire to be filled with the thing that we want.

Therefore it stands us on hand to come as poor beggars unto God if we mind to be justified for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. For if we imagine never so small a drop of deserving in ourselves, it stops us from coming to our Lord Jesus Christ.

And not without cause does an ancient Doctor say that we cannot receive the Salvation that is offered us in our Lord Jesus Christ, except we have first dispatched the minding of our own deserts, and acknowledged that there is nothing but utter wretchedness in ourselves.

Thus you see why Saint Paul had yet more just reason to say that the Galatians were carried away from Jesus Christ and from his father. But there was yet this clog more: namely that they were made to believe what other men listed, and thereby brought into subjection to a slavish bondage, to be robbed of the quietness of conscience which we ought to have in our Lord Jesus Christ.

For besides that we be reconciled by the sacrifice of his death and passion, we be also set free from the rigor of the law, under which we were held in bondage. As for example (according as we shall see more fully hereafter, for as now I do but overrun matters whereof we shall see a larger discourse afterward).

You know how it is said in the law, that whosoever performs not all that God commands to the uttermost point, shall be accursed. But it is impossible for us to attain to such perfection. Therefore it stood us upon to have freedom purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ, that the Lord might not anymore hold us under his yoke, which was intolerable as it is said in the fifteenth of the Acts.

Now we see in effect why Saint Paul blames the Galatians for falling away like perjured persons towards God, and towards our Lord Jesus Christ, as having given him the slip, and forsaken the faith which they had plighted unto him.

And by this example, we are warned to hold us to the pure doctrine and simplicity of the Gospel, without wavering one way or other. For it is not enough to have the name and title of Christians, no nor yet to bear the mark of baptism: but we must continue steadfast in the doctrine of the Gospel.

For (as I have said heretofore) our Lord Jesus Christ cannot deny himself: and when we have dreamed this and that of him, yet must we be fain to know him for such a one as he is given us of God his father.

Now the Gospel shows wherefore he is come, what his office is, the benefits that we receive by him, and what his power is towards us. And therefore if we have not the pure and single doctrine, wherein our Lord Jesus Christ was manifested unto us: surely we have

nothing at all: and whenever we have once been instructed in it, we must hold it still to the last push.

For if we swerve never so little from it, there will be nothing but unfaithfulness in us. And in good sooth it stands us on hand to bethink us of the horrible fall whereunto we were tumbled with others when we were plunged in so many errors, trumperies, and illusions of Satan, that Jesus Christ was utterly unknown to us.

Seeing that God has now of his own infinite goodness plucked us out of such a bottomless gulf: let us settle ourselves to have a constant and fast faith, that we be no more shaken like reeds with every wind, but abide fast in the root of the Gospel, grounded upon the invincible power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And again, seeing that in him all God's promises are yea, and Amen, and have their truth in him, so as they be performed there: let our faith also abide steadfast there. This is it that we have to remember in this saying of Saint Paul.

Furthermore, to put the Galatians to the greater shame, he sets before them their calling by grace. These words, "from him that hath called you," may be referred as well to Jesus Christ as to God the Father: for there is no great difference in the matter.

But in the meantime we see in effect what Saint Paul meant to say. Therefore, he casteth the Galatians in the teeth with their lewdness, in that they had so much the less excuse of their shrinking aside after that sort, considering the goodness that God had showed upon them. For if God calls us, although it were to summon us to our confusion, yet ought we to obey him because we are his creatures. It becomes us to be subject to his authority, and however he disposes of us, it is always our duty to say, "Behold, Lord, I am at thy pleasure." So that

to use any shrinking away when God calls us is an utter perverting of all order.

Much more when God not only calls us unto him but also sets all the treasures of his goodness before us in our Lord Jesus Christ, and shows that he seeks nothing else but to make us his own by giving himself so willingly unto us, when God (I say) uses such bountifulness towards us as ought to ravish all our wits unto wondering: must we not needs be too lazy if we shrink back?

Moreover, if we fortune to wander to and fro after we be once come unto him, we shall have so much the less excuse, and feel the sorer and horribler condemnation, as I have touched already. Now then we see what is imported in this saying where Saint Paul makes mention of the grace that the Galatians had been called to.

And out of doubt we in these days are much more blameworthy than the fathers that lived under the law if we continue not in the pure doctrine of the Gospel, without turning aside from the things that are contained therein. For albeit that God called the Fathers to salvation under the law as well as us now: yet was not that calling with so open and abundant utterance of the riches of his mercy as we have it in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore let us look well about us, and seeing he has already made us to feel his grace: let the same stir us up and inflame us to be the bolder to have an invincible courage to continue in the same calling until we be come to the place whereunto God allures us.

So then, if we compare ourselves with the great number of misbelieving and ignorant souls, it is certain that our unthankfulness will be so much the greater as God's grace has showed itself larger and deeper unto us. We shall see many silly souls straying here and

there, and yet cease they not for all that to be subject to damnation. For he that has offended without law, shall perish without Law.

Now forasmuch as God has declared his will so friendly unto us, and that together with the use of discretion we have also the doctrine of his Gospel, which (as I have said heretofore) serves to show us that our damnation shall be more horrible if we labor not to dedicate ourselves wholly unto him, by means whereof our bond becomes so much the straighter: Saint Paul adds another circumstance, which is that it came to pass very hastily.

For certainly it was a horrible thing, that the Galatians having been taught by the holy Apostle's own mouth, should be so corrupted as long as he was alive. You see then how it was the more to their blame, that within three [or four] days after their receiving of the Gospel, they were fleeted away and had mingled many false opinions with the truth of God.

But although they had continued in the truth some good while after Paul's decease: yet does it not follow that their so doing might have been a sufficient discharge for them if they had fallen away afterward. For as the truth whereupon our faith rests is everlasting, although both heaven and earth do pass away: so must our faith hold out to the end, and not hang either upon the life or upon the death of any man, but have her anchorhold fastened in heaven.

Therefore, if we change [at any time,] whether it be today or tomorrow, we shall be the more to blame, and our unthankfulness shall be so much the more shameful. And truly, the thing that Saint Paul sets down here in the person of the Galatians is seen nowadays too much. For such as have gotten some smattering of the Gospel will be weary of it within two or three years if there comes no new change in the meantime.

For they have itching ears, and we see many fantastical persons become backsliders: and because the truth of the Gospel likes them not, they would always be fleeting, and have I know not what new stuff brought in, to feed them in their fond speculations. We see others grieved because they perceive that the Gospel advantages them not to the worldward: yea, and there are some that turn away because they see it is an occasion to make them to be persecuted, and to purchase them many enemies, or else they starve (as they think) while other men prosper and fare well.

Thus you see how Jesus Christ is forsaken of many, howbeit not from the Father to the son, but by reason that such as have showed him a fair countenance, are suddenly changed and fleeted away from him within two or three years, or at least within half a score years after. So much the more then ought we to mark well this doctrine, because it is spoken to us: and also to think upon the reproach which Jeremiah laid unto the Jews.

"Go your ways into far countries," says he, "run beyond sea, see what other people do: every man keeps him to his own Idols, and yet there is no Godhead in them: Satan beguiles them under color of devotion, and they be so settled in the same, as they cannot by any means be turned away from it. Now at least wise be you as constant as they, seeing that God has showed himself to you, and you know his will fully and certainly."

Let us beware that the like be not said to us nowadays: for we see the over earnestness of the Turks [in their Religion]. And although the Jews be no better than unclean dogs, yet are they stiff still in maintaining the authority of their Law. As for the Papists, they have nothing but dotages, so beastly as it is horrible to see: even children

are able to judge of them: and yet for all that, we see how they burn with furious zeal to maintain their treacheries.

But as for us, the Devil does no sooner hold up his finger, but by and by we gad after him: it should seem that every of us watches to spy if there come any new toy, and the least occasion in the world will by and by shake us and scare us out of our way: and thereof we see too many examples, even here without going any further.

So much the more therefore does it behoove us to mark the blame that is laid here by the mouth of Saint Paul, against the inconstancy of such as turn away from God, especially so soon after he had called them to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And thereupon Saint Paul says, that it is nothing else but that there be some among them which trouble them, and would overthrow the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here Saint Paul shows that whatsoever men bring besides the Gospel, is every whit of it but stark smoke, and that in the end it will be perceived that the Devil did cast gewgaws in their ways, to cozen silly fools that could not rest wholly upon God's truth.

"It is none other thing," says he, "but that some trouble you." Truly this word "Other" imports that it is nothing else or nothing at all. Nevertheless, Saint Paul declares that the Galatians may well pretend, that they which came from Jerusalem and from the country of Jewry, had told them that they ought not to separate the Law from the Gospel.

"No, no," says he, "there is no more but one Jesus Christ, neither is there any more than one doctrine that leads us unto him, and holds us in the faith, where through we obtain salvation by his means."

So then all such as intend to cleave unto the pure knowledge of the Gospel, and to continue in the same, must not seek any other perfection [than that]: as for them that go any further, they be troublers that overthrow and disorder all things.

And this saying is well worthy to be marked, to the end we may know that when our Lord has done us the grace to teach us in his school, we must no more have a wavering faith to reel to and fro, but a resolute judgment and determination to say, "This is the thing wherein we must live and die."

But you shall see many that will not speak openly against the doctrine of the Gospel, but will suffer the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to be preached. If a man ask them what it is that they find fault with: "Nothing," say they. But let an Altar be never so soon set up, and puppets upon it, and by and by they run to it, they must needs go hear Mass and see all the rest of the Popish trash, they care not which way the world go, and when all those disorders are set before them, they think not that there is any difference at all.

But let us mark that such beastliness betrays that there is no faith in them. And why? For, the thing wherein we may show, yea and (as in respect of ourselves) feel, whether we be faithful, is to have such skill of the Gospel, as to conclude that it is God's infallible truth, and that it cannot lead us amiss if we follow it.

Contrariwise, the Papists have devised an Implicate faith (as they term it) and that is enough for them: and although the wretched souls wot not what they mean themselves, yet notwithstanding, behold (say they) I refer myself to our mother the holy Church, I believe as she believes. But such folk show openly, that they have no faith at all, nor know by what means to be saved.

Nevertheless, it is said that we obtain righteousness and salvation by faith, namely for that we embrace Christ as the party by whom all good things are imparted unto us. Then if our Lord Jesus Christ be unknown, it is no longer faith, but a gross Illusion of Satan, who hath bewitched the Popish doctors to speak after that sort: and thereby we see that they have no knowledge of God, but are utterly given over to a lewd mind.

Wherefore let us mark well, that whereas Saint Paul says here, that there is none other Gospel: it is to hold us still in such steadfastness, that after we have once learned what our Lord Jesus Christ is, we may continue in him, and utterly give over all things that are contrary to the doctrine of the Gospel.

Have we once such skill, it will serve us to fight against Satan and all the diversity of opinions that are at this day in the world, so as we shall not be shaken down what trouble soever happen, nor finally be turned aside from the certainty of our faith.

But if we waver after such a sort that we become like little children, who if one man offer them an apple at one side they run thither, and if another man offer some other pleasant thing at other side they run thither likewise, and leaving the first go to yield themselves to the second.

I say if we be so fickle-minded, it is a token that there is nothing but mere unbelief in us. Then let us assure ourselves, that there must be such a mutual agreement between our faith and the Gospel, that we must give ourselves wholly thereunto, and never be plucked from it, and our knowing of the things that are contained in it, must be to rest ourselves upon them, as I have said already heretofore.

Not that all men can be teachers alike (for it is very certain that the most part of those whom our Lord Jesus Christ has in his flock, comprehend not the tenth part of the understanding of the holy Scripture) but that however the world go, it behooves us all to be grounded in these points, namely that there is but one God the Father, of whom we have all things, and who has adopted us of his own mere mercy: That there is but one only Jesus Christ, by whose means we be made partakers of all good things: And that we be begotten new again by the Holy Ghost:

And as touching our Lord Jesus Christ, it stands us on hand to be well assured that he is our advocate, and that without him we cannot come unto God, nor durst once open our mouths to call him our father, save in respect that we be members of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he bears word for us as our spokesman and patron, guiding us as it were by the hand, to bring us unto God his Father.

If we know not these things, it is certain that we can obtain no Salvation. And that is the cause why Saint Paul blames the Galatians, for that they considered not that there is but one only Gospel, which could not be altered without doing of wrong to our Lord Jesus Christ, who all only ought to have all audience.

Therewithal also he warns us, that whenever there come any busybodies to turn us from the pure simplicity which we ought to hold us to concerning God and our Lord Jesus Christ: we ought to hold them accursed.

For (as shall be said more fully hereafter) they overthrow the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is a right horrible thing, that the Gospel which is the foundation of our faith and the key to open us the gate of Paradise, should be overthrown. For that is all our welfare, that is the kingdom of God from whence we (after a sort) are

banished: and we can by no means come unto him, until he have made us way by means of his Gospel, to the end we may be his people and he our king, and we be guided and governed by his authority.

You see then that the inestimable benefits which are comprehended in the Gospel, are these: namely that men are reconciled unto God: that the gate of Paradise is opened unto us: and that our Lord Jesus Christ is given us for our heritage, so as we be made partakers of all the benefits that he has poured upon us, and that he has warranted our endless Salvation.

Now, were it not better that the whole world should sink and perish, than that all this should be overthrown? That therefore is the cause why Saint Paul tells us, that all such as come to set troubles after we have been faithfully taught, and that all such as bring in any curiosities or foist in this or that of their own brain, do turn men away from the kingdom of God and from his royal seat, to the intent that they should not any more be governed by him, nor the Scepter of our Lord Jesus Christ be any more lifted up among them to their salvation.

Now if we set so much store by God's honor as we ought to do, or esteem it a precious thing to be partakers of all heavenly benefits, or if we make account of our own welfare: ought not every of us to shun those troublers, and to cast them out as deadly plagues of the world, when they come among us and fall to abolishing of the whole Majesty of God, and of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently of our salvation also?

Thus you see in effect, that the thing which we have to mark here, is that we must stick with so earnest a mind to the Gospel, as we may not suffer ourselves to be thrust out of the way by any means, nor

abide that any man should trouble our wits, by bringing in any new thing more than was before. Although the men be never so skillful, subtle, sharp-witted, and eloquent: yet let us shake it off every whit as accursed, if it go about to turn us from the pureness of the Gospel. That is the thing which Saint Paul teaches us here.

And when he has spoken so, he adds, that if he himself, or an Angel came to preach any other Gospel than that which the Galatians had heard and understood, they should shake them off, hold them as accursed, excommunicate them, and take them to be as Devils. Here we see that Saint Paul is (as you would say) hot to maintain the steadfastness of the faith, to the intent we should not by any means be shaken from it, and that is not without cause.

For we see what frailty is in us, and not only frailty but also fondness and rebelliousness, which are yet worse. At the first blush, if a man teaches us God's word, and that we be not touched with it in good earnest: we will think it the strangest thing in the world: for the doctrine will always seem foolish to man's wit, as we have seen heretofore. And what is the reason? Even our fondness, because our wits are wandering and roving, and we be naturally bent and forward to leasing, and desire (as it were willfully) to be beguiled.

Now then seeing that our wits are so marred, it is no marvel though we like not the word of God, or though it have no entrance into us, for all our lustiness is but rebelliousness, and whereas we think ourselves to have reason, we be stark blind: and to be short it is not for nought that the scripture says, that men are nothing but vanity and leasing, yea and rebels to God, so as they draw always back from that whereunto God calls them.

But put the case that God had done so much for us as to draw us to him, and to make us taste that his truth is the thing whereunto it

behooves us to hold ourselves, and that we were so tamed that there were no more wilfulness in us, but that we were ready to yield him all obedience: yet is there such a frailty and inconstancy in us, that the Devil shall easily thrust us out of the way every minute of an hour.

And hereof we see experience even in those that had been as mirrors of holiness, so as you would wonder to see them suddenly changed and gone from the right way. And what is the cause of it? As I said before, although we be in a good forwardness, yet can we not hold our own long, but that we shall by and by go clean awry, except God work in us and amend our frailty.

Thus you see why Saint Paul does with such majesty maintain the doctrine of the Gospel and the occasion thereof was given him by the Galatians, for they were thrust out of the way, by reason that they were borne in hand, that it behooved them to keep the ceremonies of the law.

Saint Paul therefore beholding such an example and image of men's infirmity and over great lightness, says that the belief of the Gospel must surmount all that we can conceive, and that we must not be removed from it, neither by the knowledge, nor by the great cunning, nor by the eloquence of men, in so much that even though the Angels of heaven should deal with us in that case, we should take them to be but Devils.

But howsoever the case standeth, this were very strange. What? The Angels of heaven? And again, what is it that Saint Paul speaks of? His own preaching. He says not simply the Gospel of Christ, but the Gospel which I have preached unto you. And ought that to have preeminence above all the Angels of heaven? First and foremost we see, that it is to no purpose to magnify the doctrine of the Gospel in general and undistinct terms: but we must also therewithal be sure

which is the same doctrine. To be short, there are many among us that can well enough mock at the fondness of the Papists: but if a man pose them in the principles which even young children ought to know perfectly, they can no skill of them: and so that one of them be talking of one man and another of another, all is one to them, they have no discretion, they make such a hotchpotch of the matter, as if a man should jumble salt and water and mustard and very wee all together.

You see then that they can well enough confess in general terms that the Gospel ought to be preached, but in the meanwhile they know not what the Gospel is. Now to correct such faults, Saint Paul says: Namely the Gospel that I have preached unto you. And hereby (as I said) he shows us that we ought to know what substance is contained in the doctrine that is set forth unto us in the name of God, to the intent that our faith may be fully settled upon it, so as we may not be fickle-minded to be tossed with every wind, nor go at all adventure to alter our purpose an hundred times a day, but that we may stand out to the end. This is in effect the thing that we have to bear in mind.

But by the way, it ought to make Paul's doctrine of the more authority, that he speaks so boldly in the maintenance of it, and that not through human rashness and presumption, but in the name of God. For in very deed he stands not here upon the praising of himself in his own person: and that he shows right well in that he says, If I myself. He sets himself foremost, as if he had said, Let me, even me myself I say, be taken for a Devil, if I change the doctrine, or if you find me to have swerved in any manner of wise.

Here Saint Paul shows that he meant not to purchase reputation to himself, nor fought in his own quarrel, to have it said of him that he was a fine-headed fellow, or a wise and excellent man: no, but he

ranks himself in array with the faithful, and says, let us all embrace the doctrine of that Master to whose charge God has committed us, and unto whose government we ought to be submitted. For although I be he that taught you the doctrine: yet is it not mine, but God's who is unchangeable: and although you should see me change, yet be not you removed nor abashed for it, but esteem me as a Devil, hold me accursed, and for your own parts continue you still settled in the truth which you have learned, and as for me, curse you me, and ban you me, yea and the very Angels of heaven too, rather than to change any whit of the truth of God's Son, or to turn aside from it.

Here we see well enough, that Saint Paul sought not aught else, but that God's truth might have such reverence among men as it deserves, and be so received, as all our wits, all our thoughts, all our lusts, and all our affections might be subdued and held prisoners under it, and that it might not be lawful for any living creature to change aught thereof, but that God only might speak by the mouth of his only Son, and we hold him for our Master, yea and every of us obey him without gainsaying. That is the thing which Saint Paul sought. Howbeit forasmuch as we cannot now lay forth the rest, it shall be reserved till the next Sunday if it please God.

Now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us perceive them more and more, and that the feeling of them may draw us to right repentance, and cause us to grow and increase in faith, so as we may be true sacrifices to him: that like as our Lord Jesus offered himself for our redemption, so we also may bethink us to dedicate ourselves wholly unto him, and be guided by him in such steadfastness, that neither in life nor death we may not seek any other contentation and rest, than to apply ourselves to his good will, nor glory in any other thing than in the Salvation that is purchased for us in him. That it

may please him to grant this grace, not only to us but also to all people and nations of the earth, &c.

The Fourth Sermon upon the First Chapter.

> 8 But if I myself or an Angel from heaven tell you otherwise than I have told you, cursed be he.
>
> 9 As I said before, so say I yet again, if any man tell you otherwise than you have received, cursed be he, &c.

We have seen heretofore that we must be sure of the truth of the Gospel, or else our faith is no faith but rather an opinion, if we are ready to stagger to and fro. Now then the very proof which we ought to make of our faith is to be fully settled and resolved in ourselves that God has taught us, and that he has so uttered his will unto us, that if we swerve from it one way or another, it is all one as if we did willfully cast ourselves away. And for this cause we must not only receive God's word as good and holy, but also bear such honor to it, as to hate whatever is against it, yea or which agrees not fully with it. For when Saint Paul speaks here of another Gospel, his meaning is that if men disguise the pure simplicity which they have learned of him, there remains nothing else but untruth and corruption. Wherefore let us learn to set such store by God's doctrine, that we may not only esteem it in itself, but also reject as devilish things

whatever shall be brought contrary or repugnant unto it. And truly Saint Paul thinks it not enough to speak of men, but mounts even unto the Angels of Heaven, and says that we must rather hold them accursed than alter any whit of the faith which we have of the Gospel. He does well to speak of himself first: and he does that, to show that he had no regard of his own person, but that he meant simply to honor God, and to cause his word to be received of all the world without gainsaying.

Therefore, it was needful that Saint Paul should use that protestation: for if any man exempt his own doctrine by privilege, he makes the same a private case. But he that teaches ought to range himself in the common array and to submit himself obediently to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we may not have any other Master in this world of whom to hold our faith, but that the Son of God may have all sovereignty over us as belongs unto him. And Saint Paul speaks purposely of the Angels, because the false Apostles and deceivers that were come into the country of Galatia, pretended the name of Peter, John, and James: and therefore he sets a bar in their way, saying that when they had all that could be on their side, yea and that the whole world took part with them, all that was nothing. Moreover, though they had the very Angels of heaven with them, yet should God nevertheless overrule them by his word, and all creatures be thrust down. For if anything lifts up itself against God's truth, wherein his image shines forth and his majesty and glory ought to be known: the same ought also to be condemned, and to be held as accursed. It might perhaps seem at the first blush, that Saint Paul used an excessive fashion. For to what purpose brings he in the Angels, seeing we know how they are wholly given to do God's will? According as it is said expressly in the 103rd Psalm, and as we see moreover through the whole holy Scripture, that they have not any other regard, than simply to obey God. Seeing then that it is

impossible that the Angels should falsify the pure truth: Saint Paul should not have brought them in. Yea, it might be thought that he does them wrong and injury, considering that God has given them the grace to abide in his obedience, and to walk quietly as he has appointed them.

But it is not without cause that Saint Paul speaks so, for as much as the Devil does always endeavor to bring the things that may be well-liked of, to overthrow the pure doctrine withal. And we see, how that even God's name has at all times been pretended by deceivers, and although they brought nothing but illusions and mockeries, yet notwithstanding they protested with full mouth, that they were sent of God. By reason whereof, the Prophets had much ado in fighting against such as labored to abuse the world under such covert, [in so much that] they were fain to come to the trial, to know whether God spoke by their mouth or no. And we know also how Saint Peter says, that like as among the people of old time there were many deceivers which troubled the Church and brought all things in a broil: so we also in these days must look to have underlings of Satan, which shall labor to sow darnel among us, and the Church must still be subject to the same inconvenience, because God intends to bewray and try whether we be his in truth or no. For the Hypocrites will soon be shaken down, when they find occasion to change. They are so light-headed and fleeting, that they must needs be trotting too and fro.

But God's children which have taken lively and deep root in the Gospel, will never be removed. And therefore does God also give bridle to Satan, who raises up false Prophets as it is said in the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, because God intends to know by experience, whether we love him or no, that is to say, whether we bear him the honor that he deserves, by resting upon him, yea and by resting upon him with a true and unchangeable constancy. Now

seeing that the Devil has in such wise troubled the Church, and so sown his errors as he has taken covert under the name of God: it behooves for the maintaining of that point and article, that God's word abide in its full and perfect state. For when the Pagans worshipped their Idols, they always abused the name of God, and all that they did was Religion as they termed it, and (to their own seeming) there was none other holiness in the world, but the following of their fond devices. But contrariwise the holy Scripture tells us, that all their Gods were but Devils. And what agreement is there between those two sayings? Yea, but forasmuch as the thing that the Heathen men took in hand, was but a masking to unhallow the name of God, and to convey it over to their Idols: therefore it is requisite that that fond opinion should be cut off. And we see at this day how the Pope and all the filthy puddle of his Clergy, do bear us in hand that they be Christ's vicars, and that they represent the Church, and are the successors of the Apostles. All this gear must be beaten down, or else we shall never know what faith we ought to stick unto. You see then after what manner Saint Paul alleges here the Angels. As if he should say, whatever authority of men be alleged, it cannot in any wise prejudice God or his word. For his word must have the upper hand, and all high and excellent things in this world must stoop and be brought low: and not only the mortal creatures, but even the Angels also, inasmuch that if it could come to pass (which thing is impossible) that an Angel should set himself against God, he ought to be abhorred. And let us not think that the Angels are wronged herein. For what is all their glory and dignity? It is to do service to their Maker, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is their head as well as ours. So then, if a man make bold with their name to the end that Jesus Christ be glorified, and that his Gospel may abide in perfect soundness unimpaired: therein the Angels are willing to yield, so their name serve to such use, for that is their chief desire.

Thus you see why Saint Paul makes bold with the name of the Angels, although he means not that they can at any time shrink from their obedience unto God. And he repeats the same sentence again, saying, that whosoever shall bring any new Gospel, let him be held as accursed. Now first of all we see here, how God intends to be honored and served at our hands: namely not with strange Ceremonies and fashions as men are wont to do: but our chief service is to hearken unto him, and as you would say to bridle ourselves, holding all our senses prisoners under his word when he speaks unto us, according also as he himself protests in his prophet Jeremiah. "Have I," says he, "demanded Sacrifice of thy fathers? No, but the thing that I required of them, and which I still require of you as the homage that you owe unto me, is that you hearken to my voice." In that text, God shows, that men may well over-labor themselves in bringing their own devotions to him upon hope to please him thereby, but all shall be but filthiness, till we have learned to hearken to his voice, and to obey him. Mark well this point which is very notable, lest we labor in vain as we see the wretched Papists do. For it has always been a common disease in the world, that men knowing well that they were created to serve God, have tormented themselves & taken much pain [to do it,] & yet all has been vain & unavailing, because they began not at the right point of ruling their life by the will of God, and of settling themselves fully to take nothing in hand but that which he commanded them.

You see then that the means to have our service acceptable unto God at this day, is to give ear unto him, to suffer ourselves to be taught by his word, to be governed altogether thereby, and to frame our life with all our deeds & thoughts fully according to the same. And herein we see the benefit that God has given us in calling us to the knowledge of his Gospel. On the other side, we see (as I said afore) how the poor Papists rise early, & busy themselves about this & that,

without end or ceasing of their travels: & yet in the meanwhile, not only the time is lost, & their labor is vain & unprofitable, but also they themselves are abominable before God. Then seeing the case stands so: let us make account of the grace that God has granted us in declaring his will unto us, & let us understand that we must not walk at adventure, but discern between good and evil, howbeit not after our own wit and imagination, but by going to God's school, & by learning the things that he allows, assuring ourselves that nothing deserves to be esteemed, save the framing of ourselves to the rule which he has given us by his word. Mark that for a principle. And herewithal we see also what the majesty of the Gospel is, & that it is not for us to bring in men's opinions in that case to wrap ourselves in any doubt as the Papists do nowadays, who have none other buckler against us, but the traditions of the Church, Councils, and Antiquity. Howbeit when they have thronged all the world together, will it be able to counterbalance the Angels of heaven? No certainly.

Now then we may well mock at their foolishness after the example of S. Paul, and say that if the Pope and all the rabble of his stinking Clergy had the Angels on their side, it were nothing at all in comparison of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has all sovereign power, and before whom all knees ought to bow, not only of mortal creatures, but also even of things that are aloft in heaven, according as it is said in the Epistle to the Philippians, where this saying is applied to his person, in that God swears that all knees shall bow before him, & all tongues confess that he only is to be glorified.

You see then that the way for us to commend the doctrine of the Gospel, is to abide unmoved by the authority of men, & (when it is told us that such a one is of this opinion or that,) to assure ourselves that seeing God has given us the grace to be fully resolved in our minds, it behooves us to hold us always to it without changing. This

is in effect the thing that we have to consider in this sentence: Now hereupon S. Paul shows, how it was not without cause that he spoke so of his Gospel that he had preached. For he says that he teaches not after the manner of men, or that he does not set forth men, nor counsel [them] after the manner of men, but that he sets forth God, and seeks not to please men, but Jesus Christ. Afterward he adds, that his Gospel is not of men, but that it was revealed to him from above, as I have declared already.

It had not been enough for S. Paul to have spoken of the Gospel in general, except he had showed therewith, that he had been a true & faithful minister of it. For the Devil can well enough away, that the name of the Gospel should be of very great estimation among us: but in the meanwhile he would not have us to know what it means, nor cease to be entangled in store of errors, & to have our wits roving here & there. Then it is not enough, that the name of the Gospel be honored in the world: but we must also know what manner of thing the Gospel is, and what is contained in it.

And that is the cause why S. Paul challenges that faithfulness of teaching the Gospel, in so much that if any whit of it be changed, let the same be accursed. And this yet again is well worthy to be noted. For when the Papists read this place, they do nothing but scoff at it: and God also has dulled them, so as there is less wit in them, than in little children. For they understand it [thus: namely] that Paul meant, that if a man should make another Gospel, as if a man should write a book, and the same should not be the Gospel that was written by him, then they should utterly reject it, because the Gospel was sufficiently proved already. But in the meantime they thought not that all that was contained in Paul's Epistles was every whit of it Gospel: but they rather surmised, that he had written some story of the Gospel, and that if any other had been brought in upon the

refusal thereof, the same that had been so brought in, should have had no credit nor reputation.

But we see that in that case these wretched beasts have neither reason nor understanding, nor any taste at all. So much the more therefore does it stand us in hand to mark, that S. Paul had good cause to speak of the Gospel which he had preached, even to show as it were with his finger the doctrine which it behooves us to be fully persuaded of. Will we be of the flock of our Lord Jesus Christ? Then is it not enough for us to accept whatever is told us in his name: but we must put that thing in practice which is spoken in the tenth of Saint John, which is, to be able by hearkening unto his voice, to discern his voice from the voice of strangers, and to be always fully persuaded, that there is not any other than he, to whom we ought to yield.

Thus you see how the way to be under the guiding of our good shepherd, is that we swerve not one way nor other when men assail us, but every of us endeavor to draw home to himself, so as we become not like wavering reeds, but stand steadfast in the doctrine which we shall have learned. In so doing our Lord Jesus Christ will avow us to be of the company and number of his sheep, and always do the duty of a shepherd towards us.

But if we play those men who care not which end goes forward, in so much that if a man tells them that Jesus Christ is the only one upon whom we must rest to have any trust of Salvation: it is well, they can like well enough of that doctrine: and on the contrary part if a man set store of trumpery before them, and go about to trouble their wits with this and that, [they can well enough away with that too] and all is one to them: if there be no discretion in us, it is a token that we have no certainty of faith. For we must be out of all doubt, that Jesus

Christ is the only Master, seeing that that charge is committed to him by God his father, and also that he has fully performed the same. If we be not at that point, it is certain that we shall always be carried away with opinion and imagination, and that there shall be no faith at all in us.

And that is the cause also why S. Paul declares, that the Gospel which he had preached, is the same which our Lord Jesus Christ commanded to be preached and published, and whereof he is the author in the name of God his father. Seeing it is so: it behooves us to hold us to it: and so consequently when S. Paul speaks of another Gospel, he means the minglemangle and corruption that might be put unto it: as if he should say, Whatever is added or patched to the doctrine of the Gospel by man's device, so as they cannot content themselves with the simpleness thereof, but that they do vary from it: is every whit of it mere leasing. And therefore let us shun it as a poison, for surely no poison can be so deadly as a false doctrine.

And if men do naturally keep themselves from the things that may hurt this transitory life: ought not our souls to be much more precious to us? What care ought we to have that they be not poisoned by any trumpery of men? To be short, let us be sure that as soon as any by matter is added to the pure doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is plain falsehood. For he will not only be held as principal, but he must continue alone without any companion, and all those that teach, must first become his scholars, so as he that speaks in the Church set not down anything of his own, or which has been coined in the warehouses of men, but show himself to be the true disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ, and teach us all by the authority of him. Mark that for one point.

And for a second, it behooves us to know what is contained in the Gospel. For if the word Gospel should trot up and down in every man's mouth, and yet in the meanwhile men make us believe that Chalk is Cheese, as they say: what a thing were that? What should we be the better for giving so honorable report to the Gospel, as to say it is God's pure truth, whereunto all creatures ought to submit themselves? It stands us in hand to know what is the substance of it, so as we may be sure that the Son of God is come down hither to guide us unto God his father, to the end we may understand after what manner he will be worshipped at our hands, and furthermore be made privy to God's will, that we may frame our whole life thereafter, and not invent a service after our own lust and liking, but yield him that obedience which he requires and allows above all things.

Again, we must [learn to] know how miserable our state is, if we intend to seek our salvation in ourselves. For there is nothing in us but ignorance, infirmity, weakness, yea and stubbornness and wicked lusts: and to be short, we are held in Satan's bands, so as he draws us like silly beasts, even as Asses and Oxen that are sold: and if we intend to be set free from so horrible bondage, and tyranny, we must go to none but God, assuring ourselves that he is the fountain of all welfare. Furthermore forasmuch as we cannot come unto God, but we must first come to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is come down unto us: so as we must seek all that we have need of in his fullness, and repose our whole trust there, and not have any other preparation, righteousness, holiness, or perfection than him, but be utterly emptied in ourselves, and yet notwithstanding not cease to trust that he will lead us to God his father.

We must also understand by what means we be justified, that is to wit, by the sacrifice of his death and passion. Besides this, when we

come to pray unto God, let us resort unto him as our Advocate, that he may bear word for us. You see then that the thing which we ought to know concerning the Gospel, is that there is but one only law whereby to rule our lives: that we must have but one certain belief, so as we know the God whom we should serve and worship: that we behold him in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ who is his very Image: that we must have none other thing to rest upon than Jesus Christ: and that all our thoughts must be directed thither, assuring ourselves that in him the father has put all things requisite for our salvation, and that he also does by the power of his holy spirit, guide and govern us, in such wise, that being under his protection, we be sure that the Devil and all his champions can do nothing against us, when we be so preserved by his power.

This is the contempt of the Gospel, which it behooves us to know, or else the things that are spoken here will do us no good at all. Furthermore, S. Paul, to show that he does not without cause prefer himself before those who went about to disguise the doctrine of the Gospel by thrusting in some minglings and additions, uses two arguments. The one is, that he had behaved himself faithfully and with a pure and right meaning mind in teaching the Galatians and all other men. The other is that he had not set forth anything of his own head, but had received his matters by heavenly revelation from our Lord Jesus Christ. Now it behooves us to mark well these two arguments, to the end we may perceive that S. Paul has not without cause declared heretofore, that this doctrine of his ought to be of good credit, and that it was not lawful for any living creature to strive against it. Hereupon we may gather a general rule, how we ought to be sure of our faith. For the Angels shall not come down to speak to us after a visible manner, but we must be taught by the mouths of men. And yet for all that, (as I have said already) we must hold this for an infallible conclusion, that we have the doctrine whereupon our

faith is grounded and settled, from God and from our Lord Jesus Christ. And how shall we perceive that? By the two reasons that are set down here. Whereof the one is, that such as teach us have a desire and zeal to bring us unto God, and arm not themselves with the title and name of men, no nor have anything at all of man, but follow the trace which God has commanded all his to keep, that is to wit, that they win the world unto the obedience of him. Let that serve for one point.

Secondly, besides their good zeal, they must also have a certainty [of doctrine] so as he that speaks may not take anything upon him, nor pass his bounds, but from hand to hand deliver the thing that is commanded him, in such wise as Jesus Christ may always be heard, and suffered to speak, and all mouths else be stopped, saving only in way of hearkening, that his doctrine may be known unto us. Now as touching the first, where S. Paul protests his good mind: he says that he does not counsel [or persuade] according to men, but according to God. And hereby he means, that he went not to work with a worldly affection, but had labored to apply himself simply unto God, seeing he had been called by him: and also that he had taken Jesus Christ for his master, so as he laid not forth anything but him, nor took any backfence of men, as those do who would allure simple and ignorant folk unto them, who hunt for credit here and there, saying: ho, such a man saith so. But it is only God that is to be hearkened unto. For though all men with one accord would turn us aside from him: surely he alone ought to outweigh ten hundred thousand worlds, if there were so many. Then seeing the case standeth so, let us mark well the doctrine that is contained here, where S. Paul sets down his own affection, which serves to give us a general rule: according whereunto he adds immediately, that he had not labored to please men. For as soon as folk speak after the appetite of men, God's truth must needs be corrupted. Also, he adds, that if he should please men, he were not

the servant of Jesus Christ. But the devil has many means and sleights to darken God's truth, in such wise, as it may well seem unto us that we be still with God, and yet in the meanwhile we shall be a great way off from him, unless we have wisdom and discretion as it is given us here. Therefore let us have the skill to discern God from men, so as we may not be abashed nor amazed when we see many contrarieties, much diversity of opinions, and many encounters and disputations. Let none of all those things make us change our belief. And why? Let us look no more but whether we can be sure in God: if we have that once, let us boldly despise the whole world. But if we are not well settled in our faith: it is certain that every blast of wind will overthrow it; or at least make it to stagger to and fro. Therefore let us take such taste, as we may know that God has truly had pity on us, to the end to show us his will: and let us look well to such

as teach us, [and mark] of what mind they be led and governed, whether they seek to obey God on their own part, and to lead us in the same way by their own example. Furthermore, when S. Paul says, that if he should please men he were not the servant of Jesus Christ: that doctrine implies very much. For we know well enough what men are of their own nature, how there is nothing in them but iniquity and stubbornness against God. Then if we mind to pleasure them: we must give over God and have nothing to do with him. For men always go backward if they are not compelled to come unto God, and they kick against him like wild beasts. Therefore we cannot please them but by straying from God, and by giving the bridle to such as leap out, aft at one side, and aft at toother: yea and even the good men could sometimes find in their hearts, that God should apply himself to their appetites. For although they be still minded to serve him: yet are they not at all times, and in all points so well ruled, as to have given over all their own opinions, likings, and desires, but that sometimes they shall every one of them be tempted to do one thing

or other, insomuch that if we were not held short, and made to retire out of hand, we would run to our destruction. To be short, there is none of us all but he would be pleased, insomuch that if they which have the charge to build and teach the Church, would please men: they should be fain to renounce our Lord Jesus Christ. And hereby all Ministers of God's word are taught to shut their eyes when they intend to discharge their duty faithfully, so as they must not look aside to regard men according to their disordered desires which they see, but set aside all desire of their good liking and favour. And if they purpose to lead those unto God who would else be stubborn hearted: whatsoever come of it let them so deal, that God may have his right, and that our Lord Jesus Christ may have his authority. For (as I have said already) what is to be done when we speak in his name? We must not only generally condemn all that is of our own nature, but also so ransack men's consciences, as every of them may feel that God executes his jurisdiction there, and that the Gospel is not only a lancing iron to prick, but also a sword that pierces

to the marrow of the bones, as the Apostle says in the Epistle to the Hebrews.* There must then be neither thought nor affection, which the Gospel must not search. Truly it cannot be but that they who are so wounded, must needs groan and have some grief and heartbiting. But yet must we shut our eyes at all that, and not regard what men covet or desire, but pass on still forward. Furthermore, this warning serves not only for the Ministers of God's word, but for all men in general. Therefore if we desire to be Christians, let us learn to do so much honour to the Son of God, that although his word be not very well to our liking, nor we find favour in it according to our natural wit: yet notwithstanding we may not cease to receive it obediently. And so when any man comes to a Sermon, let him first and foremost make his reckoning to be rebuked as meet is, and let him understand that it is for his profit that he is not soothed. And if he have itching

ears, let him lay them away from him, assuring himself that else he is foreclosed, so as he shall never receive the doctrine to his profit and instruction. Wherefore let us all suffer our sores to be rubbed, and ourselves to be condemned, and to be dealt with clean contrarie to our liking. Thus you see how every of us ought to be prepared, if we purpose to be scholars to the Son of God, and to yield him the mastery which belongs unto him. And we ought to endeavor this thing so much the more, forasmuch as we see our nature drives us to the contrary way. For we are blinded with self-love, and every of us covets to be honored: but honored we cannot be, but by flattery and lying. For who is he among us that deserves to be commended? There is nothing but filthiness and infection in us before God. For all the goodly virtues which we have to outward show, are but corruption till God has reformed us.

So then it is certain, that all that ever we have of our own nature must be cleansed, or else we shall rot in our own wretchedness. And therefore, forasmuch as there is no other means to draw us to salvation, but by cleansing us of all our vices, and the same cleansing cannot be done but by violence: when we are warned by the doctrine of the Gospel, so as our own consciences rebuke us, although we like well to be now and then flattered and soothed, yet let us seek to be spoken to earnestly, and to have our faults told us, and to be made ashamed of them, and to have our dishonesty discovered, and not desire to be pleased: for it would be the next way to make us rot in our own naughtiness if we should hold it so in secret: and it would cost us dearly the setting on, if we should be so flattered by men, and in the meantime, the heavenly Judge should thunder down upon us. Thus you see how every of us ought to profit himself by that which S. Paul speaks here, namely that if the preachers gratify and please men, in so doing they renounce God: and if they renounce him, what shall become of the rest of the people? Whither shall they be led but

to the devil? Therefore when any man comes to a Sermon, let him bear well in mind, that he who preaches speaks not of his own authority, but in the behalf of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God his father has appointed to be our judge. And to what end is Jesus Christ our Judge? To the end that every of us should condemn himself, and that having so passed condemnation, we should resort to him to be quit. Now then if a mortal man cover my sins for some love that he bears to me: will the heavenly Judge spare me because he spares me? Were it not better that he who has the charge to teach me should condemn me, and show me my faults, to the end I might be sorry for them, and learn to dislike of the thing that would bring me to destruction? Ought not I to take the proffer, while God has his arms stretched out to receive me, and while Jesus Christ comes before me, offering me up to God his father, as an acceptable sacrifice of sweet savor? And so, must it not needs be that we are as good as mad and bewitched by Satan, if we cannot abide to have our sores rubbed and betrayed, that we may be brought to that which is for our welfare? If a man pleases a sick body, what will become of him? Shall he give him drink every minute of an hour? Shall he give him wine whereas he should give him water? Shall he give him salads? It would be the next way to poison him. To be short, it is certain that a man always seeks his own death when he would have men to soothe him. But now which is the better, either that he who has the ordering of a sick man should yield to all his desires, or that he should bridle him notwithstanding that he chafe at it and gnash his teeth, and storm because he may not have his own will in his desires?

But it is certain that if there be inordinate desires in sick folks, there are much more inordinate desires in us. What would become of us then, if they that have the charge to bear abroad God's word, and ought to play the physicians, had not a care to keep us from the things which they know to be hurtful to us, and to minister the things

unto us which they know to be for our welfare? For surely if they should soothe us in our affections, it would be the way to cast us quite down. This in effect is the thing that we have to consider, when S. Paul speaks of his affection. Now he adds the second argument: namely that he had not his gospel of men, but by revelation from heaven. He confirms still his matter, in that he says that neither Peter, nor John, can have any such reverence in their own persons, as that men should be bound to hearken to them as of themselves, for that is reserved to God alone, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, and they must not have any companion. Then since it is so, let us learn to look up when the case concerns the certainty of our faith, and let us surmount all that is in this world, and quite and clean give over men. And though they be never so excellent, yet let not our faith rest here beneath, nor upon any creature, but let it be grounded upon God.

The Papists will say, we are full of pride and stateliness, for that we will be wiser than all the world. Truly if we rested upon our own wit and thinking, or upon our own opinion, it would be too great a pride. But forasmuch as we walk in humility, shrinking down from all our own reason and wisdom, and acknowledging that we must be fools in this world if we will obtain the wisdom of God: Seeing (I say) that we have such a modesty and soberness in us, and attempt not to know more than is lawful for us, but in the meantime do so magnify God's doctrine, so that we can defy all that is of the world: that loftiness must needs be good, for it is the thing wherein God will be glorified. Therefore we may defy the Crosses, Miters & Gewgaws of the world, and all the horns of the Pope whereby he advances himself against God: I say we may defy them, yea and abhor them, as things full of filthiness and infection, whereby our mortal enemy Satan goes about to poison us. And therewithal let us be so settled upon God's truth, as we may triumph over all that is against it, assuring ourselves, that our faith must get the upper hand of all that ever sets itself against it

to batter and bear it down: the which thing to do, Satan never forgets to torment us as much as is possible. But if we be once strengthened in our God, let us not fear that we shall be vanquished by all his temptations: for we are sure that as long as God is on our side, we may esteem all that shall come of creatures to be no better than smoke.

Now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us feel them more and more, till we be utterly rid of them, and that so long as we have to live in this world, he will bear us up in our weakness, till he have remedied it, and we be thoroughly reformed according to the perfection of his righteousness whereunto he calls us. And so let us all say, Almighty God our heavenly father. &c.

The Fifth Sermon upon the first Chapter.

> 11 But brethren, I do you to wit, that the Gospel which was preached by me, is not of man.
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> 12 For I received it not of man, neither learned I it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, &c.

We saw this morning that all those who have the charge and office to teach in God's Church must forget all liking and favor of the world; for otherwise, they can never discharge their duty faithfully, considering how men always desire and covet to be flattered and cannot abide to have their faults rebuked as they ought to be. Thereupon, I told you also that every man must rid himself of all fleshly affections so that they may become true disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. For as long as we follow our own lusts, the gate shall be shut against us, and we shall never have any entrance into the Gospel. And truly, we see how the Prophet Isaiah speaks thereof. He says that all those who want men to preach pleasurable things to their liking drive away God as far off from them as they can. True it is that they will not speak after that sort. For even in the country of Judea, every man protested to serve the God that was revealed to their father Abraham, and who had published his law by Moses. Sacrifices were offered in the Temple, and there were fair shows enough there. Nevertheless, the Prophet concludes in one word that men were desirous to be soothed and fair-spoken to, and by means thereof could not suffer God to guide them nor give Him leave to lay His yoke upon their necks. You see then that the means for us to be prepared to receive the doctrine of the Gospel and to be edified by the same is that we are not wedded to our own likings but suffer our Lord Jesus Christ to speak the things that are expedient for our

instruction. However, besides this, we must also be, as it were, wounded to the heart by the word that is preached to us, or else we shall never fare the better for it.

For as I declared this morning, it is not without cause that the Gospel is likened to a sharp sword, and it behooves us verily to be made true sacrifices by renouncing all our own lusts and all other things which God condemns, and to endure the same patiently to the intent to be wholly brought back to the obeying of His will. And herewithal, we must also call to mind what has been treated of heretofore, that is to wit, that all men, as well great as small, must stoop, and the Son of God must have the preeminence and mastery, in such wise as there may be no more shepherds but He, and we all of us be His sheep. True it is that those who have the charge to preach the Gospel may well be called shepherds; however, that is not because they may do anything in their own name and authority or that the same should impeach the superiority of the Son of God. For as for me who speak here now, I must not bring aught of mine nor advance myself above others, for my speaking unto all this company is in such wise that my doctrine must first be applied to myself and afterward bear sway over all other men without any exception. For there is no highness in the world which can exempt itself from the subjection which all of us owe to the Son of God. According as we have seen heretofore, how it is the property of the Gospel to bring down all the glory of the world, so as men may not presume to set up their bristles nor to challenge ought to themselves, but that such as ween themselves to be most excellent may be utterly abased and made nothing, and all things be made captive to the obedience of the Gospel. And that is the cause why Saint Paul, to confirm his doctrine, declares that it came not of men nor was learned in their schools but that he had it of our Lord Jesus Christ, concerning whom the Father gave commandment that men should hear him.

For that prerogative is given peculiarly unto him and ought not to be communicated, neither to any man nor to any angel of heaven. Good reason it is that men who speak as instruments of our Lord Jesus Christ should be heard; but (as I told you before) that is not to impeach the authority which he has over us. But however the case stands, the certain and infallible rule to attain to salvation is that our Lord Jesus be the only master and teacher, and that we be teachable to receive his word without gainsay or replying. And Saint Paul thinks it not enough that he holds the things of Jesus Christ which he has published, but also he utterly rejects and excludes men in that behalf, to show that the authority of them were not sufficient to ground and settle our faith upon. For we shall never leave staggering till we come unto God and unto that person whom he has established as head and chief teacher over us. Now whereas Saint Paul says that he tells it to them, it is not because the Galatians and others had not heard the like before, but because they had been unthankful, so as they had been entangled in many errors and paltries. Therefore, he brings them back again to the wellhead, as if he should say, until such time as men have fully concluded with themselves to suffer themselves to be governed simply by the pure word of God, they shall be always in a mammering, and the Devil shall no sooner raise up any trouble against them, but they shall be so dismayed as they wot not which way to turn them. For it behooves us to be first of all sure that as touching the doctrine whereupon our faith is settled, we hold it of God and not of men. True it is that all men shall not have the like revelation that Saint Paul had, but it ought to suffice us that our Lord Jesus Christ, having ratified the Gospel with his own blood, and also commanded his Apostles to publish it abroad, has given them such proof that the doctrine which we receive of them is of full authority and utterly out of all doubt. This, I say, ought to suffice to hold us as it were in prison and to keep us from admitting any of all the things that men can allege. But let us also call to mind what the

Apostle tells us in the first to the Hebrews, namely that God has lastly spoken to us by the mouth of his own son, to the intent we should have all perfection of doctrine in him.

You see then that the thing which we have to bear away is that the revelation whereof Saint Paul speaks here shall not be common to all other men but serves to warrant the doctrine which we have received by his means, so as we see it is our Lord Jesus Christ that has spoken. And whereas he excludes men after that sort, it is to show us that our Lord Jesus Christ does not give us some bare entrance, as if a man should teach a child his ABC, and afterwards send him to a better-learned master. Our Lord speaks not so by halves unto us but in full perfection, insomuch that both in life and death, we must always stand steadfast in the things that we receive of him and forsake whatever comes of men; for all mingling will be but corruption, as I told you this morning. And that also is the cause why he exhorts those who speak in the Church to hold fast continually the Majesty of God and not to bring in aught of their own nor to put forth anything which breeds of their own brain. For in what case should we be if men might intermeddle themselves with our Lord Jesus Christ, and every man cast in his morsel and collop (as they say), and that we might have a Gospel stuffed with men's dreams and fancies? It would be nothing else but a horrible confusion. You see then that our Lord Jesus Christ has not his authority among us until men are put down, and all other creatures with them, and that all give ear unto him from the least to the most. This in effect is the matter which we have to bear in mind. And indeed, we see how that in another text to the Corinthians, Saint Paul declares that he had preached the perfect wisdom when he did set forth our Lord Jesus Christ, and that there a man shall find whatsoever he can wish for his welfare.

And in another text to the Ephesians, he says that that is the thing unto which we must apply all our study, both far and wide, so as we need not to bring any petty trash to further the thing that he had set out before. Then, since it is so, we see that all such as entangle themselves in men's devices and inventions have a disguised Jesus Christ and a bastard Gospel which God disclaims, so that our Christianity can be no Christianity unless we continue in the things which we have learned of the Son of God, who is our only Master, and in the things which the Apostles also have taught us in his name. Lo, what we have to remember in this text. Now, hereupon Saint Paul shows his own conversation, whereby it may be gathered that out of doubt he was as it were fashioned by the spirit of God. For so strange an alteration as was seen in his person could not happen except God had put to his hand and wrought after a secret and unaccustomed fashion. And so you see in effect whereat he aimed when he says that the Galatians knew his conversation or manner of living. We have here a good lesson.

However, that we may profit the more by it, let us mark how Saint Paul continues the thing that he had touched before, which is that a man shall not find a steadfast foundation in any creature whereon to settle faith, but that God only must be the founder thereof, and although men be means and instruments of it, yet notwithstanding they have need to be authorized of God and to have it known that he has sent them and allowed them, and that they bring not anything which they have not received of him. Now, if a man have an eye to the virtues that were in Saint Paul, certainly he deserved well to have some credit and audience among men. Yet notwithstanding, he acknowledges and confesses that he is nothing as in respect of himself, and that all that ever he has is only to serve our Lord Jesus Christ and to set forth the things faithfully which he has received of him. What shall we then say to such as have neither good life,

doctrine, nor aught else? Whereas they call themselves Prelates and take upon them some stateliness and superiority so as their sayings go for saws: are they therefore advanced above Saint Paul? [Admit they were:] yet must all loftiness of man cease and be pulled down so as nothing may hinder the exalting of Jesus Christ. For example, although Saint John the Baptist had record borne unto him that there was not a more excellent man born of woman, yet notwithstanding, he says that both himself and others must be diminished, that Jesus Christ might grow and increase. Likewise, Saint Paul speaking of it in another place says that the Church must in such wise be builded as our head Jesus Christ may always have preeminence. For if we should so advance men that Jesus Christ should be defaced among them, that were a terrible building, and such a one as should bring nothing but ruin and confusion. And in good sooth, if a man should become as big as a pillar of this Church, and his head of the bigness of one's fist so as it should be hidden between his shoulders: he should be a monster, and it were much better for him to keep his ordinary proportion. But like as the Church is the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, so must he be advanced above all men, and every man must look upon him and stick to him. And certes, the Papists condemn themselves at this day by their own proverb, in that they say a man cannot know God but for his Apostles. And in very deed, they have buried Jesus Christ in such sort that he is as good as hidden in the world. For they have robbed him of all that belonged to him, insomuch that whereas he is called the lawgiver, the Judge, and the King, to show that he alone ought to bear rule, we see how men have decked themselves with all those feathers.

Therefore, let us keep ourselves from such confusion, and if we increase, let us always abide in the root and groundwork of the simplicity of the Gospel. Let us take good heed that we swerve not a

hair's breadth from it. And as touching that which is rehearsed here concerning the conversion of Saint Paul: it tends still to this end, namely, to do us to wit, that he did not thrust himself in of his own head, but that God reached him his hand, and that the doctrine which he had preached was given him by revelation, so as it might safely be held as the word that proceeded out of the mouth of God, and consequently as the certain and infallible truth. I have told you heretofore that if a man seeks to be heard for his own skill, for his great and deep understanding, for his fair speech, or for his great eloquence: all those things are nothing but filthiness and dung, and that God only must have that authority and honor at our hands, and that inasmuch as it pleases God to speak to us by the mouth of his only son: only Jesus Christ must have the preeminence to be the master and teacher of all his, and we likewise must become his flock to hear his voice. Lo, how our Lord Jesus Christ is to be honored among us: namely by becoming his true scholars, and without feigning. In the Papedom, a man may well enough worship some Marmoset with the honor of Jesus Christ, when as in the meantime the Gospel is trodden underfoot and blasphemed, and yet notwithstanding those blind wretches think themselves to have made a fair hand. Yea, but [in very deed] it is an open spitting in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ when men renounce his word wherein they should behold his glory and majesty, as Saint Paul says in the second to the Corinthians.

Then it is no honoring of Christ when men make many mummery and ceremonies, but when they submit themselves simply to the doctrine wherein it is his will to be known, and wherein he shows himself unto us as it were face to face. Thus you see in effect what we have to bear away. And herewithal, in this conversion of Saint Paul, we see perfectly the heavenly power which he minded to show us here: that is to wit, that it was not of man, but that God had uttered

his arm, to the end it might be known that such change came of him, and that Saint Paul was become a new creature. For surely it is a more excellent work of God when a man is repaired after his image than when we are born into this transitory life. And so we see how Saint Paul was made a new man. And that is the cause why he says expressly that he persecuted the Church of God, that he made havoc of all things, and that he played the cutthroat (as you would say), until God had changed him, and of a ravening wolf made him a meek sheep, and finally a shepherd in his Church under our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus then we perceive that Saint Paul was sent us by the hand of God, and that he brings a sure mark, so as we see he did not thrust himself in, but that it was a work of the Holy Ghost, and there was nothing of his own coining in the doctrine that he preached, for so much as it behooved him to have quite and clean renounced himself, to the end to give and apply himself to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. For had Saint Paul been led with vainglory, we are sure he was honored among his own countrymen, and he could have won his spurs there. Again, if he had stood upon the reputation of a holy life, he was unblamable. On the other side, he was at his ease and lived in rest. But it stood him on hand to have made no more account of all the things that are to be desired to the worldward, and which he had highly esteemed before, than of dung and dirt (as he himself protesteth to the Philippians), and it behooved him to cast them all away as things hurtful, for as much as he saw well how they were all of them impeachments that hindered him from coming to our Lord Jesus Christ. Saint Paul therefore not only gave over the reputation which he had to be a great doctor, and therewithal a holy man, and as it were a little angel, and moreover the rest, ease, and commodities of the world, but also did before God give over all his opinion of purchasing eternal life by his own good works. All these

things he rejected as abominable, knowing well that he was blinded with pride, in that he had imagined that anything was available before God or that he could purchase any favor by that mean. It behooved him (say I) not only to have thrust all these things under foot but also to have abhorred them, as he himself protesteth. For so much then as we see this, we be so much the better confirmed in that which he says: namely that in executing his office of Apostleship, he had nothing of man nor of himself, for he had been quite and clean stripped out of all the things which he had made great account of before. For in that he confesses himself to have been a persecutor of God's Church, we see that to the intent to maintain still the honor of God, and the authority and mastership of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he served, he does not in any wise spare himself. But behold also it behooves us to proceed in the like case.

If we purpose to employ ourselves to God's service, it stands us on hand to forget ourselves and not to be curious in seeking the things that are for our own behoof or for our own honor. Until such time then as we be come to the utter abasing of ourselves, we can never give ourselves to the service of God whereunto we be called. I speak purposely of those that have the charge to preach the Gospel, whom it behooves to be abased in themselves, or else they can never execute faithfully the charge that is committed unto them. On the other side, we see how Saint Paul does not disguise anything nor take any shadow or cover to be received among men, but had rather reap the blame that he had deserved and to be shamed before men than to cover himself with vain starting holes. For he says he had persecuted the Church, been a rover and a cutthroat, and had shed innocent blood. But yet does not this prove that Saint Paul had not endeavored to live in holiness and perfection; for he had been a mirror of great incorruptness. He terms himself unblamable; and not without cause. For he says he was so blinded that he thought himself righteous

before God, because there was not any spot in him that could be condemned by men. Truly there was hypocrisy in him, like as there is in all men that are not renewed by God's spirit.

When they surmise themselves to be well liked of all the world, then it is certain that they are nothing but corruption, till God has taken them into his guiding. And so you see that men shall be abused, because they stick to their common sense in judging what is good and evil. But contrariwise our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, that all the things which are highly esteemed before men, are abominable before God. Surely however the case stands, Saint Paul had endeavored himself to live holily and without any blame or reproach, And yet for all that, when he was once converted, he could not say he had done well, and that his devotion was worthy to be allowed. But contrariwise he declares that he had been a persecutor, and that all this gear was nothing worth. What is to be said then of that which nowadays is called devotion and the service of God? As for example, in Popery those terms run roundly enough in every man's mouth: all things are done of good intent, all men (to their own seeming) have affection and zeal, and they bear themselves in hand that God is much beholden and indebted to them for the things which they do. Yea, but we know that God has not commanded them any of the things that they bring unto him, but every of them behaves himself after his own fancy.

However the world goes with them, it is but an opinion, that they ween they do well, and that is all. One says, it seems so to me: another says, I learned it so, and so was I taught. Now if God should allow all these things, he should have great burdens to bear. For the things that men have invented of their own heads are but stinking dung before him. And yet for all this, every man alleges this foolish brag, that he meant to serve God. But therefore it is said in one word

by the Prophet Isaiah, who has required these things at your hands? Let him that set you a work pay you. For as for me, I will never put this gear in my reckoning book: I utterly disclaim it, because I require obedience. Now Saint Paul has very well gathered this matter. For if he had judged here of other men, it should have had less power and force, than when he speaks of himself, and in no wise spares himself, but says that all the holiness for which he had been commended among men, was but a theatre, because he had been as a mad beast, full of fierceness and rebellion against God. Then if Saint Paul make such a plain and free confession: must not all mouths be stopped, and all of us understand that when we thought to have served God, we were (as you would say) in a maze, and it was but a leading of us to the bottom of Hell? And in good sooth, as the wretched unbelievers rack themselves, they do but double their own condemnation, for the Devil snarls them so much the more in their damnation. Therefore let us acknowledge that we have been rebels to God ever since the time that we would needs serve him so after our own fancy, and that there was nothing in all our whole life, but error to make us stray all the world over, and to pluck us back rather than to set us forward, and finally that all the devotions which men devise, are but sleights and illusions of Satan, to sink us down to the deepest dungeons of death.

So then let us return to this obedience, and acknowledge that there is no way for us to rule our life well, but by being taught in the school of the Son of God. But do we think that the Superstitions that reign nowadays in the world, and have their full scope there, are better than the traditions that were in the time of Saint Paul? It is true that there were many wicked corruptions in the Church of the Jews. For Sects were sprung up, and the Pharisees (which were yet the purest and soundest of all the rest) had mingled many gewgaws with the service of God, in so much that all was corrupted among them. But

however they fared, yet Saint Paul had always the law and the holy Scripture. As for the traditions whereof he speaks, he took them as appurtenances: but yet in the meantime his mind was to maintain the Law of Moses, which had God's word in it, and the unchangeable truth, and which ought to have the same reverence to the world's end. Yet notwithstanding he had but the letter of the law, as we have seen heretofore in the Epistle to the Corinthians. But nowadays as for them that be the devoutest in the Popedom, what have they? When they have alleged all that they can, it is certain that the holy Scripture is as good as buried among them, and no man makes account of it. They will not say that it ought to be cast away, for that were too great a blasphemy, and men would abhor it. But whatever they pretend, the Gospel is nothing with them in comparison of that which has been ordained by their holy Councils, and by our mother holy Church. Yea and they are not ashamed to say, that the Gospel and all the holy Scripture is as a nose of wax, so as there is no certainty in it, but that it must be interpreted altogether by men. Lo how Jesus Christ is mocked and scorned. Think you that such men may make us believe all their own inventions, when as they are so manifestly contrary to themselves.

Then let us mark, that if Saint Paul did so condemn himself with his own mouth when he followed not our Lord Jesus Christ: no excuse shall be available nor go for payment before God, when men swerve aside from the simplicity of the Gospel. This is in effect the thing that we have to gather upon his text. But let us mark therewithal, that God uttered a singular grace in Saint Paul, to the end that by his example we might know that our calling to salvation has been of his mere and undeserved goodness. And furthermore, that if we have slid back, and broken our promise made in Baptism to our Lord Jesus Christ, yet however the case stands, we shall not fail to be received to mercy, so we confess freely and without hypocrisy, that

there was nothing in us but confusion, and that God must have been fain to remedy the matter of his wonderful goodness. True it is (as I have touched before) that Saint Paul was taken for a holy man, and it might well have been said, that God had accepted his devotions, and that there had been some good preparation in him beforehand: however, all that was but a plucking of him back, as I have touched already in the third to the Philippians, where he says he could not take hold of Jesus Christ, and of the incomprehensible benefits that are in him, until he had misliked all the things that he had erst esteemed and had in reputation, as his own righteousness and holiness. We see then after what sort God wrought in the person of Paul, inasmuch that in the first to Timothy, he sets forth himself for an example and pattern, saying that Jesus Christ had showed in him, that he was come to save all wretched sinners, to the end we should not doubt to be received when we keep the right way. What did Free will in Saint Paul for the bringing of him to the obedience of the Gospel? [nothing:] but God was fain to thunder down upon him from heaven, to drive out the pride and presumption that was in him. He was not only drawn by the hand, but also God did cast so thick scales upon his eyes, that he was as a blind wretch. And besides that, he was stricken to the ground and astonished, to show that the knowledge and cunning, which he thought himself to have before, was but stark blindness, and that this darkness had served to bring him to a new light. For if God had let him still alone in his perfect plight, surely there would always have remained some foolish self-weaning in him, and he would always have mingled some trick of his own device and brain, with the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ: and therefore it behooved him to be blinded and to abide so. For inasmuch as he had erst been in great reputation, and been tempted to hold his state still: it was requisite that he should be brought down, and lifted up again, and carried like a little babe, or rather like a carcass or dead body. Thus you see how it behooved Saint Paul to

be corrected after a violent manner: whereby we see that neither free will, nor devotion, nor holiness stood him in any stead, but that all ought to be attributed to the mere mercy of God. And in very deed we see how he yields a pure and unconstrained confession thereof.

Then seeing it is so, let us mark also, that when God calls us to him, it is not for that he sees us disposed thereunto, or for that we be in any good readiness to it beforehand: but because it pleases him to draw us of his own mere mercy, as we shall see yet more at large hereafter. And if we mind to be partakers of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ as Saint Paul was, the way what we must take, is to confess that there is nothing at all in us, but that we must be fain to receive from above, all the things whereof we be destitute, and to have God work in us after such a sort, as the praise of our salvation may be reserved to him alone without any exception. And in that respect also Saint Paul adds, that when it had pleased God to call him to preach the Gospel, he did immediately fall in train, and waited not at all for the advice of man, for it was enough for him that God had sent him, and that he was avowed by such a Master.

Whereupon he did not in any wise spare himself, nor stand scanning of the matter, but resolved himself fully to go forward on his way, and to hold out in such wise as we have seen, which is a sure record that God governed him by his holy spirit. This is the thing which we have to bear in mind. And therewithal we must also mark well how he says, that God had prepared him from his mother's womb, and in the end called him to publish his Gospel. Here Saint Paul shows that his calling after that manner was not for any forwardness or worthiness that was in his own person: but because he had been chosen of God, even before he was born. That is the cause why he purposely uses this saying that from his mother's womb, he had been as it were separated and dedicated unto God. How then could he

bring anything of his own power? For what could he do when he was yet unborn? God therefore must needs be the worker in that behalf. Again, he adds that God called him. True it is, that he speaks this concerning his office: but yet notwithstanding he magnifies God's goodness in general, to show that to him only we are beholden for all that we have, not only in respect of this flightful life, but specially for the everlasting salvation of our souls. This cannot be laid out to the full at this time, and therefore we will leave a piece of it till the next time. Howbeit for a conclusion, let us mark how Saint Paul shows us as it were in a mirror, that our yielding of ourselves in obedience unto God, happens not through any man's putting forth of himself, but through God's reaching out of his hand from above, and through his drawing of us to himself, even at such time as we could not seek him. No doubt but men will always imagine somewhat to commend themselves withal.

Nevertheless all is but illusion: and the Devil uses that trick to make us to darken God's grace, to the intent we might be bereft of it. For it is good reason that God should leave men in such plight as they be, when they will take upon them that which belongeth unto him, and not condemn themselves as they be worthy. Therefore let us mark well, that all the goodness which we perceive in this world, proceeds of God's mere grace, and that there is not anything that can be granted to our selves. And that we may the better perceive this free goodness: let us understand that we must lay down all worthiness of our own deserts, and have an eye, first to God's free election, and afterward to his calling. Wherefore then are we enlightened with the knowledge of the Gospel? Is it for that we have deserved aught? No: but because God has chosen us before we were born, yea and even before the making of the world, as it is said in another place. You see then at what point we must begin, to the end we be not puffed up with vain pride which would make us break our necks in the end, but

rather bethink us to walk in lowliness, remembering how it is said in another place, "Who is it that sholte thee out, or that maketh thee more excellent than others? It is God (sayth he,) who hath done it of his own mere goodness." When Saint Paul confesses there that it is God which hath separated or sholed us out: it is to cut off all allegations of men, being well assured that no man can say he is better than his fellows, save only because God hath chosen us, yea even before we were born. And this choice of God is secret, until he show by effect that he calleth us to him. And how doth he that? By his Gospel: and therein there is a double grace. The one is when the doctrine is preached to us. For we see the miserable state of the world, how a number of silly souls, and a number of blind wretches wander there in darkness, without succor or aid, when in the meanwhile our God offers us food, yea and puts it into our mouths: and is not that a singular grace?

But yet further, God must be fain to call us inwardly, and to touch us in such wise by his holy spirit, as his doctrine may rightly have authority with us, and we acknowledge that it comes of him, and he seal the same in our hearts by his holy Ghost, according as he speaketh of it as well in the second to the Corinthians, as also in the first to the Ephesians. To be short, according as it is said by the Prophet Isaiah, that it behooveth us to be taught of God: let us understand that we must be thoroughly assured in our hearts by the holy Ghost, that the doctrine which we hold comes not of men, but is the infallible truth of God: and we cannot but have so sure record of it, that (if we be not too lewd and unthankful,) we may perceive by eye sight, that it is the very same whereunto we ought to stick even to the end, and also which will bring us into the kingdom of heaven, when we shall have finished our course in this mortal life.

But now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying Him to make us perceive them more and more, to the end that being humbled to dislike of ourselves, and to renounce all our own wicked affections and desires, we may offer ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ, and yield Him the honor that He requires at our hands, not only for fashion's sake, but also in such wise, that as He has His mouth open to show us the way of salvation, so we also may have our ears attentive to submit ourselves quietly unto Him, and our hearts open, so as there may be neither hardness nor stubbornness in them, but that we may abide His yoke, being ready to receive the same, and to dedicate our whole life to the obeying of Him, and to the framing of ourselves unto His holy will, that when God's name is so glorified in us, others may also be drawn thereto, and all of us be gathered into His flock, to the end we may worship Him with one common accord, and our Lord Jesus Christ have the due honor and service that belongs unto Him. And for the performance hereof, it may please Him to raise up true and faithful ministers of His word, etc.

The Sixth Sermon upon the first Chapter.

15 But when it pleased God, who chose me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,

16 To reveal his Son by me, to the end I should preach him among the Gentiles: I did not thereupon take counsel of flesh and blood:

17 Neither went I back again to Jerusalem to those that had been Apostles before me: but went my way into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

18 Afterward, three years later, I went again to Jerusalem to visit Peter, and abode with him fifteen days, etc.

We have seen what case is handled here by S. Paul: that is to wit, that men ought not to be advanced so high, as that the glory of God should be defaced or diminished in respect of them, or of the reputation that we have of their persons. For oftentimes we be given to commend creatures too much, so as the same carries a prejudice to God's word. And although S. Paul compares himself here with the other Apostles: yet he has no regard for his own person, but is desirous that the gospel which was committed unto him should be received with all reverence. And for the bringing thereof to pass, he alleges here God's graces rather than his own virtues. For he does not allege or rehearse here what he had done as of himself, but what he has done through the change that happened unto him, which men might perceive to be from heaven, and not through his own endeavor. Yes, and we see how he declares freely, that all his changing after that manner, ought to be fathered upon the mere goodness of God: for he uses the term of good Pleasure. Wherein he excludes, whatsoever is of man, to the end it should not be thought that he minded to reserve aught to himself.

Again, he says not that he had sought the Gospel, but that he had had it by revelation. Thirdly he says it was God that called him. And lastly he says that it was not for any readiness that was in himself beforehand (as perhaps a man might put one of us to some service when he finds us meet for a thing:) but he says that God had separated him beforehand from his mother's womb. We see then that

S. Paul intends not to exalt himself, but only to make Jesus Christ known by his means, and to keep the doctrine of the Gospel from impeachment under the color that other men had gotten great reputation throughout the whole world. And (as we see) the troublers that were come into the Country of Galatia, took a deceitful covert under the name of the Apostles. S. Paul therefore shows, that the thing which he held, he had not of men. And likewise also he brags not that he had conquered or deserved aught, but that at leastwise it was known how God had so set out his grace in him, as the same served to make the doctrine of more authority which he bore abroad. But by the way, there is no doubt, but that in the person of S. Paul, we have here a mirror of God's goodness, in such sort as it shows itself towards us, and whereof we be partakers, to the end that all men from the smallest to the greatest, should learn to humble themselves.

Therefore when we come to the knowledge of the Gospel, although we have no such revelations as Paul had: yet notwithstanding, this thing does always take place and has its continual course, namely that it is not of ourselves, neither can men put forth themselves to it of themselves, but all proceeds of God's mere goodness, for that he has so ordained. For the words that S. Paul uses, exclude all respects that can be had, as when one man shall do another man good for some desert, or for some other thing that he finds in his person. He does no more here, but set down simply, that for as much as God finds no worthiness in us, therefore when it pleases him to accept us for his children, and to draw us to the knowledge of his Gospel, he shows that his so doing proceeds of his own purpose and will. Thus then the thing that we be taught here, is that faith is in such wise the mere gift of God, that men cannot challenge to themselves the praise of their coming to the light of the Gospel, where their happiness and welfare lie, but ought to glorify God, because he has bound them to

him by choosing them, and calling them to lead them thereto: for as for the cause thereof, he seeks it in himself and in his own mere mercy. As much is to be said of all the charges whereabouts God employs us. True it is that men choose one another according as they see ability in them to be put to some business: so as one is set to rule a country, another to preach God's word, and another to this or that. In so doing we have an eye to the things that God has put into every man, and it is good reason so to do.

But yet for all that, however the case stands, he that is so chosen, (what handsomeness and ability soever he has to go through with his duty) must understand that God had marked him out before, and that he is not framed thereto by his own policy, but that God has wrought it in him. And therefore let us not think that he who has a better and more forward wit than other men, has it of himself. For whereof is it long that we be not blockish as many creatures are, whom we see to be without wit or reason? Who is it that has put such difference between men? It is certain that of necessity God must have marked us out, and appointed what we should be, even before we were born. And therefore whoever has either wit or any other excellent gift above other men; let him assure himself that God has fashioned him thereunto.

Again, when we come to age, God must be fain to thrust us still forward and to guide us, albeit that the same be by a secret power. We see that the Pagans have some care of the upbringing of their children, and that some of them have a better mind to their study than others. But yet however they fare, it is God that guides and governs them from above, so as all ought to be attributed unto him. And here you see why S. Paul, having said that God revealed his son unto him, adds that as he had called him to preach, so also he had erst sholed him out beforehand from others: that is to say, he had

held him fast as he that wist well to what service he were best to apply him. Then seeing it is so, we have cause to walk in humbleness, assuring ourselves that if there be any excellence in us, we must not every man brag of it as of his own, but acknowledge God to be the author of all that he has bestowed upon us, and that his mere goodness is the fountain whereout of we draw. Now if this extends to the smallest gifts of grace which we receive of him: what does it to the inestimable benefit which he bestows upon us, when he calls us to the knowledge of his Gospel, when he opens us the gate of Heaven, to show us that he holds us all for his children and that he is our father, and when our Lord Jesus Christ is so knit unto us, that by his means we be already made sure of the endless life? Can we say that we have anything of our own, when God makes us partakers of such a treasure? You see then that the thing which we have to gather upon this strain, is that God has so reserved to himself the disposing of man's life, that it is his peculiar office to guide our steps: and he knows whereunto he has ordained us. And therefore it becomes us to magnify his mercy, in that he has vouchsafed to enlighten us by believing his Gospel, to the intent we might know him to be our father, and rest upon him, and pray unto him with full trust. Let us assure ourselves, that the having of this comes not of our own freewill, but of his touching of us to the quick by his holy spirit. For our Lord Jesus Christ who has all wisdom in him, cannot be known of us except he be revealed, according as he himself avouches that no man comes unto him except the father draw him. Behold, Jesus Christ was conversant in the world at that time: he preached the Gospel and published it with open mouth: and yet notwithstanding he says that no man shall come unto him, that is to say, no man shall frame himself to his obedience, except the father have wrought in his heart by the power of his holy spirit. Now that Jesus Christ is separated from us as in respect of distance of place, and as in respect of human nature, so as we see him not here beneath to have any

visible knowledge of him: how shall we come unto him, if we be not drawn by the grace that is spoken of here? And if faith be a special gift of God, and we cannot come to our Lord Jesus Christ except we be led unto him by the hand of God his father: how can they that should draw others do it of their own ability? Needs then must God utter yet a second working. And that is the cause why Saint Paul sets down both twain of them: that is to wit, firstly that he had been enlightened himself, and secondly that he had been ordained and established as a Master and teacher to draw other men, to the good way of Salvation wherein God had set him.

Therefore let us assure ourselves that God grants a singular grace to such as have charge to preach the Gospel, when he vouchsafes to apply them thereto. And that is not only to the end that we, who are in that state and office, should walk in the fear of God, and not challenge aught to ourselves: but also to the intent that every man should in that behalf have a record of the love that God bears to his Church. If men should thrust in themselves on their own heads, it might be said that we were taught at all adventure. But when as we know that no man is of sufficient ability to open his mouth to speak of Jesus Christ as he ought to be spoken of, but that it is God's doing to send forth those of whom it behooves us to be taught: thereby we perceive the care that he has of us, and find much better that he is our father and has not forgotten us.

And moreover, this serves to engrave the truth of the Gospel in our hearts, to the end we may know how it is not a doctrine that proceeds of men, but as of God's sending? And that although he is served by his creatures: yet notwithstanding he makes them as instruments of his spirit, and it is he himself that governs them. You see in effect how we may make our profit of this doctrine. But yet do we understand God's grace the better, in that it is said that he has

chosen us and kept us to himself, even from our mothers' wombs. And yet is this no let, but that he has also moreover reserved us from before the creation of the world, according as Saint Paul speaks in other texts: albeit it is enough that in this place he excludes all that ever comes of men. When a child comes out of his mother's womb, what brings he with him? What worthiness [has he]? Surely he is a poor carcass full of filth and uncleanness.

Now then if God marks us out at the time when there is nothing in us worthy to be accepted of him, or which deserves any love or liking: we may perceive thereby, that if he applies us to any honorable service afterward, it is by reason of his own mercy, accordingly as they whom God gathers to be of his flock, are called instruments of his goodness. Thus you see that the cause why Saint Paul speaks purposely of his birth, is to show that there was no preparation on his own behalf when God drew him, but that God had respect to his own eternal election, the which he continued, in that it was his will that the same creature should come into the world, and had always guided it to that end.

Then let us assure ourselves, that whenever God bestows any of his benefits upon us, we must always come back to this principle, namely to mount up to his everlasting purpose. Not that we be able to comprehend how or why he has chosen us, (for that passes all capacity of man.) But for that we must conclude, that God's preferring of us before those whom he leaves as of castes, is not for that he finds us worthy or capable of such a benefit, but because he had so ordained before he had created us and put us into the world, yea and even before there was either heaven or earth. And that is the cause why it is said that it behooves us to be given to our Lord Jesus Christ before we can come unto him. And who is it that makes that gift? It is not every man's offering of himself of his own mere motion.

True it is that we ought to do so: for our faith imports obedience and sacrifice, so as it becomes us to dedicate ourselves to God willingly, and to make a present both of our bodies and of our souls unto our Lord Jesus Christ, as to him that has bought us. Nevertheless, this (as I said) is not of our own mere motion, but God must be fain to bow us thereunto. And why so? Even because we were his afore. And how belong we to him? Not by inheritance, nor by any title that we can allege on our own behalf, but only because he chose us. Now then we see what this text imports. But let us come back to the chief point that Saint Paul treats of here. For the things that I have discoursed hitherto, are but to show that our adoption serves not to bereave God of his glory, which thing they do that brag of their own free will, virtues, and merits.

Therefore let us put away all such pride, and confess that we are beholden to God for all things. However, let us also consider therewithal, that Saint Paul's rehearsing of this change is to assure us thoroughly that the doctrine which he delivered us in his life, and which we have now still in writing, is not of this world, nor forged of his own brain, but a thing whereunto he was prepared of God. And we have need to be grounded upon such a certainty, for else, whereas our faith ought to get the upper hand of Satan and of all things that are against our Salvation: it should always stagger, yea and be but a wavering opinion.

But now let us see a little what battles we have to endure. If we leaned unto men, what should become of us? What steadiness would there be in us? Seeing we are daily assailed with so many temptations, that by all likelihood we should be overwhelmed and perish: as for example, in that our nature is so wholly inclined to distrust, to lying, to vanity, and to deceit: and again, in that we have so many lusts, which are as storms and whirlwinds to overthrow all

our faith: were it possible for us to stand or to have any constancy, if we were not grounded upon God, and knew that the doctrine which we follow is the pure truth that proceeds out of his mouth.

Then stands it us on hand to have that first of all. True it is that among the Papists men will content themselves with some imagination. For it is enough with them, to believe as the Church believes, as they say. Howbeit in the meantime the Devil holds them in his nets, and they are like silly beasts that are stark blind. But as for us, we must be out of all doubt, that we are taught of God, and that the word which we follow is his. Therefore it behooves us to give ear to the preaching of the doctrine which was brought by Saint Paul, and therewithal to consider that Saint Paul did not thrust himself in of his own head, but that God served his own turn by him, as by an instrument that he had ordained to that purpose.

Thus you see whereunto it behooves us to refer that which is spoken here. For had Saint Paul followed Christianity from his childhood, or had he learned it at school, truly it had been a gift of God: but then had not we had such an open avouchment and evident record as we have by his change, in that of a ravening wolf he became not only a sheep, but also a shepherd: and whereas he had been a deadly enemy of the Gospel, now he has become a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ: and whereas erst he had nothing in him but blasphemy, cruelty, pride, and rebellion, we see he has the zeal of God's spirit, he has all humility and meekness. Seeing then that we perceive so great and sudden a change, it is as much as if God had uttered his power of purpose that Saint Paul should not be taken for a mortal man.

And verily for the same cause also did God take up Moses into the Mountain, and keep him there by the space of forty days, when he intended to have his law published. For had Moses forthwith

preached the things which he knew by revelation: surely he had discharged himself of his duty as a true servant of God: but the thing had not been known to be so excellent as it was, in that God kept him forty days upon the Mountain, and afterward made him come down with a shining face, so as men could no more abide to look upon him without dazzling of their eyes, than to look upon the brightness of the Sun, but he was fain to put a veil before him.

Therefore all these things serve to prove, that he devised not the law of his own head, but was as an Angel of heaven, yea and much more excellent than an Angel, for so much as God had ordained him thereunto. In like case is it with the Apostles, for Jesus Christ could well have chosen such as had been exercised a long while beforehand in the Law and holy Scriptures, and had some countenance to the worldward, and had already purchased some reputation and degree among men: but he chose poor silly souls and handicraftsmen without any learning at all, and yet notwithstanding made them to speak after such a strange fashion, that through the eloquence and highness of knowledge which was in them, they passed all such as had been esteemed most skillful and sharp-witted in the world.

We see then that by God's so sudden changing of them, their doctrine was made of so much the more authority unto us. Even so stands the case concerning Saint Paul. That then is a thing which ought to confirm us, and whenever we be taught by that which he has left in writing, let us assure ourselves that God speaks to us, and that he was the instrument of our Lord Jesus Christ. He adds furthermore, that he did not then commune with flesh and blood, that is to say with any mortal man, but went straightway into Arabia, where he abode three years, and from thence returned to Jerusalem to see Peter, and saw not any other of the Disciples than him and James.

Herein it might seem at the first blush, that Saint Paul had too greatly disdained the rest of the Apostles. For although he had the knowledge of the Gospel, yet might he well have been more confirmed, and the consent and agreement that God's children have among themselves, does strengthen them the more, as we find by experience. It seemeth then that Saint Paul disdained a mean that was fit for himself, and might have stood the whole Church in good stead. But there was a special reason that drew him the other way: which was, that men should not surmise that it came to pass by worldly means, for it was not yet sufficiently known. Then if he had gone to Jerusalem, and communed with the Apostles, men would have said, this man is in some doubt, and therefore he went thither to dispute, and in the end was overcome. And so it would have been thought that it had been of man's doing, and the glory of God had been so much darkened thereby.

But when as Saint Paul had been a man full of cruelty, that sought nothing but to abolish the memorial of the Gospel, a shedder of the blood of the Martyrs, a blasphemer of God, and an enforcer of the poor weaklings to renounce Jesus Christ: when as men saw him to be such a one, that is to say, as a man beside himself with such rage, as he would never leave till he had borne down the Gospel: and yet notwithstanding saw him so changed in one minute of an hour, and no man spoke to him: yea and blinded and beaten down to the earth, so as he lay there like a poor dead man, and afterward was raised up again as it were out of his grave, and his eyes by miracle opened, so as God sent a man unto him of no great fame named Ananias, who baptized him, strengthened him, and made him to receive the visible tokens of the holy Ghost: and that thereupon he went his way into Arabia, a country where Jesus Christ had never been spoken of afore, (for although the Jews had been somewhat dispersed, yet was the Gospel utterly unknown:) I say, when we see how Saint Paul went

that way to work: who is he that can say that he learned aught of men, or that he had been won to it by disputation, or by reason, or by any other manner of [worldly] means at all? Nay rather we shall be constrained to grant, that whatsoever was to be found in him, was of God's putting into him. That then was the special reason why Saint Paul communed not with the Apostles. And truly here he speaketh of them as it were in way of scorn, terming them flesh and blood.

However, it is not a defacing of the gifts which they had received of God, when we make comparison between our Lord Jesus Christ and them. And we ought to mark that well. For when we speak of men, surely they may well be called flesh and blood, as we see they be called in the first of John. You see then that men of their own nature are nothing but corruption. And forasmuch as they would fain presume too much of their own wisdom and power, or of their own righteousness and courage: therefore to put away all that pride and fond overweening, God says "What are you? flesh and blood." Yes, and sometimes by this saying flesh and blood, the holy Scripture meaneth this sinful nature of ours which we have since the fall of Adam. For we have no more the incorruptness that was in us, but contrariwise we are utterly ignorant or rather beastly, and there is nothing but filthiness in us, so as we be not able to do anything that is aught worth, further forth than God governeth us. Lo in what wise we be termed flesh and blood. And therefore it is said, that our being enlightened in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, comes not to us by heritage, nor is had of flesh and blood, but that we be made the children of God through his begetting of us new again by his holy spirit, yes even after a special manner. For we would hold altogether with the world, if he should let us alone to ourselves.

Again, in the sixteenth of Saint Matthew it is said, that flesh and blood had not told Peter and his fellows that Jesus Christ was the son

of God: but the heavenly father. Thus you see how men are called flesh and blood: namely when they are compared unto God, to show that we have nothing but corruption in us. True it is that our souls are immortal: nevertheless the Scripture speaketh so of us in way of contempt, to the end we should be void of presumption.

But as for the Apostles, they were already regenerated by God's spirit: and therefore there was more in them than flesh and blood, as we have seen by the Text last alleged. Yet notwithstanding, whenever they are compared with God, then must all that is of our own nature be comprehended under the terms of flesh and blood. And why? For else it should come in question, to know whether the Apostles might by their own worthiness and excellence prejudice the Gospel, as the aforesaid troublers pretended to shroud themselves withal. But Saint Paul showeth, that if God withdraw that which is his, there shall remain nothing either in Peter, John, or James, but that they be the sons of Adam as other men are, so as there is nothing in them but corruption. So then let us not abuse the gracious gifts that God hath put into them, to deface the Majesty of him and the Gospel. Thus you see after what manner Saint Paul speaketh here of the Apostles.

For we have heard how he said heretofore, that if an Angel from heaven should gainsay the Gospel, he ought to be hated and cursed as if he were a Devil. And how so? Is it meet that men should speak so reproachfully of the Angels which are so noble creatures, and which are called the heavenly principalities and powers of God? It is no wrong at all to do so to them, when it cometh to the yielding of sovereign dominion to our Lord Jesus Christ who is their head, for it behooveth them to be placed under him.

Therefore let us not think we have any wrong offered us, though we were trodden a hundred times under foot, so it be to the exalting of

God's name, and that our Lord Jesus Christ may have his due and supremacy reserved unto him, so as he may be heard both of great and small, and all men submit themselves to him in true obedience of faith.

Now hereupon we may gather how blind the wretched Papists are in honoring the Apostles and Martyrs in such wise, that God is robbed of his honor and service, insomuch as it should seem that all that belongeth and is reserved to him is put to the spoil and prey [among them]. For what difference make they between him and his creatures? And besides that, our Lord Jesus Christ is as good as buried, because they pluck away the office from him that was given him.

For instead of being our Advocate to give us entrance unto God his father, and that we should go right forth unto him if we intend to have our prayers and supplications heard: they have set up an infinite multitude of Advocates, Patrons and Intercessors, and Jesus Christ is Jack out of office.

Now when we see that the creatures have obtained such honor among men, that by that means God is as it were thrust back, and his word borne down: thereby we perceive that the Devil hath turned all upside down. Therefore howsoever the world go, let our esteeming of men be after such a sort, as God may hold still that which is his own: and if we compare him with his creatures, let us consider that all is but vanity, and whatever commendation they have here, the same is a record which God gives us of his love, to the end we should keep onwards unto him, and he be exalted.

Yes and let us consider, that we cannot honor God as he deserves, but by submitting ourselves to his word. For all they that make many Ceremonies to bear men in hand that they desire to serve God, are

misliked of him, until such time as they be subdued to him, and also to his word. And that also is a cause why Saint Paul strives for the authority of the Gospel. For he thinks it not enough to have God and Jesus Christ talked of: but he will also have every man to receive the doctrine contained in the Gospel, without gainsaying.

And hereby we see, how that nowadays all Religion is decayed, and there is nothing but hellish confusion in Popery. For there is talking enough of our Lord Jesus Christ, but after what sort? Know they his power? Can they tell to what end he is sent of God his Father, and what benefits he brings us? No whit at all. He shall be called the Savior of the world, and in the meanwhile every man seeks his salvation in himself, or at some Saint's hand of his own forging.

Lo at what point they be. And therefore so much the more does it stand us upon, to bear in mind the thing that is showed us here: which is, that whenever God is spoken of, the very Sun and Moon must needs be darkened (as it is said in the Prophet), and there is not any that must not be thrust underfoot, to the end that God may have all preeminence. And forasmuch as God accepts any honor or service that we do unto him, until we be subject to his word: let us receive the whole doctrine of the Gospel and let nothing pluck us back from yielding such reverence thereto, as to submit ourselves to all that is contained therein. This in effect is the thing that we have to gather upon this place, where the Apostles are termed flesh and blood.

Furthermore, whereas Saint Paul adds, that he went to Jerusalem to see Peter: it is a sure record that his former speaking of his going into Arabia, was not of any pride or disdain, but to the end that God's grace might be known, and that no worldly means might be made as a veil to keep men from knowing that Jesus Christ had wrought by singular miracle, in that a man who had been so stubborn before,

had been brought to the lure. Thus you see on the one side, how Saint Paul meant to reserve unto God his due: and on the other side, that yet notwithstanding he meant to show there was good agreement between him and the other Apostles. And even so must we do. For in many men there are always two evil extremities to be found in that behalf.

There are some scoffers who make pretense to magnify God's grace, and in the meantime are but traitors to God, full of poison and pride, preferring their own dreams and dotages before him. If a man say unto them, how now? Seeing that God has granted grace to many men, and they are known to be men well versed in the holy scriptures, and they employ themselves faithfully in preaching the Gospel to us: therefore why do you not agree with them? O (say they) I have not to do with any man living upon earth, I ground myself upon none but God. These are the proud and stately, which pretend to have the holy Ghost in their heads, and certain revelations of the holy Ghost, and yet notwithstanding they break the unity of the Church, and despise God's gracious gifts.

So much the more therefore does it stand us on hand to keep the measure that we see here. For although Saint Paul have on the one side declared, that he went straightway into Arabia as soon as he was converted, to the end it might be known that Jesus Christ had been his only master and teacher, as indeed he only ought always to have preeminence over us: yet nevertheless he has also well showed [on the other side], that he meant to be in unity of good concord with the rest of the Apostles, and was desirous to have it known to the whole world, that his mind was to agree with them, and that they were as instruments of the holy Ghost. For as I have showed before, it is no small help to the confirmation of our faith, when we be so linked together, and that God calls not any one man alone, but has many

that submit themselves to him, so that it is seen that they be guided all by one spirit, that they be all of one mind, that they aim all at one mark, and that they show themselves to be God's children, by going onward to the heritage of the heavenly life.

That help then is fit for the confirmation of our faith: and it was for Saint Paul to show that he was rightly linked with the Apostles, and meant not to separate himself from them. Wherefore let us mark the manner of dealing that is showed us here, to the intent we swerve not to the one extremity or the other.

But there are some so lightheaded, that they will give over the doctrine of the Gospel for naught, and as soon as they hear a man speak, by and by they must receive whatever he says. Howbeit, if we be no better settled than so, shall we be able to withstand all the alarms which the Devil our mortal enemy will give us? Then must men stand stout to their tackling, and all of us from the most to the least, must stick fast together to our Lord Jesus Christ. For like as he is our head, so must he also be exalted, and (as the Prophet Isaiah says) he is the mark that all men must look at.

Since it is so, let us learn to forbear our resting in such wise upon the outward appearance of men, that the same should impeach the majesty of God's Son. But yet nevertheless, when we be once fully settled upon that point: we must all of us be contented to be taught of him that is given us to be our teacher, and not be so proud as to stand every man in his own conceit, (for so shall we but make variance in the Church:) but desire to agree together, and every of us put forth that which is given him, that the unity of our faith may be [as a bond] to knit us together, so as we may make one Temple of God.

For it is not said for naught, that we are the living stones whereof God's Temple is builted. Now if every of us should be sundered from other, and left alone by himself: what would become of it? Should there be any building? No: but contrariwise there would be utter desolation. If we covet to have God dwell among us, and to be of household with us, we must worship him truly, and every of us apply himself as much as he can possibly to his neighbors. Not that we must shrink from God to cleave to men (for it were better that we should all of us be at discord one with another, and together by the ears as hot as fire among ourselves:) but when we be knit unto God, that is a good harmony: and that is the mean for us to hold the way that Saint Paul held, who would not match himself with the Apostles to darken God's glory, or to hinder the doctrine of the Gospel, and yet notwithstanding failed not to come from a strange country to seek them, yea even with great travail, and with the enduring of right hard temptation: for (as we see) they charged him to have been a persecutor of God and his truth.

Seeing that Saint Paul came after that sort to show how conformable he was with the rest of the Apostles, and to give record thereof to the whole Church: therein we see, that the desire which he had to serve God, and his stoutness to advance God's word above all creatures, letted him not to be full of courtesy and modesty also. And even so must we do too. That is to say, we must receive the consent of our brethren, and seek to conform ourselves to them in such wise, as we may all be members of one body, and Jesus Christ be our head, and not be scattered asunder, nor every man walk alone by himself, but seek to communicate after such manner one with another, as every man may guide his neighbor, and all go onward to one mark, and each of us give courage to other, so as there may be seen a good agreement among us.

True it is that we cannot have peace with all men: we shall fail greatly of that. And therefore Saint Paul in another place says, that we must seek to be at peace with all men, at leastwise as much as is in us: whereby he shows, that we shall be constrained to be at variance with many folks. For the Devil has many underlings, and they be all of them bent against God's word: and we also must set ourselves against them, if we intend to have the pure doctrine of the Gospel on our side. But howsoever the case stands, if we see any man willing to submit himself to our Lord Jesus Christ, let us receive him, let us prevent him, let us seek to agree wholly together, and let us not look to be honored above other men, nor say how now? If I should agree with such a man, it would seem that I am become his underling. Woe be to us if we have such pride in us. But let our only seeking be, to have Jesus Christ to be our head, and in such wise become members of his body, as we may all worship him, and call upon him with one mouth in unity of faith.

And now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us feel them more and more, to the end we may dislike them, and beseech him to amend them by his holy spirit, that being quite rid of our sins and wretchedness, we may be renewed after his Image, so as he may be glorified in all our life, and in the meanwhile bear with us in our frailty, till he have brought us to the perfection from whence we be all gone away. And so let us all say, Almighty God, heavenly father. &c.

The Seventh Sermon upon the first Chapter,

which is also the first upon the second Chapter.

22 For I was unknown by face to the Churches of Judea that were in Christ.

23 Save only they had heard say, he that erstwhile persecuted us, does now preach the faith which he had destroyed for a time.

24 And they glorified God in me.

The second Chapter.

1 About fourteen years afterward, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

2 And I went up by revelation, and communed with them concerning the Gospel that I preach among the Gentiles, however, privately with those that are in estimation, lest I might in any way run, or have run in vain.

We have seen how St. Paul has, on the one side, published the Gospel throughout the whole world without warrant from any man, contenting himself in that he was sure he served God, and that his labor was acceptable to him. Yet, notwithstanding, he has not forslow in the meantime to seek brotherhood and good agreement with the Apostles, as a thing right requisite to succor the infirmity of such as might have been thrust out of the way, unless God had helped them in their feebleness. So, on the one side, we have a warrant of St. Paul's doctrine, and on the other side, we see how he intended to gather together God's children, to the end they might be joined in

one band of faith and glorify God as it were with one heart, one mind, and one mouth. And therewithal, we also see that St. Paul did not hesitate to ask counsel whether he should go forward or backward. For although he were unknown to such as had been in the faith before him, yet forslowed he not to serve God, whereunto he had been erstwhiles called. And this surely is one very notable point more: for it shows us that he was wholly bent to serve God and looked not for his hire at men's hands, to the end they should pleasure him or esteem of him as he deserved. Wherefore let us learn to walk after such a fashion in the vocation whereunto we are called, that although men look not upon us, yet we may not cease to discharge our duties faithfully, contenting ourselves in that it pleased God to allow of us. For they that hang upon men shall always be tainted with some spice of vainglory, and it will be impossible for them to walk purely and soundly.

Besides this, Saint Luke shows us that Saint Paul must needs have been led with invincible constancy, seeing he stepped not out of the way, although men made no reckoning at all of his doings. For he says that the faithful had him in suspicion and that they shunned him when he came to Jerusalem. Now, it was a grievous temptation to Saint Paul to see that he could not be received into the company of the faithful, considering that he had suffered so much already. For we know that at his first coming to Damascus, the gates were shut upon him, as we have seen heretofore, so that he was fain to be let down in a Panyer or Basket. You see then that as soon as he was converted to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, he was by and by tossed with great persecutions. After that, he went into the Country of Arabia, and there travelled faithfully. And thinketh he for all that, to have friendship and atonement with the faithful? The gate is shut against him, and men shun him as a wild beast. But before [he was turned to the faith,] he had been honored and in great credit, both

with the enemies of the Gospel and in the Synagogue of the Jews. He had renounced all these things, even so far as to see himself banished out of the place, and yet for all that, they vouchsafed not to admit him to have a place in the Church. Wherefore he might have been so grieved at such unkindness as it might have made him to have given over all if he had had his mind tied here below. However, forasmuch as he had given himself wholly to God's service and was fully determined to hold out to the end, although men gave him no thanks for his labor, therefore he turned not aside from his right way. And such examples ought to encourage us at this day when we see there are so few, yea even in the Church, that like well of the thing that is done of a pure and right meaning zeal, insomuch that some backbite it through envy, others are so squeamish as a man cannot by any means content them, and others are full of wicked slanderousness and lying. Therefore, forasmuch as we see how men do oftentimes cause us to swerve one way or another, let us learn to give ourselves in such wise unto God as we may steadfastly continue in the way which he shows us, and not excuse ourselves by our own weakness, seeing that Saint Paul goes before us and reaches us his hand. He was a frail man as we are, and yet did God strengthen him in such wise by his holy spirit that he overpassed such lettes.

Therefore, seeing we perceive ourselves to be weak, let us beseech God to arm us with such constancy that we may not cease to discharge our duty towards him, though some misreport us, some blame us, and others mock us, and make no account of all our labor when we endeavor to do well. Although then our labor seems to be lost and misspent, yet let it suffice us that God likes and allows of it. And so you see what we have to gather upon that Text. Above all things, let us not covet to be renowned and to get great fame in this world: for let us strain ourselves as much as may be possibly, and yet shall we never be better than Saint Paul was. After he had preached

the Gospel in such wise, yea even as a man continually rapt up into heaven, insomuch that although the revelation whereof he speaks in the second to the Corinthians was exhibited to him but for one time, yet the fruit of it showed itself all the time of his life: yet notwithstanding he was unknown in the meantime, yea even in all the Churches of Jewry. And so it might seem well that he had not greatly profited, seeing that all his labor was buried. But it was enough for him that God edified the furthest strangers by his means. We see then that he sought not to be much renowned, nor to purchase credit and authority among men.

As concerning that he says, the Churches of Jewry that were in Christ: he adds that word of purpose because there was yet still some seed of God among the Jews, and the promises were so given to them, as they were not utterly cut off until such time as they renounced Jesus Christ quite and clean, and thereby were utterly bereft of the inheritance of the life that was assigned unto them. For like as God had chosen the line of Abraham: so our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to be the minister of those whom God had so adopted, and to perform the promises that had been given to their fathers. Our Lord Jesus Christ rejected not the Jews to whom the promises belonged (according also as it is said in the second of the Acts) but the Church of God abode among them still, and their Circumcision was not a thing devised by man.

And although they were all grown out of kind, and many errors and wicked opinions were crept in among them, so as God's service was turmoiled, and Religion corrupted: yet notwithstanding, that people was acknowledged for God's household flock. The Synagogues therefore that had not yet betrayed their unbelief by withdrawing themselves from Jesus Christ are reckoned here by Saint Paul for Churches, howbeit, not for perfect Churches, for they were not yet

regenerated in Jesus Christ. For then was the renewing of the whole world, when Jesus Christ was sent to bring home unto God, both those that were near hand, and those that were far off: near hand, as the Jews which had the law still: and a far off, as the heathen men who had no likelihood of the heavenly kingdom, because God had left them like poor wild beasts, and they were strayed away in their own superstitions and Idolatries. But Jesus Christ came to gather all together and to knit all things together again that were scattered afore. And thereby we see how the law ought to have led the Jews to the Gospel, as it is said throughout all the holy Scripture. And it is very needful for us [to know the same,] lest we surmise that none of all the things that are contained in the law can stand us in any stead in these days. For it is certain that although the Ceremonies be no more in use, yet the truth and substance of them remain always unto us, so as we cannot even at this day be faithful, but we must also be the children of Abraham and the disciples of Moses. Not that we must be held still under the old shadows: but that we must match things together which cannot be put asunder: that is to wit, the Law and the Gospel.

But yet further, let us understand that we cannot at this day be counted for the Church before God (that is to say, all the companies of men in the world cannot obtain that honorable title) except we be in Jesus Christ. For that head must knit us unto God his father, and by that means must we have entrance into the kingdom of heaven. And therefore as for all them that know not Jesus Christ, although they be marked with baptism and bear the name of Christians: yet are they but as rotten members utterly cut off, notwithstanding that they pretend to be of the troupe and number of God's children. Thus you see still what we have to mark upon this Text.

Furthermore, Saint Paul adds that the common report was that he who had erst persecuted the faith did preach the same, and that God was glorified by that means. Here once again, we see that Saint Paul preaches not his own praises, for he condemns himself to have been an enemy and persecutor of the Church. True it is that he speaks of the common report: but yet does he rehearse the very thing as it was done indeed. So then he cloaks not the thing that was to his own reproach and shame. A man might have cast him in the teeth that he had persecuted the poor faithful ones, that he had to the uttermost of his power shed innocent blood, yea and that he had compelled the weaklings to blaspheme.

But yet for all this, he grants to this indictment of his own accord, and speaks not as most men do, who make as it were a glory of it, that they have been enemies of the Gospel. It is certain that Saint Paul in making such rehearsal, was touched with earnest sorrow for that misbehavior of his, according as in another Text he says, that he is not worthy to be called an Apostle. Now then, you may be sure he felt always some pricking in his heart, for that he had erst so rebelled against God, and been so evil minded, yea and altogether spiteful against the Gospel. Nevertheless, however the world went with him, he had lever to acknowledge his fault with all humility, than to leave the thing unsought that might be to God's glory. So then let us learn with him, to acknowledge simply the offenses that we have committed, when it standeth upon the honoring of God and let us not be loth to receive some share before men. For that is the way for us also to have our sins buried before God, so as they may never come to account, nor to remembrance more: that is to wit, if we be contented to sustain some mark of infamy before men if need be, that God may have his due. This therefore is the thing which we have to remember in that it is said, that the common report went that he had erst destroyed the faith, as he had done in deed. Truly the faith

of the Gospel shall evermore get the upper hand of all the assaults of Satan, and of all the wicked: Therefore it lay not in Saint Paul's power to abolish the faith nor to overthrow it, at such time as he was carried with such fury as we have seen. For the faith is grounded upon God's truth which is invincible, it is not subject to the opinions of men.

But Saint Paul had respect here to the infirmity of the simple sort whom he had cast down as much as lay in him. For it is said in the Acts, that he did not only persecute the Christians, but also made some of them to recant. Like as nowadays when any great number is persecuted, some spare neither their blood nor their lives for the confessing of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Others redeem this wretched and flightful life by recanting, so that they banish themselves from the Kingdom of heaven as much as they can, cast themselves into Satan's snares, and throw themselves headlong into endless death, and all to escape the hands of Tyrants and of their enemies. Therefore Saint Paul's cruelty is purposely condemned by the Holy Ghost, for that he not only was full of pride and stubbornness against God, but also had enforced many to recant and give over the faith of the Gospel. You see then how he behaved himself: and that must serve for our learning. For although the word abides still in its full state, and we prejudice it not at all by our weakness: yet notwithstanding the faith is cast down in our persons. For if I swerve to please God's enemies, or if I disguise the truth, or by any means dissemble: then is my faith defaced.

True it is (as I have said already) that God's word shall always hold its own: and yet oftentimes the fall of one man shall draw a great havoc after it. If men see some one person recant, at whose hand great constancy was looked for: then are many poor souls shaken, and they wot not what to say. True it is that we ought not to rest

upon men: but yet for all that, (as we shall declare again anon) there are many that have need to be confirmed by good example. Now if a man cast a stumbling block in their way, they be as good as utterly overthrown, or else they be so heart-shaken as they wot not where to become. Wherefore let us learn to commit ourselves unto God! & seeing that the devil hath so many underlings which seek nothing but to bring all to confusion, and employ themselves wholly to overwhelm the Christian faith: let us pray God to strengthen us with such constancy, as our enemies may be put to shame though we be assailed more nearly than we be. And let us not only care every man for himself, but also for the great number of poor souls whom we see as it were in the Wolves' mouth: for they shall be tormented and threatened, and finally labored by flatteries and allurements to recant. Therefore when we see such assaults given to our brothers: at leastwise let us have the heart to pray God to aid them at their need, so as their faith may continue still invincible, and get the upper hand, and that they may never swerve, for all that ever Satan and all his brood can practice. So much the more then behooves it us to mark this Text, where it is said that Saint Paul did cast down and destroy the faith.

For although God will always maintain his truth: yet do not men cease to go to destruction, because their faith is shaken by swerving and stepping aside from the right way. Furthermore, we have wherewith to confirm ourselves, so that although men continue not in such constancy as were requisite, and to be wished, yet let us not be too much abashed at it, seeing it is a thing that has been common in all ages. Was Saint Paul's preaching of the less credit, because there were many renegades, that in the end showed themselves to be Hypocrites and full of unfaithfulness? Even some of his own companions that had been linked with him as two fingers of one hand, gave him quite over in the end. And yet must not Saint Paul's

doctrine be rejected for all that. Also when he persecuted the Christians before he was converted, although that many had renounced the salvation which they should have accepted as it was offered them in Jesus Christ: yet ought not the faith to be defaced therefore. Likewise in these days when we see many wretched folk quail and give over all, and others again hold out at whose hands we would not have looked for any great constancy: let us profit ourselves thereby, and be out of all doubt that although the whole world go to ruin, yet we have a good and sure foundation, if we rest upon our God.

Now whereas Saint Paul adds, that the faithful glorified God in him: it is to show the better, (so as men might perceive it even by eyesight) that the change which was made in him, proceeded of the only hand of God. And all of it comes to this point, namely that he had not thrust himself in, and that it could not be laid to his charge that he had preached at all adventure, nor that there was any rashness or presumption in him, or that he was driven with any worldly respect, but that God had governed and guided him. For whereas the faithful had glorified God in him: it was by acknowledging that the renewing of such a man after that fashion, and the making of a ravening Wolf to become a Sheep, yea and a Shepherd, was his work, and a very miracle that proceeded from him. Mark that for a special point. And hereby we see briefly, that they on whom God has bestowed gifts of grace, so as they excel and are far above all others, must not therefore advance themselves, but find means that the praise may be yielded to him that has right to it, and which has deserved it. Wherefore let us keep this rule of humility, which is, that we seek not our own estimation, nor to prefer ourselves above our neighbors, for any of the gifts that God has bestowed upon us, but that God may always have his preeminence, and every of us learn to glorify him for it, when we see any of his gracious gifts in any man.

And that is very needful: for there has always been such spitefulness among men, that every man envies his companion, because all men desire to be greatest. And until God has well tamed us, and we be learned to obey meekly: it is certain that there is none of us all, but he would fain overreach his fellow. Now out of this ambition spring always envy and strife, together with disdain, grudging, backbiting, and such other like things. But contrariwise, when we have well digested the rule that is given us here, by and by we learn to glorify God as often as we see any tokens that come from him. For when we envy those whom God would have honored, and go about to deface his gifts which we see in them, and all excellency: surely we do not only offer wrong to mortal creatures, but also to God, who is the Author of the gifts in them. [As for example:] I see a man that is able to edify the Church, and God has endowed him with such gifts, that his labor may do good: now I, fearing lest he should be advanced too much, and I be plucked back by it, do go about by my slanders and overthwart means, to deface and diminish the thing that God has put in him. It is all one as if he would hide all God's gifts, and bring them in contempt.

And whereof comes this, but of the cursed ambition that I spoke of before? Now in such heaving at men, there will always be some strife and heartburning: and to be short, all must needs go to wrack, because God is offended at it. For at whom do these wrongs aim? True it is that I do wrong to my neighbor whom I disgrace after that sort: but therewithal I do also blaspheme God: so as we cannot deface the gifts and virtues that are in any man, but that our doing is forthwith matched with blasphemy, where through God is grievously offended. And why? For God will be acknowledged in all his gifts, and when he offers himself unto us, it is good reason that we should honor him. Therefore whenever we see any tokens of the holy Ghost in any man, if we tread them under foot, or hold scorn of them, and

mislike them: is it not a defacing of God's Majesty to the uttermost of our power? Truly we will not confess it, but yet is it so in very deed. And therefore must we take so much the better heed of that which is spoken here: namely that the faithful glorified God in the person of Saint Paul, when they saw he had wrought after that manner in him: and that by that means we be put in mind that we be bound to yield God his due honor, whenever he offers or shows us any of his gifts. For the reproach or wrong is not done to the creature: but it is God that is unregarded in so doing; because he is defrauded and robbed of the right that belongs unto him.

And so much the more does it stand us on hand to remember this lesson, because we see this naughtiness to be as great nowadays, as ever it was. How many are there that commend the gifts of God that are profitable for the common edifying, and for the welfare of the whole Church? Nay rather, the Devil bears such a sway, that every man through his own unthankfulness, hinders himself to receive the fruit of God's gifts, whereof he might be partaker. So then if we had honest and well-meaning hearts, surely we should always fare the better when we saw any good example: and where any man is endowed with God's gifts, we should apply the same to our own profit: but we shut ourselves out of the doors through our own canker-heartedness, so as we cannot enjoy the benefit that is offered us. Again, we see there are some so spiteful, that of very malice they would fain make men believe that the Sun shines not: you shall see them so devilish, that it spites them at the heart to see God's name glorified by another man's means. Must that fellow have the honor say they? Verily as who should say, that every man ought not to have an eye to the abasing of himself, that God might be honored as he deserves, in the gifts that he gives men as he himself listeth. But there are some so canker-hearted, that they could find in their hearts to pluck God out of his seat, rather than to abide those patiently

whom he has endowed with his gifts, and which employ themselves to the edifying of his Church, or that men should receive them and acknowledge that God will be honored in them. Seeing then that men are nowadays so full of malice and venom: we have the more need to bear in mind what is showed us here: that is to wit, that God must be glorified in all his benefits that are seen of us, assuring ourselves that they come all of his mere liberality, and that he is the Author of all good qualities, so as there is not that commendable thing in any creature, which ought not to be fathered upon him. Wherefore let us learn to glorify God in all points and all respects.

Now upon this, he adds that yet once again he made a journey to Jerusalem, and communed with such as bore the countenance and had most authority, to the end he might not have run in vain heretofore, nor run in vain hereafter. Here we see how St. Paul was never satisfied in seeking all that might be to the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the taking away of obstacles, to the intent that the Gospel might have his free course and full scope, yea and that he was not led thereunto by vain presumptuousness, as we saw this morning: but considered that the wicked sort would lay to his charge, that yet at length he came to submit himself to the Apostles, to learn somewhat at their hands. He considered that this might well be said unto him: but hap what hap would, he intended not to forslow his duty in seeking agreement with the [other] Apostles. I say not that he sought a worldly matter at worldly men's hands: but to make his doings well allowed in all points. For it is certain that St. Paul going to Jerusalem, was not to scan who had taught best: but to make a mutual declaration among themselves, that every one of them had served God and preached the Gospel faithfully. That is the cause why St. Paul went thither.

Therefore we see here his mildness, in that he spares not himself at all, so the Church may receive any fruit or confirmation of faith by it, and men may be well assured that the Apostles reckoned him as one of their array and company. Again, besides his mildness, we see also his zeal. It had been enough for him to have run into many countries: he had been in Arabia and gone about all that land: he had been in Cilicia where he was born, and also in Syria: and afterward having first gone about the whole land of Jewry, he returned to Jerusalem. Seeing he made all these voyages, and took no ease at all: it was a token that he would rather have been dead than alive, so the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ might have been furthered by it, and the Church have received any profit by his travail, as I said afore. When we see such examples, let us on the one side learn to cut off our own slothfulness, and to be more hearty in praying unto God, not to suffer us to lie weltering always in our vices when we be over cold, but to waken us up, and to grant us the grace to spend ourselves in his service, specially at need and when necessity requires it: and therewithal to strengthen us in the doctrine that St. Paul brings, seeing that his serving to the glory of God and to our welfare, was in good earnest. For had he done it feignedly, it is certain that he could have gone to work after the manner of worldly folk. But now seeing he came without fetching, and sought friendship & concord with the faithful although he were rejected, and spared not himself though the pains and labors that he took were not known of: it is a sign that he walked as before God, and that the holy Ghost guided him in all respects.

Furthermore, whereas he says that he communed with those that were esteemed and had in reputation, to the end he might not [seem to] have run in vain, nor run in vain [hereafter:] he means not that he had lost his labor, if no man living had allowed of his doings: but he had an eye to many weaklings which should have been in doubt, if

God should not by that means have drawn them to the full knowledge and certainty of the Gospel. I told you not long since, that our faith must needs be overthrown, (howbeit not in respect of itself, but in respect of our infirmity,) when we quail. Even so the labor of those that preach and publish the Gospel is vain and fruitless, because we profit not as were to be wished, except God bless the labor and give it increment. Whereas Saint Paul says, to the end it may not seem that he had run in vain: it is not to be understood that such as preach the Gospel do lose their labor and avail not at all except God bless their doings by his together working: for the preaching of the Gospel shall always be an acceptable sacrifice unto God, although the world receive nothing but death and damnation by it, according as we have seen how Saint Paul in the second to the Corinthians says, we be a good savor unto God. Although the unbelievers be poisoned by the Gospel through their own lewdness, and it seem to them that there is nothing else but filthiness in it: yet will God always take in good worth the sacrifice that we offer unto him.

So then, in this text Saint Paul meant not to say that he had run in vain, as though God had been mocked by him, and that his preaching had been to no purpose: but he had an eye to those whom he had taught, and to those also whom he intended to teach to the end, how that they were not edified when they perceived not some good agreement between him & the other Apostles, which were known to be ordained by our Lord Jesus Christ. Here a man might cast some doubt, whether those persons were faithful or no, inasmuch as they had not believed the Gospel, except they had been aided by men. The answer is easy: namely that the only word of God ought to suffice for our faith. If it be demanded whereupon our faith is grounded, and how it comes to full perfection: it is by God's word. How so? Are not the Sacraments added to the word? Yes, as helps because we be over

weak: yea and there is an Oath also, in so much that God swears: all which things are over and besides the word, yea and as an overplus.

But he intends to lift us up again when he sees us stumble: and when we are so weak that we trust not so certainly to his power as we should do, he gives us such helps. For when we see good agreement between God's servants, surely it helps us much, and it is a good warrant unto us. Likewise the blood of Martyrs ought surely to be a great furtherance of our salvation, and we must be confirmed by it, as though it were some seal to make God's doctrine of the more authority among us. Then are they helps to draw us to the faith, and to maintain and confirm us in the same. As much is to be said of miracles. Miracles do not give us belief of God's word, but prepare us to it. For God utters his power in them, to the end we should be the better wakened, and his word have the more reverence among us, and finally they serve us for seals. For when we believe the Gospel, and that our belief is not utterly out of all doubt: God adds that confirmation. Even so is it with the thing that Saint Paul treats of presently. For what a thing had it been, if men had seen any disagreement or trouble between such as were of great authority? What might the silly souls have thought, but that they must have been amazed at it and said, Alas, what means this? We wot not on which side to turn us. Seeing there is such variance between those which should show us the way, that one draws clean contrary and back to other: alas how may we now be assured?

Thus you see that many simple folk had been sore shaken. And that is it which Saint Paul meant by saying, that he intended to commune with Peter and John and James, for a witness through the whole world, that they allowed of his doings, and that the Gospel which he preached was no strange doctrine, but the very same Gospel that Jesus Christ had taught his disciples, and which he had commanded

them to publish over all the world, and whereof he had committed the charge unto them. And hereby we be done to understand again, that beside Saint Paul's zeal, mildness, stoutness, and constancy: God foresaw even then, that this agreement which he uttered between him and the other Apostles, would serve to confirm us also even at this day by reason of our weakness. For as much therefore as we be raw and weak, let us apply to our use all the helps that God gives us, and let us also for our part endeavor to agree in such wise with the children of God, as every of us may be a help to his neighbor, and not imbattele ourselves against another. For woe be to him that shall sow such Darnell, as the ignorant and weak sort shall be hindered by it.

And therewithal let us consider the mischief that may happen, when such as have the charge to preach the Gospel, are so disfamed, by slanders, or else so brought in suspicion, as a man cannot tell whither he may believe them or no, as though God had not ordained them to advance the kingdom of his Son, and to publish the Gospel in many Countries, or at leastwise among many folk that should be edified by them. Cursed be he therefore that shall cast such a stumbling block in their ways. So then, let us by all means endeavor to agree with those that serve God, and to help such as have the gift and ability to edify the Church, and are put in office. Let us lend them our hand, that their labor may be profitable both for ourselves and for all our neighbors, that by that means God may be glorified, and we more and more with one heart and one mouth call upon him as our father.

And now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us feel them so deeply that it may draw us to true repentance, and make us beseech him to use his infinite mercy towards us, until he has rid us of all our

imperfections, that we may behold him face to face as he is, and attain to the perfection to which he calls us now by his word, and to which it behooves us to strive forward all our life long, being well assured that we cannot come to it until we are rid of our flesh, and taken out of this prison wherein we are now held under the bondage of sin. May it please him to grant this grace not only to us, but also to all people and nations of the earth, &c.

The Eighth Sermon,

which is the second upon the second Chapter.

> 3 And Titus also who was with me, although he was a Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised.
>
> 4 Because of the false brethren that had secretly crept in, to spy out our liberty which we have in Jesus Christ, to the end to bring us into bondage.
>
> 5 To whom we yielded not in way of submission, even for an hour, so that the truth of the Gospel might continue in you.

We find well enough what an enemy of our welfare the Devil is, since he ceases not to labor by all means to stop the course of the Gospel. And therein we perceive also that God has set all our welfare, joy, and happiness in being taught by His word. For the Devil would not be so hasty to trouble that doctrine, unless he knew that the whole

welfare of men lies therein. True it is that he labors sore and strains himself to deface God's glory, but these things go together. For God, of His gracious goodness, has appointed that to be the means to reign among us and to gather us unto Himself, and all our welfare is to cleave unto Him and to join with Him. Therefore, the Devil not only stirs up many enemies to make war against the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ but also labors to stir up much strife among ourselves and to make us enemies one to another, and that has been his practice at all times, as we see by example in the things that Saint Paul rehearses to us here. We know what alarms were given him everywhere, and what a number of battles and plunges he was put into because the Heathen and the unbelievers did (to the utmost of their power) withstand the preaching of God's word.

Yet, over and besides this, he shows how there were deceivers also, who wound themselves in slyly and entered in as it were by stealth. For the Greek word that he uses, imports so much, and it cannot well be expressed [by any one word] in our [French] tongue. His meaning then is that there were Cousin, which intermeddled themselves underminingly with the faithful, and yet all was no more but to cause the truth of the Gospel to be corrupted. And let us mark that those dogs pretended not to reject utterly the whole doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ but rather bore the name and title of Christianity. However, in the meantime, their intent was to have a half-paste Gospel, which should be neither fish nor fleshes (as they say) but a medley of their own device: like as at this day there are still too many such folk in the world, who would fain forge and build a kind of Religion after their fashion, taking a piece of the pure truth and mingling many lies and dreams with it. Lo how there have been Neuters even from Saint Paul's time hither. And now he says that he yielded not to them so much as one minute in way of subjection, to the end that the liberty of the Gospel might continue in its full force.

That is in effect the thing that is rehearsed here. And first of all, we have to arm ourselves against the household enemies, which labor to turmoil and trouble the doctrine of the Gospel in such wise, as it may become like a misshapen thing, and men may not discern any more of it. But let us not be abashed when it happens so, for it is no novelty at all. Wherefore let us understand that as it was God's will to try the constancy of the faithful in Saint Paul's time, so it is good reason that we also should be tried in these days, according as it is said that it is necessary that there should be sects and heresies, to the intent that they which have taken deep root might be known by continuing in their obedience to Godward and bear their mark that men may know them to have profited truly in the school of our Lord Jesus Christ, for that they have not suffered themselves to be misled or thrust out of the way. That, therefore, is the cause why our Lord does always suffer some troublers to sow darnell seed and to labor to turn the pure doctrine upside down. He could well let it if he thought good, but he gives Satan the bridle that our faith may be the better tried. Although we see occasions before our eyes, yet let us not swerve one way or another, but keep on still in the way that is showed us, assuring ourselves that we cannot do amiss in resting wholly upon God's word. Then if we stand to that, it is a good trial of our faith. Furthermore, let us fight against such dogs, knowing that they are deadly plagues and do much more harm than they that leap quite out of their sockets and show themselves manifestly to be despisers of the Gospel. Those then that are intermingled among us are the worse sort, and it stands us on hand to resist them manfully. For if we shrink from them in the battle, surely we shall have so much the greater confusion, and men shall not be able anymore to put a difference between white and black.

Thus you see how it behooves us to behave ourselves. And now let us mark what kind of men Saint Paul has noted here. He says that they

were crept in as it were by stealth, to spy out the liberty which we have in our Lord Jesus Christ. The liberty that he speaks of here concerned ceremonies. For (as we have touched already, and shall more fully see again hereafter) God had ordained many figures under the Law, to hold the Fathers in hope of our Lord Jesus Christ, till he were come and showed to the world. The sacrifices therefore with all their appendants and appurtenances, and the Sanctuary with all that was in it, served because our Lord Jesus Christ who is the truth and substance of those things had not yet showed himself. It was for the fathers to be led and guided under such shadows. And that is the cause why Saint Paul will use the similitude of young children that are under Tutors and governors. The ancient fathers therefore took profit by keeping the ceremonies of the Law, for thereby they were always confirmed in the things that were promised concerning the Redeemer. And for that cause also it is said, that the Sanctuary was made according to the Pattern that Moses had seen in the Mount.

Now, that Pattern was spiritual, that is to wit, it was our Lord Jesus Christ with his grace, which is uttered to us by his means nowadays in his Gospel. For inasmuch as our Lord Jesus Christ is come into the world, he has made an end of those shadows and figures. And therefore also the veil of the Temple rent asunder at his death, to show how it was God's will to have the faithful come more familiarly unto him. Saint Paul says now that we have liberty in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that is because we are no more subject to the bondage that lasted in the time of the Law, according as he will hereafter take example of circumcision, and as he treats of it in another place also to the Colossians. We then are circumcised, not by the hand of man, but by the working of Jesus Christ in us through the power of his holy spirit. And instead of the circumcision that was ordained for the Jews, we have Baptism, which witnesses the same thing unto us: namely that we must become new creatures to dedicate ourselves

wholly to the service of God. And so we see that the liberty or freedom which is purchased to us by our Lord Jesus Christ is that the ceremonies of the law are laid away, so we are no more subject nor bound unto them. Now at the first blush, a man would think this were no great thing. For what harm were it if we were first baptized, and by and by after circumcised? Or if we knew that our Lord Jesus Christ only is the whole perfection and accomplishment, and yet had the figures thereof still? First if men should keep still the ceremonies as in the time of the law: the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ should be diminished for it, according as it is said that the law was given by Moses, but truth and grace were uttered to us in our Lord Jesus Christ: for so it is said in the first chapter of Saint John.

Therefore he should be bereft of his honor if we should not have the liberty that he has brought us. And it behooves us to understand that our state is better and more excellent nowadays than was the state of the old fathers, because our Lord Jesus Christ is given unto us, and in him we have all that was figured at that time. So then, men do wrong to our Lord Jesus Christ, in keeping still the ceremonies of the Law. That is one point.

Again, for as much as he is named the Son of righteousness, we must not be led still as though there were but a spark of light: but we must fasten our eyes upon the doctrine wherein our Lord Jesus Christ is showed unto us, and wherein we may also behold him face to face, to come even unto God his father, as has been shown in the second to the Corinthians. Moreover, if the ceremonies of the Law be considered without our Lord Jesus Christ, that is to say, if they be separated from him: they bring as it were a binding with them, and a record of condemnation and death upon men. And thereupon does Saint Paul stand in the second to the Colossians, where he says that our Lord Jesus Christ has upon his Cross, torn asunder and blotted

out the obligation or handwriting that was against us. For if the Sacrifices stood in force at this day, we should see there that we be all in danger of eternal death before God. And why so? The slaying of the poor beasts was not for that they themselves had deserved it, but to show unto men as it were in a lively picture, that they were all worthy to perish. Then if the same continued yet at this day, we should still stand bound under the same obligation of death. But we be discharged of it, by our Lord Jesus Christ.

And that was the triumph of his death, as Saint Paul says. Thirdly, the ancient fathers knew that although the Law was given to them, yet they obtained such favor of freedom at God's hand, that all their faults were forgiven them. But if men should nowadays be put to the necessity of keeping all the ceremonies: it would be an intolerable yoke, as it is said in the fifteenth of the Acts: For the case would not only concern ceremonies but also the drowning of us in despair. For is it possible for men to do the things which God commands all men to do without any exception or release? No. For the thing that God requires and demands, surpasses all our ability: and if we fail but in any one point; we should be overwhelmed under the burden.

Therefore for that cause, this liberty is of such importance, as we cannot be sure of our salvation, nor freely call upon God, except we know that we are no more held under the yoke and bondage of the Law. There is yet one point more which shall be laid out at length: which is, that such as would needs make the faithful subject to the keeping of ceremonies, had therewithal a wicked and untoward imagination, that men were justified and did purchase grace at God's hand by such means. And that was an utter abolishing of the force of the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now then, we see it was not causeless that Saint Paul strove so stoutly against the ceremonies of the law, to the end they should not be so brought in use again, that the faithful should be held in bondage under them. And we have need to be warned thereof: for in these days we have the like encounter against the Papists. True it is that the Papists have less color than had the deceivers of whom Saint Paul speaks. For although they were Satan's underlings and sought nothing but to pervert the truth of the Gospel, yet had they at least wise this color, that they brought not in their own dreams and traditions, but alleged the authority of God, how that the law ought to be kept, and that was a meetly apparent excuse.

But the Papists have no such foundation: For all their Ceremonies are forgeries of man's brain. It is true that they have mingled Jewishness with them, and made such a gallimaufry as a man cannot tell of whom they have borrowed most. But however the world goes, yet are the Ceremonies of men's setting up, which are at this day in the Popedom. Now when we strive to abolish them, they say we trouble the world for nothing. And then step in these Neuters, which would fain please both parties, and make a Bastard Gospel. Those fellows cast us in the teeth, that we are seditious, and that through our preciseness we set much trouble in the world. And for proof thereof (say they) is it meet that there should be such striving about Ceremonies, seeing they are things indifferent? Yea, forsooth: For if God would have the Ceremonies of the law (which yet notwithstanding came of him and by his express commandment) to come to an end in our Lord Jesus Christ: what shall we do when men will of their own foolish rashness set up others in their stead? Seeing that God would have his own abolished, why should men step forth thereupon, and bring in their own device, and make God believe that he was not well advised? See you not a cursed blasphemy? Now we know that the cause why God would have the Ceremonies of his law

abolished in these days, was to the intent that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ should be the more lightsome and better known. For he is the day-sun of righteousness.

Therefore all those shadows must cease, and it is he in whom we have the body and substance of them, says Saint Paul. Seeing then that God had that respect and reason: the figures must pass and vanish away. But now what reason will the Papists bring, when as men perceive by eyesight, that all their Ceremonies are a burying of our Lord Jesus Christ, and yet that they bind men to the keeping of them under pain of deadly sin? And furthermore, when as in all their Ceremonies, they have a certain opinion, that Baptism is not enough for them, but that they must have holy water to christen or baptize men evening and morning: and finally, that when they have brought in all their pelting trash, and all their gewgaws, there must always be something in them to draw poor souls into bondage: is it to be borne with?

On the other side, we see there is so straight a yoke, as it is able to strangle the poor wretches. For the seely souls are bereft of the freedom that was purchased for them by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. We see them how it is not without urgent cause, yea and extreme necessity, that we strive against the Popish tyranny about ceremonies, considering that our Lord Jesus Christ has not his deserved preeminence, so long as men busy their wits about those small trifles, and that moreover their wretched consciences are always in unquietness without end or ceasing: and finally, that on the other side the Papists think to deserve grace by the things which they term God's service, bearing themselves in hand, that that is the means whereby men should become righteous to obtain salvation.

So then we see that Saint Paul in his time was driven to sustain that strife. And forasmuch as our case is altogether like at this day, so as we cannot hold our peace except we will betray both God and man: we must fight stoutly against that hellish tyranny, and against those pelting trash, trumpery and illusions of Satan, whereby he would fain either quite deface the Gospel, or else so turmoil it as a man should not know which is the pure truth. This in effect is the thing that we have to bear in mind. And whereas Saint Paul says that he yielded not one jot to such men: it is to confirm us so much the better on the thing that I touched even now. Peace and friendship are an amiable thing among men. They are so indeed, and we ought to seek them to the uttermost of our power. But yet for all that, we must set such store by God's truth, that if all the world should be set on fire for the maintenance thereof, we should not stick at it. As much as we can possibly, let us purchase peace: and if the matter concern but our own persons or goods, let us endeavor to compound with our adversaries, let us bear with them, and let us labor to overcome them by our patience: Lo in what manner we ought to buy peace. But yet in the meantime let not God's truth be diminished, nor sustain any harm or prejudice.

For the peace that men seek among themselves shall evermore be accursed if God is not therewithal acknowledged and magnified as he ought to be, and his word also continues unimpeached, for that is the knot of our bond: and if we intend to have it acceptable to God, and the end of it to be good and for our welfare, surely God must knit us together. And he has given us his Son, who is called our peace, to the end we should all of us fall in order under him. Then if we mind to have good and holy peace, let us aim at this mark of yielding ourselves under the obedience of God's son, that he may be our head and we his body, like as there is but one Church.

But if any man goes about to withdraw us from our Lord Jesus Christ: let us rather bear all the hatred, outrages, and madness of the world, than to seek such agreement. And let us not be afraid of all the reproach that can be done unto us according as nowadays we shall be falsely slandered as stirrers up of many strifes. Yea verily, but what can we do with it? For it behooves us to abide still in the truth of the Gospel, or else woe be unto us. If the Papists will not agree with us, but be utterly willful in the stubbornness that is seen to be in them: we must be contented to be at defiance with men, seeing they purpose to turn us from the peace which we should have with God by the means of his Son, who not without cause bears that title as I told you before. Therefore when they cry out upon us, we must be fenced with this answer of Elijah which he made unto Ahab. Art not thou he (said Ahab) that troublest Israel? For the Prophet was accused (as we are nowadays) because he labored to bring the people back again to the pureness of the Law, and fought against the superstitions and idolatries that had been devised: [by reason whereof] the king thought verily that Elijah had been come to make trouble sedition, and uproars, according as the princes of this world could find in their hearts always to welter in their own filth, and pass not of the serving and honoring of God, but all is one to them [what come of it] so they may be maintained in their state. But the Prophet answered him, saying: [It is not I,] but it is thou and thy fathers house. For they that will not agree unto God, nor hold themselves to his service in such wise as he has appointed it in his word: they [say I] are the troublers of the world, and the parties that ought to be blamed for all the uproars, variances, and debates that happen.

For (as I have showed already) it is no reason that God should be robbed of his right when men seek to knit themselves together. Ye see then in effect what we have to think upon when Saint Paul says that he would not yield one minute as in way of subjection, to such as

wound in themselves after that fashion under false colors, to make a bastard Gospel full of mingled mangles and corruptions: for God's truth is the thing that was to be known first of all. Furthermore let us not be afraid of the slander that is laid upon us [in telling us] that it is pride and presumption when we will not submit ourselves: like as nowadays the thing that the Papists allege against us, is that we seem to take upon us to be wiser than all the world, and that it is a great pride in us, that we cannot find in our hearts to submit ourselves to the common fashion. True it is that the title of obedience is amiable, like as I said even now of peace: but yet must God be obeyed first of all. For if we will openly spite God, and play mock holyday with him to the intent to submit ourselves unto men, and bow down our neck to bear their yoke, and in the meantime give no audience unto God: what shall become of it? Surely we cannot frame ourselves to the Papists in way of subjection or yielding to them; but God must be thrust out of doors, and his word as it were trodden underfoot, so as it shall have neither authority nor reverence among us. What is it that the Papists would have us to do? That we should leave God's word, and give over our Lord Jesus Christ, and yet in the meantime receive all that ever they have devised. They will not say in flat terms that God shall be spoiled of his honor, nor that Jesus Christ shall have no more authority among them, they will not speak so with open mouth, but yet it is so indeed. Like as these deceivers against whom Saint Paul strove, made fair protestations enough that they meant to be Christians, but yet for all that he was fain to come to the touchstone, and to examine all things thoroughly. Now would the Papists have their traditions received: and what manner of things are they? We see that our Lord Jesus Christ is as good as buried there, as I have showed already.

Again, there is nothing but corruption in them: the things that are contained under them are utter illusions of Satan, tending all to this

end, that there may be no more any certainty, nor any man know whereunto to stick. Seeing it is so, it is not for us to make war against God, that men might be obeyed. And therefore let us have as it were a forehead of brass to resist them in that behalf. For the greatest manliness that can be, is to keep ourselves from swerving aside for men's sakes, what color or fair show soever be set upon the matter, and to despise every whit of it as dung and filth, when it stands upon reserving God's sovereignty unto him, and upon giving ear to our Lord Jesus Christ, to the end that he may be our head, and govern us, and all of us from the most to the least continue under his guiding, and do nothing else but simply give ear unto him, and receive the things that are for our maintenance in the faith of the Gospel. Ye see then what we have to remember here concerning Saint Paul. Surely if you seek a meek and meek-spirited man, Saint Paul was he, yes and he was even as a mirror of all courtesy and gentleness.

Again, if you desire a humble nature, what greater humility can there be found than was in Saint Paul, who abased himself beneath all men? Yet, notwithstanding, we see how he strove for the pure doctrine of the Gospel and did not hesitate to provoke the wrath of all men in the world against himself, to the extent that it was cast in his teeth that all the troubles which happened in the Church of Galatia and elsewhere came from him. I say he feared not the reproach with which men could charge him, that he was a rebel and had too much presumptuousness in him. Even so must we do in these days. Let us be peaceable as near as we can; let us relinquish our own rights; let us not strive for these worldly goods, honor, and reputation; let us bear all wrongs and outrages rather than be moved to any debate through our own fault. But in the meantime, let us fight for God's truth tooth and nail.

Again, if anybody despises us, such that one steps up maliciously against us, and another goes about to deface us, let us not make any quarrel at all for that. But if anyone tries to draw us from obeying our God, to make us stoop to the tyranny of men, let us hold our own in that case, let us withstand him stoutly to the uttermost, and let us defy all the loftiness of the world, so that our Lord Jesus Christ is not diminished, but may always reign over us, and we be subject unto him. Thus you see in effect how we ought to put this text into practice, and also how the necessity of the time ought to stir us thereto. For nowadays we are not only persecuted, so that we see the fires kindled to murder the poor servants of God, but also are accused and condemned as seditious persons by those slaves who are in wages with Antichrist, to overthrow the truth of the Gospel. Moreover, they say there is nothing but pride in us because we will not receive their traditions. Well then, do they slander us so furiously? Let us bear it patiently, and let them rail their fill (as Saint Paul says), so our quarrel is always to stand for our part in the pure truth of the Gospel, and to withstand the creatures that will not suffer Christ alone to reign, and all knees to bow before him, and all men to do him homage.

Now, concerning what Saint Paul speaks of the truth of the Gospel, it is a very notable saying, and it conveys a very profitable doctrine. For he might well have said simply, "to the end that the gospel might abide among you, I would not give place to them so much as one minute." But he speaks of the truth of the Gospel. Howbeit, not that there is one true and another false, but when he says that the Gospel should continue true, he speaks of it in respect of men. And why so? For although men make a fair show to be Christians, yet they always labor to have some medley, as we see many garish heads in this world who cannot abide that God alone should govern us, but every man would cast in his own collop or morsel, and thereof came the

confusion that is at this day in the papacy. One would wonder how so many trifles, fool's baubles, and even gross abominations could be gathered together. But that has come to pass because men were not contented to obey God but would needs add this and that of their own fancy. So then, Saint Paul speaks here purposely of the truth of the Gospel, as he speaks of the simplicity of our Lord Jesus in the second letter to the Corinthians. And what is meant by the simplicity (or singleness) of our Lord Jesus Christ? It is matched against all the minglings that men make. For (as I have said already) they have a foolish fancy of setting forth things devised of their own brain. Now when men do so put to things of their own, it is but corruption and stark abomination. And that is the cause why Saint Paul says that we must hold still the singleness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, when under the color of handling the Gospel, men go about to make a patched and piecemeal religion (as a man might term it), it is no more a true religion, but there is much falsehood mingled with it. Then let us mark well that whereas Saint Paul uses such speech here, he (or rather the Holy Spirit by his mouth) warns us that it is not enough for us to bear the name of Christians and to make some fair show of cleaving to God's word and to the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, but that we must stick to it thoroughly and take heed that we neither mingle nor foist in anything to it, but consider that just as a little leaven is able to sour a great deal of dough, so all will be marred as soon as we give any entrance to the things that men have devised of their own heads. In short, the means to keep the doctrine of the Gospel pure is that men add nothing to it, nor be so bold and licentious as to lay one thing or another upon it, but to content themselves with the things that our Lord Jesus Christ has shown us, so that we become his true disciples and do not dare to reply against him, but that all mouths may be shut, and no man lift up his nose to say, "This is my opinion, this I think to be good," but every one of us receives simply that which is taught us by our master, who has all

dominion reigning over our souls. This is how we may have the truth of the Gospel. And it behooves us so much the more to practice this doctrine of Saint Paul's because we see that nowadays many men seek nothing but to mix one with another, so that they care not of what religion they be, so the same be most tolerable and easily received of the world.

True it is that among the Papists, many are so willful as they will never abide that a man should vary one point from them. For they see well that if there be ever so little a breach made, by and by all their tyranny decays and falls down to the ground. For what hold have they but by tyranny and violence, to tell us that we must neither will nor choose, but take it for good? Those therefore that are flatly on the pope's side would have men to hold throughout all the filthiness and abominations which they have had hitherto. But there are a sort of fantastical heads which would have a Reformation wherein the Pope, Mahomet, and Jesus Christ should be mingled together, so as men might no more discern which is which, for all is one to them so the world be agreed upon it. They bear no reverence at all unto God, and that is the cause why all things have been so turmoiled and confounded in our days, and the very foundation whereupon the Interim (as they term it) was grounded. For seeing that many men could not find in their hearts to consent to Papistry, they thought it good to have a reformation between both. And even at this day, a great sort incline still to the like reformation. It is true, they say, that there are abuses, and it were meet they should be mended. Yet their meaning is but to pluck away some leaf or little branch and to let the rest alone, that the root might grow still, that is to say, that the Gospel of God might be defaced with all manner of superstitions that reign in the Papacy. But what for that? Here the Holy Ghost condemns all such neuters and shows that their doings are but crafts of Satan, yea and mere illusions and mockeries to lead

silly souls to destruction, and moreover also a defacing of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. And why? For we have not the Gospel at all except we have the pure truth, whereunto it may not be lawful for men to add anything, but all of us to hold ourselves to that which is shown us by our Master. You see then how that in these days we are enforced by the necessity of the time to put this doctrine in use.

Therefore, when God's enemies upbraid us that we will not agree with them, let us always allege for our excuse that our agreement is to be knit together in our Lord Jesus Christ and to be all obedient to his word and doctrine. If they allege that it is pride in us to reject the things commanded by such men who term themselves superiors, let us answer that we must first obey God, and that Jesus Christ must not be bereft of his right, and men set up in his place. If they ask why so? Were it not better to have some mean way, and that every man should show how he intends not to separate himself from the rest, than to strive after that fashion and to cause Christendom to be as it were scattered? Let us answer that the matter does not stand upon knowing who shall get the upper hand, or who shall be master over his fellows, but God's word must continue always unimpeached, or otherwise all the pretense of concord that men can make shall be but abomination before God. And why? For it were better that all things should go to havoc and confusion in the world than to abide that God's word (being so precious and holy a thing as it is) should in any wise be perverted; yea, it were better that heaven and earth should be confounded together than that that should be suffered.

So then let us consider well this doctrine, how it may serve our turn and do us good, not only to beat back all the assaults that shall be put to us by the enemies of God's truth, but also to frame us to all lowliness and modesty, so as our whole desire may be to be guided and governed by God's word and by the doctrine of our Lord Jesus

Christ. However, therewithal, let us be so stout-hearted as not to be turned away by men, neither for their credit and authority, nor for their threatenings, nor for all the pride and stateliness of the world, but that we may always stick steadfastly to our Lord Jesus Christ. And if anybody comes and lays any new thing before us, let us evermore have a good eye to the end whereunto they would lead us, and consider that like as Satan has many wiles and policies, so also have his underlings too. Therefore, let us on our side have the skill to look to ourselves in such wise as we may always know our Lord Jesus Christ and be guided thither, so as he may be our only mark and sure anchor, and we understand that he has all fullness of welfare in him, to the end that we should seek our wants in him, and all things be put away that might hinder us from coming unto him.

And now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us feel them in such wise as we may crave forgiveness of them at his hand with true repentance, and profit after such sort more and more in his word, as it may make us to forsake ourselves and lean unto him and his power, that he may hold us up in our frailty till he has brought us to the perfection whereunto he calls us at this day. And so let us all say, Almighty God our heavenly father, etc.

The Ninth Sermon,

which is the third upon the second Chapter.

6 But as for those who are in esteem, (I pass not what they have been in time past; for God regards not the outward appearance of man) surely those who were in esteem added nothing unto me.

7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the preaching of the Gospel to the uncircumcised was committed unto me, as the preaching to the circumcised was committed unto Peter:

8 (For he that was of power in Peter's Apostleship towards the Circumcision was of power in me also towards the Gentiles.)

We saw this morning that when people mingle their own fancies with God's truth, there is nothing but corruption, and by that means, the Gospel is falsified. Which thing ought to hold us in such awe that no one should presume to add anything at all to the things that we have from above. For God has taught us so perfectly that we cannot add anything without great blasphemy, as it were a covert accusing of Him of unadvisedness, or else of niggardship, as if He were reluctant to bestow things upon us which would be for our welfare. Seeing then that the doctrine of the Gospel is sufficient for us, let us abide in it. And if anyone steps up to bring in some addition of his own, let us abhor it, even though the thing seems to have never so great a reason in it, as oftentimes the devil uses to shroud himself under this cover, that we must not stick at light and slender points. But God must be hearkened to in all points and all respects, according as it is to be deemed by Saint Paul's doing, who could easily have let slip the circumcising of Titus as a small thing, yet notwithstanding would not bend in that behalf: the reason whereof was, lest the Gentiles should be made subject to such necessity as was intended to be laid upon them. Yet we read that he did not hesitate to circumcise Timothy. Nevertheless, the matter seemed to be all one, and that Saint Paul

used inconsistency and variableness in that behalf. Behold, there were two Heathen men who had not been nourished and instructed in the law of Moses from their birth. And the Jews would never have received any man who had not been circumcised. For they deemed all men to be unclean who bore not that warrant about them.

Now Saint Paul circumcised one, and would not do the same to the other; who will think that he kept an even hand? If we consider all things well, we shall see why he refused to circumcise Titus and yet had circumcised Timothy. Circumcision was at that time lawful of itself. It was not like the Idolatries that are in Papistry nowadays. If you ask what holy water is, it is an unhallowing of baptism. For in baptism, we have a washing that ought to suffice us both in life and death, and God will not have us to have any other warrant of the spiritual cleansing that was obtained for us by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we must be contented with it. But as for the Holy water of the Papists, what else is it than an endless baptizing of ourselves? As for the Mass, it is so villainous and outrageous a treachery that no man can come at it, but he must defile himself by renouncing the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. But Circumcision stood not in the like case: for it was profitable for the time that it lasted. True it is that it was abolished at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: but yet for all that, the Jews might keep it still till they were fully instructed in the liberty of the Gospel. Saint Paul therefore had circumcised Timothy: and the reason why was that he saw many weaklings, who would have been offended because they were not yet thoroughly confirmed in the knowledge of the Gospel, but thought that it behooved them to keep still the ceremonies of the Law. And it is said that we must yield one to another, for charity binds us thereto. Every man must not do what he himself thinks good, to the troubling of his neighbors, but we must so fashion ourselves one to another, as none may be offended through our fault. Saint Paul then forbore in

having respect to the poor ignorant weaklings, who notwithstanding might be brought to knowledge in time. And as concerning the person of Titus, he saw how men went about to lay a yoke of bondage upon the Gentiles, and that the same would be a holding of the Jews always under the Law, which was then but superstition. For it was for them to have known that the law had served out its time, and that the ceremonies should not continue forever. If this had not been made plain, the Jews had been hardened in a wrong opinion, and the Gentiles had received a yoke of bondage: and therefore Paul made resistance against it. And so we see it is not only lawful but also needful to use things diversely which are neither good nor bad of their own nature. As for example, if we see a man drawn back from coming to the Gospel, or troubled because he is not yet well strengthened: it becomes us to forbear the thing that else were lawful for us, according as we have seen heretofore, that we must always have regard to what is expedient and fit for every man's salvation.

But if we see that under the guise that a thing is neither good nor bad, people go about to interlace some holiness with it and to bind people's consciences by constraining them to keep it, there we must withstand them to the utmost. For example, to eat flesh or fish is a thing indifferent, as they term it, for it is neither forbidden nor commanded by God to eat flesh. Now if some ignorant person is offended at the eating thereof and thinks it to be a deadly sin because he knows not whether abstaining from it be a tradition of the Pope or a commandment of God until he is taught it, we must eschew offense. Yes, and when we have to deal with any Jews, who are not acquainted with our customs, and that we go about to win them and draw them to the obedience of the Gospel, we must for a time (in being conversant with them) abstain from the things which they think to be forbidden. For inasmuch as they are armed with the authority of God, they would think they had some reason to condemn

us if it were not shown them beforehand how and by what warrant we might eat of all meats indifferently and without exception.

But contrariwise, if the Papists would bring us to this point that we should continually forbear the eating of flesh on Fridays and Saturdays, and in Lent season, and upon other days of their appointing: whoever of us should agree to that, he would be a traitor to the Gospel, and we should rather die a hundred times. For why? We must keep the liberty that is purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. If it be said, and how so? Ought a man to trouble the whole world and to be so willful for a little indulgence of eating flesh? The question is not whether a man should eat flesh or not: but whether God ought to be obeyed and the thing used which he permits, or whether we should rest upon the fancies of men.

Now if a thing be lawful for me by God's word, is it to be condemned because men judge of it after their own fashion and guise? But we see that God's authority is blemished when the right that belongs to Him, and is reserved only to Himself, is given to mortal creatures. Again, there is a clog laid upon men's consciences, insomuch that our Lord Jesus Christ is defrauded of His due honor. For if He has purchased us such liberty as to set us free from the ceremonies of the law: it is much more reasonable (as I told you this morning) that the things which men have devised should be laid away and abolished. Wherefore let us mark well that in all indifferent things we must have regard to edifying, and although it be lawful for us either to use or to forbear a thing: yet Charity binds us one to another. It is a willing serviceableness when for the edifying of our neighbors we abstain from the thing which is free for us to do. But yet in the meanwhile, we must not under the shadow of peace and concord betray God's truth, and make a mingle-mangle of it, so as men may not know who ought to rule the roast here beneath, nor what law is

to be followed, but we must utterly maintain the liberty whereof Saint Paul speaks here. See what we have in effect to hold us to.

Now he added immediately that the Apostles who were in great estimation brought nothing unto him (And he opens here Peter, John, and James, who were held in great reputation above the rest, as pillars,) but only took in good worth and allowed the doctrine which he had taught theretofore. And therewithal he adds, that he passed not what opinion men had of Peter, John, and James, forasmuch as God regards not any man's person. That is to say, his outward show or estimation to the worldward.

It should seem here at the first blush that Saint Paul strives for himself and for his own authority and credit. There were dogs that barked against him in times past, and especially the backsliders that had tasted of the Gospel: who to pretend some color of their backsliding and of their renouncing of Christ, alleged thus for themselves. "Tush, it is well enough known that the Apostles strove to wit who should be greatest, which was an unseemly thing, and showed well that they had ill borne away their master's doctrine, who commanded them to humble themselves in such wise, that every of them should make himself least, although he were the greatest." But we have to mark here that Saint Paul had no controversy with the Apostles, as he himself also declares. Therefore there is some special cause why he magnifies himself so much: which is, for that those dogs which labored to set debate between the Apostles, and therewithal to turmoil and falsify the Gospel, pretended always to be the disciples of the Apostles and familiar with them, like as in these days we see many fugitives and shameless fellows, which abuse the names of God's servants, and pass not to lie with open throat, saying: "Oho, I learned it of such a man." And yet they speak of a matter that was never heard of, yea and their shamelessness overshoots itself so

far as to name the very cities, when as notwithstanding, if a man examines them thoroughly, he shall find the clean contrary. So then it was for Saint Paul to show that the authority of men is not sufficient to deface the sovereign authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor the reverence that men ought to bear to His word. Therefore we see first of all, that Paul strove not here against Peter, James, or John, for he agreed very well with them. And secondly that he regarded not his own person, but meant to maintain God's case: that is to wit, that he was ordained and established in the state of an Apostle. Mark for one point that he did not thrust himself in upon a bravery nor at adventure, but that God had chosen him thereunto, and that thereupon, he had so borne abroad the doctrine that was betaken unto him as the pure truth of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, if we consider what Saint Paul aimed at, we shall not only have wherewith to stop the mouths of all misspeakers, but also be more confirmed in the faith which we hold by his teaching. And although there are not nowadays any such shameless persons that labor to deface him or to abolish the authority of his apostleship, yet does not that doctrine cease to be for our profit.

As how? We have seen already how Saint Paul has said that if the angels of heaven should step up to preach a Gospel contrary to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, we should hold them accursed. And even at this day, the same is good for us. For we may defy Satan and all the unbelief and wiliness of men, and all the trash and subtleties which they have to thrust us from the singleness of our faith. I say we may defy every whit of it. And why? For God's word has such a majesty in itself that all things that can be set up against it are but smoke, lies, and filthiness. Now then if we take it for a general rule that neither Peter nor John may diminish the majesty of the Gospel,

it will serve us for a buckler to ward all things that can be alleged in these days to shake us withal: according also as we see that diverse weaklings are thrust out of the way by that it is said unto them, "How now? We see that the wisest men of the world, the men of greatest skill, the prelates and such as have the government of the Church, together with the kings and princes, stick to the faith that has been received of long time, and to the old accustomed manner of living." Thus the poorer sort have their eyes blurred, and their wits utterly dulled, and their hearts discouraged, by means whereof God's truth is forsaken, so as it has neither credit nor reverence among them, and in the meantime these maskers get the upper hand, and flaunt it, as who would say, that men should make idols of them and worship them in despite of God. Then since it is so, we see it stands us in hand in these days to be armed with the doctrine that is contained here in Saint Paul: which is, that God will have us to receive his word without gainsaying; and that when our Lord Jesus Christ came down into the world, he was ordained to be our master, with condition that every of us should hearken to him and stick to the things that he speaks, without adding aught to, or diminishing aught from that which it pleased him to show, because the full perfection of all wisdom is in him.

When we once know this, we may despise all the gewgaws that men can lay before us. And if men tell us that the greatest men, the wisest men, the richest men, and the men of authority of this world do live so or so: we may answer, yea, marry, but when all comes to all, what are they in comparison of God? When creatures come before him they must all vanish away: for whenever there is that majesty given to God's word, whereby he intends to try whether we honor him or not: it is certain that we will receive all that proceeds out of his holy mouth. Now, that word is contained in the Gospel, in so much that when we have once granted that God is to be obeyed, we must no

more run over sea or land to seek what his will is: for we have a sure and infallible warrant of it in the Law, Prophets, and Gospel. Since the case stands so, we see it is not without cause that the Holy Ghost would have this doctrine to continue to the world's end. And furthermore, we are warned therewithal to rest upon God without wavering at every blast of wind, according as we see how the Devil stirs up much variety of opinions, which are as whirlwinds and tempests to drive us to and fro.

But let us learn to be settled upon God, and then shall we stand out to the last brunt. For if we held our faith of John or Peter, it would be but a lean faith, because they were frail creatures, and we know that man is subject to lies and vanity. Therefore it stands us in hand to have a much substantialer and surer groundwork and foundation than all that is to be found in this world. And so, for as much as we know that God has taught us in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that men have been no more but the instruments thereof: it behooves us to mount up unto God. That is the way for us to apply this doctrine to our own instruction, where Saint Paul says that the Apostles added not anything unto him. Nevertheless, it is not meant that he despises them, or that he intended not to profit with them: for he liked very well of that, yea and employed himself by all means thereunto, and held no scorn to be taught even of the meanest sort, as we have seen. But his intent was that God's word which he had preached should abide firm: and thereupon he puts the wisest men in subjection to it, and the men of greatest countenance in the world, and such as bear greatest show and reputation in the Church, to the end that Jesus Christ should keep his preeminence still, and men have an eye unto him, and not unto men, but ground themselves altogether upon one selfsame faith, and say that for as much as the Son of God is sent unto us to show us the will of God his father: it is not lawful for us in any wise to doubt of the thing which we receive of

him. Thus you see what we have to do at this day. And whereas Saint Paul says that he passes not what the Apostles were, because God regards not men's persons: thereby he shows that he ought not to be counted inferior to John or Peter, for that he had been an infidel, and not believed in Jesus Christ, at such time as the other Apostles did already preach the Gospel. For the manner of the world is, that they which come first, should be first served. Saint Paul therefore perceiving that the same might be some prejudice to his doctrine, says that men must not look what one he had been before, or what the other had been before. And yet his meaning is not, that he ought not to look back to humble himself continually, or that the gifts of grace which God had bestowed upon John and Peter, should not be esteemed and commended as they were praise-worthy: for we see that in other places he terms himself a poor thing born out of time, and confesses himself to be unworthy to be counted in the number of the Apostles. Saint Paul then did not as a number of hypocrites or rather shameless persons do, who all their life long have been either whoremongers, or drunkards, or loose livers, and of a beastly conversation, and yet for all that do but wring their mouth at it and say, "Tush, men must not inquire what I have been." But surely men must not look to have any other judges against them than themselves. For every of us ought to condemn himself, as Saint Paul exhorts us: and specially when we consider how we have been wretched unbelievers, and as good as beasts, we ought to be ashamed of our own lewdness. Saint Paul therefore knew well there had been cause for him to mislike of himself, and to be ashamed of his striving against the Gospel, and therewithal disdained not the goodness that had been in John and James. At such time as Peter and John were scourged and whipped for the Gospel, Saint Paul was a murderer, and passed not to say that they were rightly dealt withal, and that it made no matter. But yet for all that, he aimed at the mark which I spoke of before: namely that for as much as God had so advanced

him within a little while, his former misbehavior in times past ought not to hinder the receiving of the gracious gifts that were in him, that they might not profit to the common edifying of the Church.

Thus you see in effect, that the thing which we have to bear in mind, is that if it be late ere we be called to the Gospel, we must be sorry that we have spent our time so ill, and especially that we have lived like wretched brute beasts, without knowing who is our father to whom we ought to do homage, both for our life and for all the goods which we have received of him. Therefore we ought to be sorry for that. Again, when we see a man return that was gone astray, we must acknowledge such change to be a miracle of God. For if a man have been a wild beast, and past all hope of being brought unto God, and yet afterward becomes as a sheep, and submits himself willingly to the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ: it cannot be but that the hand of God has passed upon him. Therefore it behooves us to know what all men have been aforetimes, and every man ought to be his own judge in that behalf: but yet for all that, when a man has been slow in coming unto God, if God work in him with such power as it is seen that he minds to set him forwarder in one day, than some other men in ten years: his so doing must not cause us to pluck back him that was able to edify, as men sometimes do, saying, "What was such a one a two or three years ago?" such sayings are nought worth. Let us rather understand that our Lord has showed himself so much the more, to the end to be honored. And therewithal, forasmuch as God's gifts ought not to be unprofitable: let us suffer them to be applied to the profit and welfare of the faithful. You see then that our looking what men have been aforetimes, must not be to despise them still: for it may be that God gave him the bridle for a time to the intent to bring him down, so as he became an unthrift, or lived in ignorance, and knew not goodness, or had not any excellent or commendable quality in him: and yet for all that, God will set him as it were upon

the scaffold, and show by effect that he intends to be served by him. Therefore it behooves us to take in good worth, the thing that God gives and offers unto us in that wise.

Thus you see what we have to bear in mind, and how needful it is that we should so do: for there is not any thing contained here, whereof we have not the experience nowadays. As touching the words where Saint Paul says that God accepts not any man's person: it is all one as if he had said, that God is not tied to the things that are seen of us, or which we have in estimation, but that he is free to bestow his gifts on whom he listeth, and how he listeth. Many men, when they hear this word "person" spoken of, do beguile themselves, and wrest it against the meaning of the Holy Ghost. And thereupon many men suppose that God accepts not any one man more than another, for then [think they] he should be partial. But see how they darken God's free Election: as who should say he were beholden to men, and that if he chose any of them, the same ought to be general without exception, in so much that (to their seeming) God's grace flies in the air like a Tennis ball, and it is in our power and free will to reach out our hand to catch it, and to apply it to our use. Thus are diverse besotted, yea even with too gross ignorance, because they understand not what is meant by the word "person." But the Holy Scripture tells us, that God in vouchsafing to choose men, and to set them in a more excellent state, and to bestow the gifts of his Holy Spirit upon them, stays not upon anything at all in the party, nor passes whether he be white or black, old or young, noble or ignoble, rich or poor, beloved or hated of men, fair or foul. God thinks not upon any of these small trifles: for if he should delay to love us till he found some good thing in us: he should let us alone still in such plight as we be. That therefore is the cause why Saint Paul says expressly, that God regards not any man's person. And so we see now what we have to gather upon that Text.

First of all (as I have said already) let us learn to receive God's gifts, and to make our own profit of them when they be offered us, and let us not take occasion to refuse them as many men do, which labor to cloak their unkindness by alleging one thing or other. But whether they allege antiquity, or whatsoever thing else, let it not hinder us to take profit by those whom God sends to us: for though they be not past three days old, nor can magnify themselves among men, nor have done many exploits and valiant enterprises: yet is it no matter to us, so we perceive that our Lord has given them such gifts as may be available to our edification, and therefore let every of us stoop and become teachable, assuring ourselves that if we refuse the good that is offered us by man, we do not wrong to the man, but forasmuch as God is the author thereof, and we hold scorn to receive that which comes of him, we be worthy to be utterly bereft of the thing that he is minded to bestow upon us, and of the benefits which he has after a sort put into our hand. Lo what we have to bear away.

Furthermore let us learn also, not to bring any imagination of self-value when we come unto God. But let him that is noble, mighty, or rich to the worldward, lay away all self-estimation, and acknowledge it to be utterly nothing before God: and let him that is poor and miserable, assure himself that he is not quite shaken off, though men despise him. Also let us practice that which is showed us by Saint James, which is, that the brother which is great and noble should glory in his smallness, knowing that he has all things of God's only mere goodness: and that the brother which is poor and of low and mean degree, should glory in that God has adopted him, and given him such a state as passes all the kingdoms of the world, seeing it pleases him to avow us after that fashion for his children. True it is that whereas men gaze upon the outward appearance and fair show of things: God accepts a good conscience, God looks at the incorruptness of the heart. But yet must he be fain to put the same

before into it: for at the first he shall not find it in us. Let God look upon all the children of Adam, and (as it is said in the Psalm) he shall find nothing but utter corruption. They be stark rotten in their wickedness. See what our nature is. Then is there not anything that could move God to accept us, and to prefer us before others: but we must become vessels of his goodness, and acknowledge that his accepting of us, is not for our own worthiness: but that when he chose us to himself, and set us into the way by his Holy Spirit, even then he knew what soundness was in us. Not that we have any at all of our own: but because he does as it were behold himself in us. For look how many good things there are in the faithful, so many records are there of God's goodness in that he has showed himself bountiful towards them. That is the cause why that in the tenth of the Acts and in other places, this accepting of persons is put for the deckings and visors which are as false illusions: of which sort are riches, credit, dignity, nobility and such other things, which serve to make men to set store by themselves, and to stand in their own conceits.

But it is said that God looks into people's hearts, and not gaze upon the outside of them, so they submit themselves to him obediently, as I have declared already. This is in effect the thing that we have to bear in mind. Now Saint Paul adds immediately that the Apostles avowed him to be their fellow and gave him their hand, as it were to warrant that the Gospel which he had preached, was in all points conformable to their doctrine, and that all of them had served our Lord Jesus Christ. Hereto Saint Paul adds, that he was by common consent received as the Apostle of the Gentiles, that is to say, of such as had not been brought up under the law, nor were Jews by birth and ancestry. Here we see that Saint Paul's striving was not with the Apostles: for they avowed him to be their fellow: neither did he disdain them: for we have seen before, that although his coming to Jerusalem was with assured knowledge that God had appointed him,

and upon sure and infallible revelation, after he had been caught up into the third Heaven: yet notwithstanding he was not carried with pride, neither undertook he that journey to Jerusalem, to commune with the Apostles for fear lest he had already or should thereafter run in vain. For his desire was to have all men know that he challenged not any special thing to himself, but that his only seeking was, that the Son of God might be published all the world over, and that men should worship him and rest upon him, so as he brought not a new Jesus Christ, but was conformable in all points to Peter and John, and to all their fellows. If Saint Paul had shrunk aside by himself, it would have been said that his meaning was not to have any consent of doctrine with the rest of the Apostles.

But now, seeing he comes after that sort to agree with them: he shows that he was not carried away with any pride or presumptuousness: and that is what he means by saying anew again, that the Apostles avowed him to be their fellow. Then does he not take upon him to be above them: but will have men know that the Apostles served our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he was one of their number, and that the Gospel which he had preached must not be taken as a doubtful thing, but as certain as if Peter or John had spoken it, in so much that when Saint Paul treats thereof, he says not, "It is I," but he says it is Jesus Christ. Whether it be Peter, John, or James that speaks, let us look that the Son of God have ever the mastery above us, and let the thing that comes of him be received, whether it be by me or by another. Saint Paul will not have men to gaze after him, any more than after the least man in the world. The thing which we have in effect to remember in this text of Saint Paul's, is that he had no mind at all of himself, nor sought any whit of his own, but was contented that Jesus Christ should have the praise that he deserved, and that his word should be received with all reverence, and as for all other things, he cared not what became of them. As

touching the other point, that he was accepted as the Apostle of the Gentiles: it is agreeable to that which Saint Luke also rehearses: namely that Paul and Barnabas were ordained Apostles, because God had singled them out for the same purpose, to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles. Then did not that matter come of men: but God had pronounced his irrevocable sentence of it: and Saint Paul's treating after that sort of himself, does not at all diminish the commission of the other Apostles.

But seeing he was sent of God indeed, and that his calling was not grounded upon men, nor had he preached immeasurably, nor thrust himself in upon a garrishness, but was chosen thereunto of God: the Apostles showed that they would not in any wise speak against such a calling, because it was of sufficient authority, as coming from God. And here we see yet better how all men ought to frame themselves to obedience, to the intent that nothing may let the word of God to be a bridle and yoke, to hold us so in awe, as none of us may follow his own fancies, lusts, and affections, but suffer ourselves to be guided and governed by the hand of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now if it were not lawful for the Apostles to refuse Saint Paul because he was sent from heaven: what shall we do? Shall it not be a devilish pride if we cannot endure that the government and order which God has established in his Church should continue unimpeached, but would change callings at our own pleasure, to set up and pull down according to the device of our own foolish brain? Then if we go about to make such trouble in the Church, is it not all one as if we would pluck the Sun out of the sky to spite God withal? Therefore, you see here, that the thing which we have to bear in mind, is that the government of the Church is ordained of God, and that they who go about to change anything in it are full of devilish

pride and must in the end fall down for advancing themselves in such wise.

Now as touching that Saint Paul was sent among the Gentiles: it was not an altering of that which had been uttered already by the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ when he said, "Go preach ye the Gospel through the whole world." It might seem at the first sight that here was some change and contrariety, in that Saint Paul was sent on the one side, and Saint Peter on the other. Nevertheless, both of them do stand very well together, for as much as our Lord Jesus Christ spoke not severally to any one of the Apostles, "Thou Peter shalt go over all the world, thou shalt go about the whole earth to preach my Gospel," or "Thou John shalt do the like," and so consequently to the others: but he says, "All you whom I have ordained, go spread abroad my Gospel everywhere." And his giving of Commission after that sort in general terms is no let but that one might go one way, and another another, and every of them employ himself wherever God made him way, or gave him entrance, according also as they labored to spend themselves thereabouts, as well in death as in life.

But besides this, there was a special commission given to Saint Paul to go into countries further off, where there was not such a multitude of Jews. True it is that wherever Paul came, he did put forth the doctrine of the Gospel throughout all the Synagogues of the Jews, so as he was rightly their Apostle also. Howbeit, this letted him not to be ordained for the Gentiles, and to carry abroad the Gospel through the whole world, even where God had not been known before, and where there had not been any light of good doctrine, any law, or any religion. Saint Paul then was sent chiefly unto them. And seeing it is so: what title of supremacy can the Pope now pretend, under color that Saint Peter (as he himself says) was Bishop of Rome? Surely the

saying that Peter was at Rome and lived as Bishop there, is but a fable and flat mockery.

But let us put the case it were so. Yet according to that which I have said already, Peter's calling was specially for the Jews. And therefore if the Pope pretend to be Saint Peter's successor, he must be the Bishop of the Jews, and his supremacy must stretch no further than to them. For as for Saint Paul, it is very certain that he was never Bishop of Rome, nor never was there, saving when he was brought prisoner thither: and it is not known whether he continued there or no, howbeit it is very likely that he answered for his life. The Pope then cannot brag that he succeeds Saint Paul therein. And what warrant has the City of Rome, or what worthiness can it pretend to say that the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ were there: but that it is a den of thieves, and that God's servants have been murdered there? So then let us mark well this Text, where Saint Paul shows that Saint Peter was appointed for the Jews, and himself sent to the Gentiles: for in as much as this lesson serves expressly for our turn, we ought to be the more moved to profit by it.

True it is that the doctrine of the other Apostles belongs to us as well as this, for our Lord Jesus Christ will be heard when he speaks to us, whether it be by the mouth of Peter, or by the mouth of John, for all are instruments of his spirit, and we must not make a difference between persons.

But however the case stands, for as much as Saint Paul's doctrine concerns us, it ought to serve us as a spur to prick us to the quick. And forasmuch as God chose him to bring the wretched Gentiles unto him, making him the means to draw those unto him who had been cut off from his Church: surely it ought to give us the more courage, seeing he did his endeavor to draw the wretched unbelievers

out of the darkness of ignorance wherein they were, (making that his only mark to shoot at) that is to wit, us that come not of the race of the Jews as concerning the flesh. Nevertheless, let us consider therewithal, that Jesus Christ will be heard of us in such wise, as we must not regard either Peter or Paul, or James or John, or anything else but him. Let us hold us contented with the master that is given us of God the father to bring us to all perfection and wisdom, and let us also suffer ourselves to be taught by such means as he listeth, and let the things that Saint Paul hath written serve us, and likewise the writings of John and of James, and of the rest of the Apostles: so they lead us to Jesus Christ, let us receive whatsoever is brought us by them, and let us shut our eyes at all other things, and not have any other consideration, than our Lord Jesus Christ calls us by their means. And although we follow the guiding of the doctrine of Peter, John, James, and Paul: yet let our shoot anchor always be to be joined and united to our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we shall find the fullness of all welfare and joy, so as we shall have whereof to glory thoroughly in him.

But let us offer ourselves before the majesty of our good God, with acknowledging of our faults, praying him to make us feel them more and more, that we may be sorry for them, and ask him forgiveness with true repentance, and fight against our lusts all the days of our life, till we be thoroughly rid of them. And for as much as we be so wretched wights, that we cannot be quite and clean discharged of them: let us beseech him to bear with us till he have buried all our sins, to clothe us all over again with his own righteousness. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people. &c.

The Tenth Sermon,

which is the fourth upon the second Chapter.

11 And when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he ate with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those that were of the Circumcision.

13 And the other Jews also dissembled with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was brought into their dissimulation.

We have seen heretofore whereabouts the doctrine of Saint Paul strove: that is to say, about his abolishing of the Ceremonies of the law. Now, they that strove against him had fair enough color, saying that the law was given of God, and that it was not lawful to alter any part of it, seeing that God was the Author of it. But they should have considered to what end the Ceremonies were given to the people of old time. True it is that like as God is unchangeable, so his word also endures steadfast forever: but yet does it not follow thereupon that God should not appoint men the things which he knows to be meet for them. Therefore the Ceremonies were ordained for a time, to serve the necessity of the Jews. Also, there was this respect which I have touched: that before the coming of Jesus Christ, it was requisite that there should be certain shadows to bring the faithful more further forward, that is, that they might be confirmed in the hope of

the redeemer that was promised them. And thereupon we may well gather that God's enjoining of the Ceremonies was not to the end they should continue forever and stand always in their full and perfect state: but to the intent they should continue for a time, to serve to keep that people in the hope that was given them of the things which we now have in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the very body and substance of the shadows that were in the time of the law. Ye see then to what point we must come. And yet cannot a man argue that God is variable as some fantastical persons do, who have alleged the same reason. For shall we say that God changes his purpose, because he makes Summer and Winter? We see the sundry seasons of the year, we see the earth wax green, and the trees bud flowers, and afterward bring forth fruit, and we see all things as good as dead in the Winter time: All this variety comes surely of God: but yet does it not therefore follow that he changes his nature. So likewise (as I said before) he gave his law for man's behoof, and it was requisite that the Jews (who had not yet such manifest knowledge as is given us by the Gospel) should be helped by another means, that is to wit, by the Ceremonies which nowadays should be needless, for as much as we have the performance of the things that God showed them then afar off, and our state is in that respect better than the state of the Jews.

But now Saint Paul, to show that his preaching of such liberty, and that the law which God had laid upon the necks of the ancient fathers, was taken away at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, was not without cause: declares that he rebuked Peter for the same matter. Now if the Christians ought to have been held in like bondage as the Jews had been: surely Peter would have maintained the quarrel to the uttermost. But he suffered himself to be reproved, and confessed his fault. Seeing we have such a president in the person of Peter: it follows that our case is good, and that the Apostles knew

that all the old shadows and figures ought to cease and be utterly abolished by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the thing that S. Paul sets down here is that he rebuked Peter in the City of Antioch for being conversant with the Gentiles, not with the unbelieving sort, but with such as had been converted to the knowledge of the Gospel. He lived familiarly with them, accounting them as members of the Church. But behold, as soon as certain Jews came from Jerusalem sent of James: Peter, fearing lest some misreport might be raised of him, shrank away and made countenance as though he had no familiarity nor acquaintance with the Gentiles, and notwithstanding that they had the same faith of the Gospel which he had, yet did he use them as strangers, because it was taken to be a kind of defiling to be in company with them. See here a wicked madness: for by that means there was a division made in the Church. (As it is said in another place) the wall was broken down when our Lord Jesus Christ was appointed to be a light from God, not only for the Jews but also for the salvation of the whole world.

Wherefore if it behooved those that had erstwhile been separated and estranged from the Church to be called into one flock: then does Peter annul God's grace, whereas yet notwithstanding we know there is not a more precious thing than the union of the Church. Therefore, he that varies from it cannot by any means be excused. But behold, the fault of Peter was that he broke this bond of concord by separating the Jews from the Gentiles, notwithstanding that all belonged to the body of our Lord Jesus Christ and were the very children of God. Again, they had all one self-same head and one self-same redeemer: and therefore his deed was a diminishing of God's house, for as much as we are all gathered together in his name and do become his household folk, even till we are gathered up into the heritage of heaven. But there was yet one other fault: which is that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was darkened. For what fare we

the better by his coming, unless we know that in him we have the fullness and performance of the things that were figured to us in old time? If we should offer sacrifice nowadays as they did in the time of the law: we should not know that we were cleansed by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that the same was a sufficient payment for the satisfaction of all our sins, and that we have there a perfect righteousness purchased for us. We should know none of these things. Therefore Saint Peter offended grossly in hanging up that veil again, which was as much as to stop Christ from being known as he ought to be.

Moreover, there was also a third fault, which was, that thereby the Jews were hardened in their error. True it is that we ought to bear with the ignorant and weak ones, and not grieve them overmuch: and although they overshoot themselves, yet must they be brought back again by little and little, rather than to break either bone or gristle of them, as the proverb says: but yet as for to nourish their ignorance by soothing them in it, or by giving any token of allowance or well-liking, that is naught. And Peter by withdrawing himself from the Gentiles to please his own Countrymen, brought to pass that the Jews might the better make their brags, that they had won their spurs, for as much as Peter had given an inkling that the Gentiles were unclean and unholy people, and so his deed was an augmenting of the evil that was too great already. In respect whereof Saint Paul said that Peter was blameworthy. And it behooves us to mark this thing well and diligently, because some have thought in times past that it was done by agreement between them, and that Saint Peter was sorry that some of his Countrymen were too hard to be pleased, and therefore had told Saint Paul secretly, that he was contented to be rebuked of him. But all this is but a flimflam. For Saint Paul says expressly that Peter was worthy of blame, and that thereupon he had stepped up when he saw he walked not aright. We see then that there

was not a secret agreement or packing in this case: but rather that Saint Paul used the liberty that was given him [of God] and rebuked Peter, and would not bear with him in that case, although he revered him as the Apostle of Jesus Christ.

And now upon this text, we have to gather for our own instruction, how precious this liberty is as I have declared heretofore. For here the case stands not upon the only use of things: but upon the having of our consciences quiet before God. If the debate had been, whether it were lawful to eat swine's flesh or no, which was a thing comprehended under the ceremonies of the law: it had been a trifling matter, and it might well have been passed over, like as it may be nowadays when the like Ceremonies are talked of. But it behooved them to come to the wellhead, as I have declared heretofore. For the figures served to hold the people of old time as it were in wardship, like young children which are under governors and do not yet enjoy their liberty. But at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, like as faith grew great, so it was meet that such manner of teaching should no more take place among the Jews. Then was not Saint Paul's striving, only about the outward use of things (for he would willingly have forborne that): but to the end it might be known to what purpose the Ceremonies of the law had served: namely, how it was not a bondage that should endure forever, but that they had stood in force only to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And hereupon it may be gathered that when the Jews forbore the eating of Swine's flesh, or observed any holy day, or did this thing or that: they did not a service to God that was of necessity in itself, but used it for the continual exercising of themselves in the faith of Jesus Christ.

Whereby we see that the Ceremonies had no virtue of themselves: but that when they were referred to their due end and spiritual pattern, then it was perceived that God had not ordained them, but

to the benefit of the Church. Then let Jesus Christ be separated from the Ceremonies, and they shall be but trifles for little children to play with. But if the end be considered whereunto they ought to lead the faithful, then will it be found that they were profitable. Yes, and even we at this day may fare the better by them. Although the use of them be abolished, yet may we by them gather the things that are showed us in the Gospel. As how? It was said that the Priest should enter alone into the Sanctuary, and not without sacrifice. Well then, thereupon we have to gather, that there is neither man nor Angel worthy to come unto God, but that we should all of us be shut out, if there were not a way opened for us in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Mark that for one point.

Again, we have also to bear in mind, that we can have none atonement with God, nor boldness and liberty to call upon him, except blood go with it: that is to say, except the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ [go with us] to get us grace and favor. And all our prayers must be offered up by that means, or else they shall be refused at God's hand. Moreover, it is said, that the book of the law was sprinkled with blood as well as the Sanctuary. We see then that all things should be unholy, if they were not hallowed by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ on all sides, and also that we should have no assuredness of God's promises, nor be able to apply them to our welfare, unless they had seals continually at them.

Besides this, when as it is said that God is our father, and that our sins are forgiven us and we accepted of him as righteous and guiltless: none of these promises should be of any force, neither could they boot us at all, except the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ went before our eyes, so as all the word of God were (after a sort) written unto us in red letters of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus you see how we should profit ourselves by the Ceremonies of

the law. But howsoever we fare, the use of them is abolished, and if they continued still, we should not have so good teaching by them as we have, for we should rest upon these base and corruptible things. But in as much as we have the heavenly pattern that was spoken of unto Moses, according also as the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and Saint Stephen in the Acts do show right well: now we understand wherefore God ordained such Ceremonies. The thing then which we have to mark for one point, is that we must understand, how here is no speaking of matters of small importance, but in knowing wherein the Ceremonies profited the fathers of old time, and why it was God's will to have them abolished at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And herewithal we see also, that Saint Paul spared not Peter though he were his fellow, and were in as worthy and excellent an office as he was, and seemed that of duty he should have been borne withal. Howsoever the case stood with him, he rebuked him sharply for that matter. We may much better deem, that if it were a small & light thing, Saint Paul would not have moved such debate and strife for it. Needs therefore must it be a matter of great importance. But by the way we be warned, that whenever God's truth is defaced, or that any man turneth away from the pure simplicity of the Gospel, we must not in any wise spare him, but although the whole world should set itself against us, yet must we maintain the case with invincible constancy, without bending for any creature. For if any man ought to be borne with, the same was Peter: and seeing that our Lord Jesus Christ had bestowed such gifts of grace upon him, as to give him that name, Saint Paul should have yielded somewhat unto him: yes, but that matter was not to be borne with. Then you see here an example, which shows us that when the authority of men tends to the defacing of the truth of the Gospel, we must fall to striving and not regard any creature. And this is greatly for our profit nowadays. For there are many that would fain row between two streams, and although they perceive the abuses and

corruptions, yet would they bear on both sides, and all to purchase peace as they themselves say, whereas in the end there must needs follow great confusion when men do so heave one at another. Therefore to appease all discord, they would fain have a parting of stakes and a mingle-mangle made, and that every man should bow on his side. But in the meanwhile, will God give over his right at the pleasure of men? Or may we confederate ourselves to his prejudice? So then, seeing that we nowadays have to encounter against the willful Papists, who have perverted, corrupted, and falsified all the truth of the Gospel: although they face us with these honorable titles of holy Catholic Church, holy Sea Apostolic, Prelacy, Christendom, and holy Supremacy (which yet notwithstanding are but visors in very deed): let us not be abashed a whit at them.

For why? We have God on our side: and besides that the truth of the Gospel is so precious in his sight, as he will not have any creature to be spared for it: according as we have seen how Saint Paul himself tells us, that if it were possible for the Angels to turn us away from the pure doctrine, we should hold them accursed, and refuse and abhor them. And why then shall we seek to please mortal men, when they would disguise the pureness of the Gospel, and mingle their own inventions with it, and in so doing make our Lord Jesus Christ their underling, that they might still keep possession of their errors? Is it meet that we should yield up our places to them? A mischief light upon such concord: for it shall always be cursed of God.

Wherefore let us have such stoutness and constancy of mind, that when we be once sure that the quarrel which we maintain is God's, we stagger not for any greatness or loftiness of the world. Thus ye see in effect what we have to bear in mind. And here withal we see also what the fondness of the Papists is, and how shameless that villain [the Pope] hath been in exempting himself from all correction. When

the Pope intends to magnify himself greatly, he calls himself the Successor of Peter: and yet in the meanwhile, he will by no means submit himself to any chastisements. He says that it belongs to him to correct all the world, and that it is not lawful for any man to meddle with him. And whence comes that exemption? For if he pretends to hold the place of Peter, we see here the contrary. Peter was rebuked and bore it, yes and he willingly granted himself to be guilty when he saw he was overcome. Seeing it is so, we must needs conclude that there is no dignity in this world (how much soever men color it) which should not always be subject to God's word. For what a thing were it if it were otherwise, so as our Lord Jesus Christ should have set up dumb Idols in his Church under the title and shadow of shepherds, and that it should be lawful for them to find fault and rebuke, yes and to mar and falsify all things, and in the meanwhile no man should open his lips against them? God's Church should become as it were a Swine's sty, infected with all filthiness, and there should be no remedy to help it. Let us mark well then, that God will not have any such preeminence to be in his Church, as should hinder the continual course of his word, so as it should not be able to bridle all such as are in any superiority above others. For it behooves us to give ear to our Lord Jesus Christ, and he must have the mastership that is given him of God his father, so as every man must yield himself thereunto, and none of us pretend to have any exemption. That is the thing which is showed us in the person of Saint Peter.

On the other part, we see also after what sort the faults that are committed ought to be rebuked: that is to say, openly before all men, and not only in secret: which thing is well worthy to be marked. For there are many that can find in their hearts to give cause of offence, who after they have set all in a broil, would have a man do no more to them, but tell them softly in their ear that they have done amiss. For

the common divinity is this. What I pray you? Is it not said that each should reprove other secretly? Is it meet that a man should be so defamed when he has done amiss? No verily, if he have not offended in such wise, as his fault engendereth trouble in the whole Church. For even our Lord Jesus Christ does expressly set down the same difference, so that if any man have done amiss and I know it, I must rebuke him betwixt him and me. But if the fault be notorious and open, and an occasion to bring in evil example, if he were not told of it: then must I not any more keep that order of rounding him secretly in the ear, but condemn the fault as it deserves, that others may take warning by it. And this is meant, not only of private persons, but also of such as are in highest degree: for it becomes them to lead the way, according also as in another place to Timothy, Paul commands expressly, that such as have done amiss (though they be the Shepherds which have the charge to teach and govern the flock) should be rebuked openly. The same thing has he put presently in practice in the person of Peter. For in as much as the fault was overgreat, and too far out of square, and might engender greater trouble in the Church, because it was (as you would say) an overthrowing of the Gospel) for that there was as yet some infirmity in many men: Saint Paul saw well it was requisite that Peter should be rebuked, and thereupon did it.

That therefore is the thing which we have to remember concerning that process. On the other side, we see also the mildness of Peter. It had been said unto him by the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ, that besides his ordinary name of Simon, he should be called Peter for the steadiness of his faith. He was excellent among the rest of the Apostles: and yet nevertheless he stoops with his head, and bows down his neck when he sees that he has done amiss, and makes no buckler of the honorable state wherein he was, but only considers, that since God's word is given us to correct us, it becomes us to

submit ourselves to it, except we will be rebels against him, who in the end will beat down all the pride of the world. Therefore Saint Peter, perceiving that nothing is better for a man than to receive chastisements when he has done amiss, yields to that which was told him by Saint Paul.

Now if we consider all these things well: we have here a very profitable story. For on the one side we see how every man desires to hold in with the world: and that is an occasion to blind us continually in our misdoings. For there is nothing with us but flattering, and (to our seeming) we cannot be friends, except every of us bear with his fellow. Surely there is a manner of bearing with things, which is commendable, as I have said already: which is, to be gentle in rebuking such as have done amiss, so as we labor to win them, and draw them back again by friendliness, and be not too fumish and hasty with them. For there are faults that may be borne with, and which are not to be searched to the bottom, for it does but sharpen men when they see an overeagerness of fault-finding, according as you shall see divers who keep as it were continual watch, to see if they can find anything to carp at in some man or other: all their holiness consists in taunting of one man, and in railing upon another: and to be short, they be the greatest Correcters of the world. But our desire [of rebuking] must be so bridled, as we seek not to find fault with men.

And yet on the other side, the flattering that reigns nowadays too much in the world, is a vice which we ought to shun as a deadly plague. Therefore according as every of us loves his neighbor, so let him learn to use the freeness of speech which Saint Paul shows us here. And specially when God's truth is in hand, let no man be spared, let the zeal of God get the upper hand in us, and although we should purchase displeasure, and run in danger of many slanders

and backbitings, yet ought we nevertheless to undertake the challenge. For there is no excuse for us if we play the traitors, by dissembling when the truth of the Gospel is falsified. Wherefore we must follow the thing that Saint Paul shows us here: and the deed which he did to his fellow Peter, must serve us for a law and rule, so as we may show that we desire nothing more, than that God should be heard, that his truth should not be turned into a lie, and that there should not be anything shuffled to it, nor any Leaven or Darnell mingled with it, but that it should continue always in his own pure singleness.

And on the other side, the great ones are warned here, to submit themselves meekly, and to yield themselves pliable to the correction that is offered them, knowing that God surrendered not his own right when he advanced them to that state, but must still keep his sovereign dominion, execute his jurisdiction by his word, in such wise as they which are most highly advanced, must bow down their necks, and understand that it were a devilish confusion to pretend a privilege to receive no chastisement. For by that means God's word should be as good as thrust out of doors, and he be bereft of the sovereignty which he has over us: and therefore after that manner must we put that doctrine in vre. And specially nowadays when we see men so bold to bend themselves after that fashion against God, let us be fenced beforehand against them, and let nothing abash us, seeing we know what the quarrel is wherein we fight against them: but let us hardily defy all that filthy dungeon, that is to wit, the Pope and his Clergy, and let us not pass a whit for these stinking vermin, when we see them bend their horns at our Lord Jesus Christ, and that under his shadow and by pretending his name, they go about to thrust his Gospel under foot, yea and to bury it utterly, or else to make such a confused mingling of it, as men may not know who is master. Then since we see that the Devil possesses them after that

sort, let us not stick to arm ourselves to the battle, and to stand out against them to the uttermost: specially seeing that among other things, the quarrel is more favorable to us in these days, than it could seem to be in the time that Saint Paul maintained it. True it is that the reason is alike, and springs all out of one fountain: but yet was Saint Paul fain to fight against the Ceremonies that God had commanded by his own mouth. And why did he so? Because that thereby the Gospel was darkened, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was after a sort beaten down, men's merits were established, and finally men knew not whereat God had aimed in his law. And nowadays the self-same reasons move us, to fight against all the abominations that have been set up in the Papacy. But we have this for an advantage, that all these things were forged in the shops of Satan and of men. Now we know there is nothing but vanity in men, so long as they are ruled by their own fancy, and submit not themselves to the obeying of God.

For as much as the case standeth so, let us fight so much the more manfully, seeing that our Lord doth in all respects give us wherewith to keep us from being dismayed at the titles that are set before us to outface us with, which are naught else but illusions of Satan. You see in effect what we have to bear in mind. But it behooves us also to mark well how Saint Paul adds that his rebuking of Peter was because he and his companions walked not the right way in the truth of the Gospel: and besides that, his rebuking of them was, because he saw that the mischief was already spread far and wide, and that if he had forborne any longer, the remedy would have come out of season. Behold here two reasons which it stands us in hand to mark well. As touching the truth of the Gospel, I have showed you already how it is the pureness which it behooves us to stick unto. He might well have said, that they walk not the right way in the Gospel: but he speaks of the truth [of the Gospel,] according as he had used the same word

once before. The reason why he does so, is for that men would have a half-faced Gospel, and be are themselves in hand, that they be discharged before God, so the name of Christianity run roundly in their mouths. Like as at this day the word Gospel is taken to be meetly honorable among the Papists: but yet the Gospel which they have is but a bastard gospel, because they have put their own collups and gobbets to it. They have turkined all things after their own pleasure, and they have taken such a scope, that Jesus Christ is but an underling in comparison of them. For they have given determinate sentence as it were from Heaven. And in good sooth they have not been ashamed to say, that the Contents of the Gospel are but as an Apsie of the Christians, or as it were an introduction: and that the great Mysteries and principal matters, have been revealed to them since, so as they must come from Councils, and from the Sea of Rome.

Thus is our Lord Jesus Christ mocked, as though they had taken in hand to crucify him anew. For men could not devise to offer him a greater villainy, than to say that he was but as an Usher of a School to teach folk their Apsie, and that the Pope is come in above him, to bring in the state of perfection: and yet notwithstanding it is seen how the Pope makes a minglemangle or hotchpotch (as men term it) of all things. Then is the word Gospel villainously unhallowed among the Papists, and these sticklers which would have men to agree unto many superstitions, and to content themselves with a little of the Gospel, and in the meantime let many abuses and errors continue still: do likewise darken the pure doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is the cause why Saint Paul speaks expressly of the truth of the Gospel, to show that we must go to it roundly, and not by halves, and that there must be no adding nor diminishing of the things which the son of God has taught us, but that every man must be contented to hear him speak, and to let him have his mouth open. Let us on our

side open our ears and be heedful to receive whatsoever he says: and let no man presume to have an oar in that boat, to say this would be good, or this or that should be done. Wherefore let us so reverence the pure doctrine of the Gospel, as none of us presume to change aught of it, but all of us yield to it without exception. Thus much concerning the first reason that is set down here. So (to be short) let us keep ourselves true scholars unto our Lord Jesus Christ, and if any man go about to make us swerve never so little from him, or to gad after the doctrines and inventions of men: let us withstand them stoutly. And why? For Saint Paul had none other respect, but that the Gospel might abide in his pure and uncorrupted soundness.

Therefore let us follow him in the same nowadays, and we can never do amiss. Mark that for one point. Another is, that we must also mark well, that if an inconvenience should increase, and spread abroad by our silence and forbearing, we must provide for it beforehand. For it were too late to shut the stable door when the Steed is stolen. Therefore when we see that such as labor to entangle God's truth, or to mingle their own fancies with it do draw folks to them, and begin to have some train and tail following them: then is it high time for us to be fiery in fighting. For if we bear it: it is certain that we be guilty of the decay of the Church, that shall come upon it, and whereas we think to shift it off, God will not grant us that grace, for as much as we have been too cold and reckless. Therefore when the mischief increases, and that there breeds any infection of it, (that is to say, when one begins to mar another,) let us bethink us to set ourselves lustily against it, and not suffer the shrewd weeds to grow so far as to choke the corn, but let us pluck them up betimes. And this is to be done, not only in the errors that mar the pure doctrine of the Gospel, but also in all vices and corruptions [of manners]. Truly if there be any Heresies and wicked opinions which might set all things in a broil, it is all one as if a man should have a stroke with a

sword or a dagger in his breast or in his throat. For wherein is the life and welfare of the Church, but in the pureness of God's word? If a man would come and put poison in our meat whereof we should take nourishment, should we hold our peace at it? No: but we should rather storm at it?

Now the self-same reason holds in the doctrine of the Gospel, and we must have our hands always lifted up to maintain the pure doctrine, and not suffer it in any wise to be corrupted. Also when we see vices reign, we must provide for them and redress them in due season. For if we bear with it and do as most men do, which do but laugh at it and provide for it at leisure: we shall afterward be at our wits' end, to see how God has shut the gate, and how Satan has won the goal out of all cry. And sure it is a just reward of our recklessness and coldness, when we are not heedful to cure the diseases as soon as we see them infect and mar the body of the Church after that sort. Thus you see what we have in effect to remember here: namely that we must not be so foolish and light-minded, as to receive the things that these Neuters or double-handed men do put unto us, as who should say, that if the great abuses be amended, it ought to suffice us. But let us never leave till the Gospel be set again in its pure soundness, and that we have it in the self-same wise which our Lord Jesus Christ delivered it to us, without any mingling put thereto by men.

And secondly again, thereafter as we see the mischief prevail, let us bring these back unto God which are gone astray, and labor to stop those that lead their neighbors after that fashion to destruction, and seek nothing but to turn all upside down: let such men be repressed, and let every one that has the zeal of God show himself their deadly enemy, breaking asunder whatsoever may hold us back: and whether there be friendship or kindred between us, or any other of the straightest bonds in the world: let us bury every whit of it in

forgetfulness, when we see the souls that were bought with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, so led to ruin and destruction: or when we see things that were well settled, overthrown, and nothing else sought but confusion, so as men might not know anymore what Jesus Christ is, and that by little and little the Devil gets full scope, and carries us away headlong, as though the bridle were laid loose in our neck. When we see the mischief tend to this point: let every of us strain himself to stop it, and show that we had lever to have deadly food for the serving of God, than to have all the friendship in the world for pleasing and pleasuring of mortal creatures. Wherefore let us not play the blind men or blinkards when we see God offended, but let us set so much store by his truth and glory, that all other things may be nothing to us in comparison thereof. Thus you see in effect how we ought to put this doctrine in use. The residue shall be reserved till the afternoon.

Then let us now fall down before the Majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us feel them more and more, and that therewithal forasmuch as he will have us to come to him with true repentance, it may please him to draw us by his Holy Spirit, and to bear with our infirmities till he have quit and clean purged and rid us of them, and brought us to the perfection whereunto he calls and encourages us. And so let us all say, Almighty God our heavenly father. &c.

The Eleventh Sermon,

which is the fifth upon the second Chapter.

14 But when I saw that they walked not rightly after the truth of the Gospel, I said to Peter afore them all, "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles and not as the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to play the Jews?

15 We be Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.

16 And yet forasmuch as we know that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by belief in Jesus Christ, we also have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the Law; for no flesh shall be justified by the works of the Law.

It has always been a common saying that whatever law a man imposes on others, he ought to keep the same himself. For it is neither right nor reasonable that a man should go scot-free himself and lay the burden upon other folks' shoulders. And for that cause, our Lord Jesus Christ upbraided the Scribes and Pharisees, that they passed not to lay heavy burdens upon the poor people, and in the meanwhile took leave to do what they listed themselves. And commonly, it falls out through hypocrisy that he who is rough and extreme in all rigor towards his neighbors would have other men to forbear him and to dispense with him. But if we will need press our neighbors to do their duty, the true and natural order requires that every one of us should first begin at himself. You see then how it is a most manifest hypocrisy when a man will not bear with his neighbors, but challenges their duty to the uttermost, and in the meanwhile offends grossly himself and will not suffer any correction.

Yes, sometimes it falls out that we would play the good fellows at other men's cost. Even so, it fell out here in St. Peter's case. For his enforcing of the Gentiles to keep the Ceremonial law came not of the aforesaid hypocrisy of taking leave to do what he listed and of desiring to go quite and clear before God for his constraining of other men to such a point, but of doubleness, for that he was too desirous to please his own countrymen. He had already taken leave to live after the manner of the Gentiles, that is to say, to give over the using of the Ceremonies of the Law. For (as I have erst touched) St. Paul speaks not here of the unbelievers nor of the despisers of God, but of those Gentiles that had been converted to the knowledge of the Gospel and were desirous to serve God, yea even without the old Ceremonies. Now St. Peter had fashioned himself to their common trade, and yet notwithstanding he was a Jew: and therefore he did the Gentiles too much wrong to put a straiter bridle upon them than he received to himself, as I said before. He did it not in respect of himself, but played on both hands, as they do which would fain keep favor with all parties and are loath to mislike any man. So we see there was rightful reason to rebuke him and to shame him before all the Church. Now remains that he acknowledged his fault, by which example we must learn mildness. That is to say, forasmuch as there is none of us all but he may step awry, as they that have not such perfect wisdom but that we may fall even into gross faults: and although we perceive it not, yet now and then we happen to swerve through infirmity: at leastwise let us not jeer at it when we be reformed, as many proud and stubborn folk do, who either spew out their poison or else rankle inwardly in their hearts when they be rebuked.

Let us learn first of all by St. Peter's example that there is none of us all so far forward in holiness, wisdom, and virtue, which may not overshoot himself. And therefore let us patiently hear what is told us,

that we may fare the better by it: and let us not be ashamed to cast down our heads when we see ourselves justly accused and condemned. Thus you see what we have to remember upon the first part of this Text. Truly we have seen already this morning how St. Peter had this honorable title, to be called a chief pillar in God's Church, and in the spiritual Temple that was to be builded. He was honored, he and his fellows had received the Holy Ghost, and although he had stumbled once before, yet had Jesus Christ set him up again, and wiped away the remembrance of that fall, in saying to him, "Feed my Sheep, have a care of my Lambs." And yet for all this, he walked not the right way, but stepped aside. Wherefore it behooveth us to be so much the warier that no man deceive us, as though we had profited so well in God's school that we were no more in danger of doing amiss. Let us beware of such overweening, and keep continual watch, that we be not misled by the wiles and trains of Satan: yea let it be a suspicious matter with us to desire to please men, seeing that St. Peter fell into that extremity. True it is that his meaning was to the contrary, and that his intent was to employ himself wholly to the glorifying of God's name. He had stoutly withstood it when he was forbidden to preach anymore in the name of Jesus Christ. It was the voice of an angelic stoutness when he answered, "God must be obeyed and not men." For he saw there the rulers of his country, he saw them assembled with their pomp, and there was the stateliness of Magistrates, which had been able to amaze a poor man of no credit as he and his fellow John were. But notwithstanding his stout answering that he would obey God maugre all those that pretended to have pre-eminence over him, yet he was deceived in this case whereof mention is made here. Therefore whenever men do the thing that may thrust us out of the way, and we have some fair cloak, so as it shall seem to us that we do not amiss to please them: Let us bethink us of this example, that is set us down here, and which is told us to make us every of us look about him what

his calling will bear, and what God commands, without casting of our eye aside to purchase favor in the world. Let us shut our eyes against all that is about us, and look only at this mark, that we must in all cases and all respects fashion ourselves to the will of God. And when we shall have looked right forth to God's ordinances, and asked counsel at his mouth, and prayed him to guide and govern us by his holy spirit, and finally well considered the bounds of our vocation, so as we attempt not anything otherwise than becometh us: then shall we be able to eschew the slightes and allurements of Satan and the world, so as we shall not pass to pleasure creatures overmuch. But without that, we shall be beguiled at every turn as it happened unto Peter. For if we compare ourselves with him: it is certain that he was much better able to keep himself than we be. Nevertheless, he was cast down afterward, to the end that his doing might serve for our learning, and we be rid of all pride, so as we might not thrust forth our own opinions to be overwise in our own brain and fancy, but that all our wisdom might be to rule ourselves according to God's pure word.

But now let us come to that which St. Paul addeth. He enters further into the matter and says, "We be Jews by nature and not sinners (that is to say, damnable men, defiled, and miserable wretches) of the Gentiles. And yet notwithstanding forasmuch as we know that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the law, and that there is none other means to make us acceptable to God than by coming to him with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: we have renounced the righteousness of the law and assured ourselves that God's accepting of us must be of his own free goodness for his son's sake. Seeing then that we Jews have renounced our own worthiness, what shall the Gentiles now do? Must not all be reconciled to God through his own mere goodness without bringing anything of their own, and without

pretending to have any manner of desert or worthiness of themselves?"

Here (as I have touched before) St. Paul enters into the principal point of his disputation against such as mingled the Ceremonies of the law with the Gospel. However, St. Peter was none of that number. For it is certain that he knew well enough that there was none other means to come unto God than by his mercy as it is showed us in our Lord Jesus Christ. Saint Paul had communed sufficiently with him afore of that matter, as we have seen. He agreed fully with Saint Paul as touching doctrine. Then was not Saint Peter wrapped in that error: for it had been a superstition that had utterly defaced the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore Saint Peter would have abhorred that. But the dissimulation that I treated of this morning was an occasion to harden the Jews in the fond dotage which they had conceived of their own meritorious works. Not that he intended it: neither is it a sufficient excuse for us though we protest a hundred times that we mean not to maintain evil: but if we make any countenance at all of it, surely we are always worthy to be condemned both before God and the world. Saint Peter then agreed very well with Saint Paul as concerning doctrine, namely that there is none other means to come before God to obtain grace than by renouncing all creatures, and by confessing that there is nothing but cursedness in us, and that God must receive us of his own mere mercy for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. St. Peter knew this, and taught it without any gainsaying. And moreover, he wist well it was lawful for him to give over the use of Ceremonies. For he would not have granted to any such liberty, unless he had known that the same had been purchased for us by the death and passion of the Son of God. Nevertheless, he swerved a little too much to the intent to keep still his own Countrymen, because he knew that the Jews were somewhat too willful and wayward, and therefore he meant no more

but to bear with their nature. But St. Paul respects not the person of his fellow St. Peter, neither reasons he with him as if he should say, "You are an abuser of men, you know not what the Gospel means," but he says unto him, "Bethink thee well what is likely to befall of thy doing, and what inconvenience it will draw with it. For what aim are they that would have men to keep the Ceremonies of the Law? Even to get some holiness by them, or to bind men so to them that they should use them upon necessity of salvation, and to deserve favor by them at God's hand, and finally to obtain forgiveness of sins by keeping of circumcision and all other such things. But in so doing, they be held down in this error, that they renounce the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and yet notwithstanding thou intendest to feed them in that fondness, and what a thing were that?"

Therefore, let us mark well how St. Paul passes not what Peter's opinion is in this behalf, but deals with the matter itself, to the end that all cloaking might be taken away from such as did shut the Gospel out of doors, besides that they did also rend the Church asunder as we saw this morning. However, forasmuch as it is a matter that cannot be fully discussed in a day or twain, no nor in four, we must take the things in order as they lie, to the end we may know why St. Paul strove so sharply for the abolishing of Ceremonies. For the case concerns the salvation of our Souls, and it is the chief point that we must learn in God's school, next after the glorifying of him.

For if we fall to comparisons, it is certain that the serving of God always goes in order and degree before the salvation of our souls. True it is that they are things inseparable: for God shows his infinite love which he bears us, in this that never anything serves to his glory, but that the same is immediately fit and profitable for our salvation. However, forasmuch as God has loved us so greatly and continues

still his favor towards us: we on our side are bound unto him, both to forget ourselves and to give selves wholly unto him. But however we fare, we see here the two grounds of all our Religion: namely to know how God ought to be honored and served, and also how we may so offer ourselves before him, as he may accept us and avow us for his children, and we hold him for our father, and by that means be fully assured of our salvation. And these two points are contained in the discourse that St. Paul handles here. For the case is, after what manner God will be served: according as the chief sacrifice that he demands is the confession of humility: I say humility: not by making demure countenances, but by being touched with such remorse, as we suffer ourselves to be utterly condemned before God, and all the trust of our own works and merits be thrust under foot. Mark that for one point.

And moreover, when God commanded the Ceremonies, it was not for that he passed upon these outward things: but for that he aimed at another end: which was, that on the one side the Jews should be inured to patience, by continual perceiving of their own wants and miseries, and thereupon rid themselves from all corruptions of the flesh: and on the other side be led to our Lord Jesus Christ, to repose their trust in him, and to rest wholly there. So then, as touching those that would have the ceremonies of the Law kept, as if it were of necessity that men should be precisely bound to them upon pain of mortal sin as they term it: it is certain that their meaning was to set up a service of God contrary to his will and meaning, and that they were as good as Cousiners: for why, they perverted the natural meaning of the Law. Mark that for one school point.

Another is, that they taught men to set up their bristles, and to glory in themselves, and that was an abolishing of God's glory: for we cannot challenge aught (be it never so little) to ourselves, but we rob

and rend away that which belongs unto him. You see then how it is a devilish traitorousness when men presume upon their own power, as though they had any spark of righteousness in themselves. And besides that, it is an entering into the gulf of hell, when we wean to get salvation by our own works. For we renounce the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, where we should seek all our righteousness. Again, the Devil makes us to believe wonders, howbeit, it is but to make us to fall into destruction. Wherefore let us mark well, that St. Paul treats here of the manner of justification before God, that is to say, of the means whereby we be brought into his favor, because it is the principal point which we ought to learn, and without that, all the religion or devotion that can be named, is but smoke and leazings.

And it is not for naught that Saint Paul enters into that question. For many men make this allegation: How now? The case concerned the Ceremonies of the law: and why then does Saint Paul (as you would say) fling himself overthwart the fields? Why speaks he of righteousness, of man's salvation, of the forgiveness of sins, and finally of all the whole law? Now on the one part, it behooved him to deal with all those things. For example, when we in these days teach, that men must not keep the superstitions of the Papists, nor any of the things that have been so devised by the wit of man: we shall not only debate whether flesh may be eaten upon Fridays, or whether such a wake, vigil, or Saints' even be to be kept, or whether this thing or that thing be to be done: but we shall treat generally whether it be lawful for a mortal man to make laws to bring men's consciences into tyrannical bondage. For God has reserved to himself alone the authority and prerogative to be called the lawmaker, to the intent that no man should usurp any such preeminence in the Church.

Then seeing that the spiritual government of our souls ought to be taken out of God's pure word: we may conclude that neither Pope nor any other man of what calling soever he be, has power to burden us with any laws, or ought to attempt anything that is against the doctrine which we have of God. Then may we well enter into that general discourse: and that is because the reason of them is alike in all points. If we should dispute only about the eating of fish or flesh, it would be but a fond disputation.

For every man must eat according as is for his health, or as he can get: and therefore such disputation should not concern the health of men's souls, or the matter that were requisite for them to rest their conscience upon. But when we take in hand to show that it is not for any living creature to advance himself so high, as to lay laws upon men's necks: the other disputation is fully resolved and dispatched.

Again, when as men say, that in babbling paternosters to buy out their sins, and in gadding on pilgrimage to get there the things which in popery are termed the works of supererogation (that is to say, works of overplus that men do more than God commands them) they ransom themselves and make him some recompense for the faults that they have committed: If we speak simply of pilgrimages, and go not to the ground and wellspring of the matter: it will be a cold and slender discourse. But if we declare how all our satisfaction is in the things that are purchased for us by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therewithal that God utterly dislikes all that is of our own invention, and that he will be served with obedience: then do we lay forth the case as it ought to be, and may bring it to a sure and certain conclusion.

After that manner did Saint Paul. For he regarded not only what the Jews said, how it behooved them to forbear the eating of swine's

flesh, and to keep such a feast or such a feast, and all the residue of the Ceremonies: but he marked to what end they said it: namely how they went about to show that the keeping of the law was of necessity of salvation and that was a yoke of bondage upon men's consciences, that could not be borne. Again he saw how the liberty that was purchased us by our Lord Jesus Christ was taken away, and that was another point that compelled him to enter into that discourse.

But the chief point that he treats of here, is that such as would have had men to keep the Ceremonies, had a secret meaning that the same was an acceptable service unto God, and of such importance as men should purchase righteousness and soul health by it, and (to be short) that it was a meritorious thing. But Saint Paul shows, that it is impossible for men to purchase righteousness before God by their works. Now therefore we see for what cause Saint Paul treated generally of our justification, when as notwithstanding his adversaries pretended no more, but the keeping of the Ceremonial law, and the continuing thereof still as before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, so as men should still offer sacrifice, and do the rest of the shadows and ancient figures.

And hereby we see also what a folly it is for the Papists to think themselves escaped, in saying that Saint Paul speaks here but of the works of the law, and not of the moral works. True it is that they are not the first founders of that dotage. For the Devil has always had his ministers to cousin the people. But we must not rest upon the authority of men, especially of such as have neither religion nor fear of God in them. Although that many of the Monks have been reported to be men of great skill: yet notwithstanding they have been but fantastical fellows, and never had any taste of the fear of God. Even those that were called the ancient doctors, have perverted the kindly sense of the holy scripture, and were as utterly bewitched by

Satan, and yet the wretched world has been so blind, that it could not perceive it.

These kind of men have expounded this saying, that we be not justified by the deeds of the law, to import that we be not justified by circumcision, or by abstaining from any certain kinds of meats, or by keeping such a holiday or such a feast, whereas notwithstanding Saint Paul treats of none of all those things. He matches God's grace against all our works, and finally shows that we cannot bring aught unto God, but that we must be fain to be admitted freely of him. That is Saint Paul's drift. And if we should not set the same mark before our eyes, surely all the doctrine that is contained in this Epistle, would be but fond matter.

Furthermore let us mark, that Saint Paul does oftentimes say simply and without addition, that we be justified without works: like as in the third Chapter to the Romans, he says we have a clear and sure proof of our righteousness, namely that we be righteous before God through the remission of our sins, and not by our works. He says not there, by the works of the law, but he sets it down single without addition, to the end that all mouths should be stopped, and all starting holes be taken away.

Yet is it not without cause that he speaks of the works of the law, to bring to nothing all the services that men can allege to bind God withal, as though they were able to become righteous of themselves. For as we shall see hereafter, although we were as perfect as angels, yet could not that bind God at all, if it were not for that he of his own good will hath made this promise in his law, "he that does these things shall live in them." Then if we go about to get favor at God's hand for our own work's sake, we must not dispute philosopher-like, that God owes us any wages or recompense for the service that we

have done him: for we be his, and we cannot bind him by aught that we can do. How then may our works be recompensed as though they were available before God? Even because he has promised so to do. It is the covenant which he has made with us in saying, "he that does these things shall live in them." So then, if we could perform the law to the full, surely we should be righteous before God, and deserve salvation; albeit not for any worthiness that should be in ourselves, but by reason of the covenant that God has made with us. For we see that all the desert which can be alleged on man's behalf, depends wholly upon the said promise. And that is the cause why Saint Paul says always, "the works of the law, the works of the law." For there are no other works that deserve to be accepted of God and to have any recompense. Therefore let that serve for one point.

And we shall see hereafter, how we be utterly excluded from that righteousness, because we come short of it: and that God's telling of us that we shall be saved by keeping of the law, is all one as if he had said, that we be all of us damned. And why? For there is not any man that discharges himself of it, but all of us are transgressors. You see then that the law can bring us nothing but death, by reason of our infirmity. But this shall be laid forth more at length in its order. It is enough for this time that we know how Saint Paul's setting down of this doctrine, is against the Jews which boasted themselves and were puffed up with pride, as though God had been bound unto them for their observing of the Ceremonies of the law. No, no, (says he) it is nothing worth: and we shall see the reason of it afterward.

Furthermore, Saint Paul's debating of the case of Ceremonies, is because these hypocrites which took upon them to match themselves with God, and to have the praise of their salvation themselves, did always busy their heads about small trifles, and came not to the chief point, which is to enter into their own consciences. Like as at this day

in the Papedom, they that do so much preach their own merits, and say that we must purchase Paradise by our own works, and that although we be sinners, yet we have a way to discharge ourselves Godward by satisfactions: what allege they? When those great Rabines go about to set men after that manner upon the stage to be honored as idols, and when they have made their great prefaces of free will, of their own virtues, of their satisfactions, and of their merits or deservings: what bring they? Exhort they men to live chastely, without doing other men wrong, or without any covetous desire, so as every of us should content himself with that he has, be patient in adversity, bear wrongs and reproaches, and in all things show ourselves to be the Disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ by forsaking ourselves? There is not one word with them of these things. But the good works which they set before us are, that we must go devoutly to Mass, take holy water before we enter into the Church, be cross ourselves, kneel down before a stock, worship a puppet, gad on pilgrimages, keep such a feastful day, found a Trentall, deal doles for the dead, and do this and that. So then, all these hypocrites which will needs become righteous by their own works, have nothing but gewgaws and dotages: and yet for all that, they think themselves so holy and perfect, that nothing is amiss in them. They think that God ought to content himself with the great number of mummery and countenances which they make. But that is not the coin wherewith he must be paid: for his law is spiritual. He looks not upon the outward gesture, nor upon the things that carry a fair gloss before men, inasmuch that if men set their minds too much upon his own Ceremonies, he rejects it utterly. And that is a thing well worthy the marking. For men seek still some starting hole, that they might not yield themselves to the obeying of God: and they bear themselves in hand, that when they have once dispatched their fond devotions, then they be well discharged, and all the rest of their sins must be forgotten, because they ransom them by that means. The thing

therefore which we have to mark here, is that Saint Paul strove here against such men, as never wist what it was to serve God in good earnest, nor never entered into their own consciences.

And even such are these Monks in the Papacy, and those miscreants that have their full scope there: I mean not only the Cardinals and these corrupt Bishops, (for men know that they are the filthiness which infects the whole world) but I speak also of those that are called doctors, the upholders of their Catholic faith. It is certain that they are but mockers of God, they never entered into their consciences to examine themselves earnestly, neither had they ever any remorse of conscience. Surely all their study has been to hold folk as it were upon the rack, and to put many heart-gripes into them, to the intent they might seem to be sharp-witted. But as for themselves, they never felt anything. And that is the cause why they prate so much at their ease concerning merits, and yet in the meantime have no regard of them themselves. Only they do some small trifles, like rattles that men give to little children, wherewith they bear themselves in hand that they can appease God.

Now for this cause Saint Paul disputes of the Ceremonies of the law, as they were put unto him: and yet does he nevertheless cut home to the bottom, that is to wit, he proves that men are stripped stark naked from all righteousness, and cannot bring anything unto God, but must beg at his hand, confessing that there is nothing in them but utter beggary and penury.

Furthermore, let us mark also, that the Jews did always pervert the nature and use of the Sacraments, in that they made meritorious works of them, and that was clean contrary to the use that they should have put them to. For God ordained not the Sacraments to the end that by endeavoring to observe them, men should purchase

any virtue that might be imputed to them for righteousness; but rather to teach them that it stood them in hand to seek all at God's hand. As for example, when the Jews were circumcised, thereby God showed to the eye, that all that ever comes of man is but corruption, and that it stands us in hand to have it cut away. So, the thing which the Jews had to consider in that visible Sacrament, was that man's nature was cursed before God, and that we may well seek but never find so much as one drop of cleanness in it. And on the other side, they had a token and record, that God nevertheless would succor them by means of the Redeemer, which should come of the race of men: for he was born of the lineage of David. God therefore showed that thing visibly. And so the Jews were cast down in themselves, and ought to have considered that there was nothing but cursedness in them, and thereupon should have come to seek the thing in our Lord Jesus Christ which wanted in themselves. As much is to be thought of their washings. As often as the Jews washed themselves, it was a putting of them in mind, that there was nothing but uncleanness in them. And wherein was that washing? was it in the water? No: but in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the brute beasts were slain, there they beheld that they had deserved death. The beasts were guiltless, and yet they were sacrificed for men's sakes, to bear their sins. Thus you see a mirror which shows that all men are cursed of God. And yet in so doing men humbled themselves, calling upon God, and protesting that they were redeemed by the sacrifice: However, not by those shadowing sacrifices, but by the true sacrifice which was not yet come into the world.

But what did the Jews? When they were once circumcised, they thought that God was bound unto them for it. And when they had offered sacrifice, they thought there was great holiness in so doing, and made their boast thereof. But the Prophets rebuked those hypocrites double. For first they told them that when they had kept

all the Ceremonies of the law, their doings were nothing, all was but vanity. For behold, God says, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice:" and again, "I will show thee, O man, how thou shalt please God: be thou humbled truly, and imagine not to bring him many sheep and Oxen, for that is nothing: but deal thou justly and uprightly, and when thou hast worshipped him, live honestly and uncorruptly with thy neighbors." Also we see what our Lord says in Jeremiah. "Did I speak to your fathers (says he) of offering sacrifice unto me? No," (says he) "but I willed them to obey me, and to hearken to my voice, and to serve me with a sound heart." Again in another place it is said, "Lord thou lovest faithfulness." Thus we see how the prophets rebuke the Hypocrites for being held back by the Ceremonies, which are nothing of themselves, except men walk in a clear conscience towards God, and in faithfulness towards men.

And after that the Prophets have spoken so: they add secondly that when men have done all that they can, yet cease they not to be still in God's debt, and that the Ceremonies serve to bring them still nearer, that is to wit, to make them acknowledge that God calls them to him, promising them to show them mercy, and to forget and bury all their misdeeds, howbeit by means of the Redeemer that was promised them. But now Saint Paul leaves the first point, namely that the Ceremonies are nothing without the principal, which is that we walk without doing any man wrong, and without doing any hurt or harm to other men, that we live chaste and pure, and that we have a clean and upright conscience. Saint Paul lets that discourse alone: and why? For it would not serve the purpose. And therefore he shows that the shadows of the law were neither profitable nor needful, because they were nothing if a man looked upon them in their own nature, but that the end of them was to be considered, which was that forasmuch as they were a witness of the grace that is given us now finally in our Lord Jesus Christ: it behooved them to rest wholly

thereupon. And the same ought to be well printed at this day both in our heart and in our remembrance. For we shall have profited greatly, if we once know how to apply to our use the Sacraments that are ordained by our Lord Jesus Christ, especially forasmuch as we have to receive the Lord's supper the next Sunday. For although we ought to have been exhorted this day to put ourselves in readiness for it, yet was it not touched this morning. But let us bear well in mind, that if we think to be made righteous by baptism, we defile the thing which God has appointed to our salvation. And why? Baptism does but teach us that there is nothing but filth and uncleanness in us. For wherefore do we wash our hands, faces, and bodies, but to make them clean from the spots that are in them? Now it is said that Baptism is a washing of us: and therefore it follows that when we come to Baptism, or when any of us brings his children [to be baptized] we declare that the children are already damned and forlorn even from their mother's womb, and that they are a cursed seed, so as they must be fain to break cleanness, not by their own purchase, but by receiving it, for as much as it is offered them in our Lord Jesus Christ. Now if children are already full of infections at their coming into the world: what are we who never cease to offend our God, and do drink wickedness as a fish drinks water, as it is said in the book of Job?

Again, when we come to the Lord's supper, what come we to do? Come we to get anything of God by our own desert? No: but to confess that we are like wretched dead men, which come to seek our life out of ourselves, and therefore must be fain to have the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ for our meat, and his blood for our drink, and all things in him which we want in ourselves. You see then that the Sacraments serve not to puff us up with any presumption, but to make us walk in humbleness, to the end that being void of all self-trust, our whole seeking may be to be succored by God's infinite

goodness, and by his pouring out of the treasures of his grace upon us according to our need. And our coming to them is, that God should warn us of our sins, to be touched with them in good earnest. And we must not acknowledge ourselves sinners with the mouth only, or slightly and by way of ceremonies: but we must have our hearts wounded inwardly with grief that we have offended, and feel how dreadful God's wrath is, to the end we may be sorry in ourselves, and not have any rest till he have showed us where we shall find it, that is to wit in our Lord Jesus Christ. And when we come to this holy table, let everyone of us look well that he be so grounded in our Lord Jesus Christ, as that he having forsaken all the fond illusions of Satan, and all the deceits that he sets before us to turn us away from the grace of God, and may embrace our Lord Jesus Christ with the merits of his death and passion, assuring ourselves that it is he in whom we have the full performance of righteousness and salvation.

Moreover, forasmuch as our Lord Jesus Christ has called us to be members of his body, let us knit ourselves together, endeavoring to glorify God as it were with one heart and one mouth, and therewithal to live in true unity with our neighbors, like as the hand serves both the foot and the eye. So then let us have the said brotherliness in such estimation, as we may show that we intend not to separate ourselves asunder, as it were to tear Jesus Christ in pieces: but that our desire is that he should so knit us together, that not only he may live in us, and we in him: but also that he may so rule us by his holy spirit, as every of us may endeavor to serve and honor him first of all, and afterward to employ himself in the serving of his neighbors, according to the ability which he shall have.

And now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us feel them more and more, that the same may always stir us up to better

repentance, and cause us to continue therein to the end, and also make us to grow in faith to our Lord Jesus Christ, so as we may give ourselves wholly unto him, and in his name call upon God his father, to the end that he may hear us, and continue his gracious goodness towards us, till he have drawn us wholly to himself, to make us feel perfectly the benefit which is purchased for us by his death and passion. That it may please him to grant this grace not only to us, but also to all people. &c.

The Twelfth Sermon

which is the sixth upon the second Chapter.

15 We be Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.

16 And yet for as much as we know that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by belief in Jesus Christ, we also have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the law: for no flesh shall be justified by the works of the law.

WE have seen already and declared heretofore why Saint Paul, having to treat of the Ceremonies and shadows that were before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, concluded generally that men could not attain righteousness before God to stand in his favor, but by keeping the whole law.

Now, a man might deem at the first sight that these were diverse matters. Howbeit (as I have said afore), it behooved Paul to come to the pure use [of ceremonies] to show that men do but beguile themselves when they think to obtain favor at God's hand by their own merits.

Secondly, also I declared why Saint Paul does expressly add the word Law. For although it has always been a common opinion in the world that by living well men might bind God to be good unto them, yet did they foully deceive themselves therein. For do what we can, God shall not be any whit at all beholden unto us because we owe unto him whatsoever we be able to do.

Then there is not any desert (if there might be any deserving at all) but by the covenant which God has made, in saying that he who fulfills the law shall obtain life and salvation. For as much as God has spoken that word, no doubt but he accepts the obedience that is yielded unto him, as if it deserved salvation. But yet is not that as much to say as that we can deserve aught.

For there is none of us all that discharges his duty, as we shall see hereafter. That promise would be to no purpose, or at least wise it would be unavailing, so as it should never take effect, unless God gave us another remedy, that is to wit, unless he forgave our offenses and accepted us for righteous, although we be not so.

But however the case stands, when Saint Paul says that we are not justified by the works of the Law, his meaning is that if we intend to claim favor and salvation because God has promised that such as keep his law shall be righteous and so taken to be, that will not serve our turn. Because none of us fulfills the Law, but we are all of us guilty before God and must receive sentence of damnation upon our heads.

For the better expressing hereof, he makes a comparison between the Jews and the Gentiles. Although, says he, that we be Jews by nature, and not Heathen men, yet do we know that we shall not otherwise obtain God's favor than by believing in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now it may perhaps seem that although men, being corrupted in Adam, cannot deserve aught, yet notwithstanding the Jews had a special privilege because God had adopted them as it were for his own children and accounted them to be as his household.

And that was the thing wherein the Jews deceived themselves. For when the Scripture speaks of uncircumcision, it means the uncleanness wherewith we are compassed about in Adam, in so much as there is not any man who is not damned already from his mother's womb. But the Jews thought that God had set them free from that common curse, and they made their boast thereof.

Surely God's choosing of them after that sort for his own people and heritage was a great dignity, and worthy to be esteemed above all worldly goods. But yet nevertheless it became them to have acknowledged with all humbleness that there was not any excellence at all in their own persons.

For according to our wonted manner of drawing God's gracious gifts too much to vain overweening, the Jews did commonly overshoot themselves by bearing themselves in hand that they were above all the rest of the world. Verily as who should say that God had found anything in them why he should prefer them before those whom he had forsaken.

Therefore that doing of theirs was a great pride, which carried with it a shameful thanklessness, in that they imputed not to God's mere goodness the things which they had of his free gift but were puffed

up with overweening, as though God had known them to be better or worthier of everlasting salvation than the Gentiles.

But now Saint Paul to dispatch all overweening says, "Go to, we be Jews by nature." As if he had said, It is true that we have some favor above the Gentiles whom God has not vouchsafed to receive into his Church.

When he speaks in such a fashion, it is not to give the Jews occasion to wax proud, but to lay before them the things which they had received freely of God, wherein they had no cause at all to brag of themselves. According to what we see in the Epistle to the Romans, he utters two sayings which at first blush might seem contrary.

For on the one side, "Have we then," says he, "no privilege above the Gentiles? Yes, verily, for God has chosen us for his people, he has given us the seal of Circumcision to show that he avows us for his children, he has allied himself unto us, he has promised us the Redeemer of the world, and (to be short) he has sanctified us in such wise that if we consider the favor which he has uttered towards us, there has been well wherewith to advance and exalt us above the residue of the whole world."

Thus, on the one side, Paul there magnifies the goodness of God, and afterwards, he falls to questioning again and asks, "What advantage have we then? None at all," says he, "for all men are shut up under God's curse. If the Gentiles are to be condemned, we are to be condemned double, for there may be yet some likelihood that ignorance shall serve to excuse them. But yet can they make no defense of that before God, but shall perish although they never had any instruction or teaching."

Needs then must we be condemned by the law, says he, seeing that God has taught us, and yet for all that, we cease not to sin still, and to transgress his commandments, in so much that we be plunged in greater and deeper cursedness than the Heathen folk and unbelievers. Now then he says that the Jews are indeed separated after a sort from the Gentiles, not that the Jews are of more worthiness, or that they have any righteousness in themselves, but because God of his own mere goodness vouchsafed to choose them, like as at this day the children that are born of believing parents are not better than the children that are born of Pagans and Turks if a man consider them both in their own nature.

For we are all of a corrupted and cursed lump and God has so condemned us, as no man can justly set up his bristles to think himself of more value than his fellows. But yet nevertheless, Saint Paul shows that they be sanctified, and that they are not unclean, as those are which are born of unbelievers or Heathen folk.

Here should seem to be some contrariety; nevertheless, all agrees very well together. For there is nothing but uncleanness and filthiness in us all without exception, and that comes of nature. However, there is a supernatural gift, that is to say, a remedy that God gives, which is that the children of the faithful are dedicated unto him, and he acknowledges and avows them for his.

Then like as nowadays the children that are born of the Church are reckoned to be of the number of God's people and of the company of the chosen, even so under the law, the Jews were separated from the rest of the world. And that is the cause why Saint Paul says, "We be Jews, and not sinners of the Gentiles."

Whereas he speaks of Sinners, he means such as continue in their filthiness and are not cleansed by the grace of God. For Circumcision

was a token and witness that God accepted Abraham's issue and offspring for his own household and peculiar people.

The thing then wherein the Jews differed in old time from the unbelievers was that although they were all of one suit, for as much as they were all indifferently the children of Adam, yet notwithstanding God had chosen the one sort and left the other sort still strangers from his house.

If a man asks why he did so, there was none other cause than his own mere grace, and yet were not the Jews in the meanwhile the more excellent. But now let us follow the matter that Saint Paul handles here. "We know," says he, "that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the Law, but by belief in Jesus Christ." In saying this, he shows that the Jews themselves (whatever grace they had received) could not ground themselves upon other men, nor upon themselves, as though they had deserved aught at God's hand, but must be fain to flee to his free goodness, acknowledging that there is no salvation but in Jesus Christ, who has come to find out the thing that was already lost.

And herein is fulfilled that which he says in another place, how that as well they who were near hand, as they who were far off, were all gathered together into one. Jesus Christ is the peacemaker to cause God to love us and to receive us to mercy: not only those who were erstwhile far off, as the Gentiles, but also the children of Abraham, whatever nobleness or dignity was in them, for that came not of their own nature.

And let us mark, that when Saint Paul says, that the Jews who were converted to the Christian faith knew they could not be justified by the works of the Law, but by belief in Jesus Christ, he makes a comparison between faith and the Law, to show that we cannot be

justified by grace, except we forsake all our own merits; and that is a thing well worthy to be marked.

For the Papists will well enough confess that we be justified by faith, however, they add that it is but partly. But that gloss mars all. For here it is proved that we cannot be found righteous before God but by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ and by resting upon the salvation which he has purchased for us. The Papists see this well enough: and therefore for fashion's sake, they say we are justified by faith, but not by faith only; they will none of that. That is the thing that they fight against: and it is the chief point that is in controversy between them and us.

But Saint Paul betrays their beastliness here when he says, "but by belief." For that word signifies that all that ever men presume to bring unto God to win his favor with is quite cut off. You see then that the door is shut against all deserving, when Saint Paul avouches, that there is no other means than by faith. We shall see more plainly hereafter why faith is so compared with the Law as a thing full but against it.

For the Law presupposes that if we have once fulfilled God's commandments, we shall be taken for good servants, and that he will pay us the wages which he has promised; and faith presupposes us to be wretched, damned, and forlorn folk, and that we must be fain to seek the things that we want in Jesus Christ.

As for example, there are two men that desire to be boarded and lodged: whereof the one brings money with him and looks to be well entertained for his well-paying; and both of them require meat and drink howsoever the case stands, but the second man is poor, and has neither penny nor penny's worth, and he desires alms.

Thus do both twain of them match just in one point, for they desire food as the thing whereof they have both need. But the first has money to content his host, and like as he shall have fared well and been well and courteously entertained, so shall his host receive money of him, and hold himself contented with it, and not think his guest beholden or bound unto him. For why, he is recompensed, yea and he has gained by him.

But as for the poor man that craves alms, he thinks himself beholden for his life to him that fed him and lodged him: for he brings him nothing but a charge. So then, if we will be justified before God by the Law, we must deserve it, so as he may receive of us, and we of him, and there may be as it were an interchange between us. And is that possible? No: as we shall see more at large hereafter. Therefore we must conclude that we be excluded from the righteousness of the Law, and that if we think to bring anything to bind God withal, we do but provoke his wrath.

Then is there none other shift but to go to him like poor beggars, and so to be justified by faith: not as by a virtue that is of ourselves, but because we confess with all lowliness that we cannot obtain salvation but by his free gift. Thus you see how the Law is set here full but against faith, as if Saint Paul should tell us that all they who go about to win God's favor by their own merits forsake the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as shall be declared more at length hereafter.

But now if any man say that the Law was given of God, so as it cannot have any contrariety against faith, whereof God is the author also: the answer thereto is easy. For God made both day and night, fire and water, cold and heat.

Now it is certain that the day is not contrary to the night: but we see the wonderful order of God's goodness and wisdom, in that men have

the light of the sun to do their work by day, and [the darkness] as it were a cover to rest in by night. So then although the day differs from the night, yet there is no contrariety between them, neither is there any between fire and water, so each creature be put to its own proper use: but we see that God has very well agreed the fire and the water, and yet notwithstanding if we behold them fighting together, then is there great contrariety. Even so is it between the Law and the Gospel. And if anybody will have a man to be justified both by the Law and by the Gospel too, he does but turmoil and mingle things together, and it is all one as if he should set heaven and earth together by the ears.

To be short, it were much easier to mingle fire and water together than to say that we can purchase any grace at God's hand by our own deservings, and therewithal also have need to be succored by our Lord Jesus Christ. But if a man considers what the law is and to what purpose it was given, he shall find that it is not at all repugnant to the Gospel, nor consequently unto faith, but that they agree very well. Thus you see how this difficulty is dispatched: so that if it be alleged that faith comes of God as well as the Law, it is true. Nevertheless it is to be considered (as we shall say hereafter) to what end God gave as well the one as the other.

But let us return to that which Saint Paul says. He says that we are not justified but by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he speaks of being justified, let us mark that it is all one with being reckoned or taken for righteous before God. And that word had need to be well understood: for the case stands upon knowing after what manner we be saved. But are we not wretched caitiffs, if after we have lived long in the world, a man asks us which is the means to be saved, and we cannot tell him? We shall see many beastly wretches,

which have devoured God's bread, and yet notwithstanding cannot tell how they should offer themselves before him.

And therefore it behooves us to take so much the better heed to the things which are taught us here by Saint Paul. He says that we are justified: and how? Is it that we be righteous, and that there is nothing amiss in us? No: but it is for that God accepts us. Then is the word Righteousness put for the favor which God shows us, in that he vouchsafes to be our father and to take us for his children.

If a man demands why the Scripture uses the word Justify, since it seems to make nothing to the purpose: for it might well be said, God loves us, God pities us, God vouchsafes to become our father and Savior: [and therefore] why should not men rather use that manner of speech, than say that he vouchsafes to justify us? [I answer,] it is not without cause that the scripture speaks so. For if we take the word Salvation rawly, & say [no more but] that we be saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: we shall not well perceive what our own state is, nor how wretched it is, nor also the remedy which we must apply to it. For to the intent we may put our trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, we must understand that we be utterly forlorn as well by reason of the sin of Adam, as by reason of the infinite number of iniquities wherein we be saped: yea and we must fully believe it. But we should never perceive that our sins condemn us & curse us before God, except we knew that we have need of righteousness.

And on the other side we should not know God's righteousness, if we should singly say that we be saved by faith and by grace.
For God cannot once renounce himself, because he is the sovereign righteousness, and there is nothing in him but pureness and perfection, by reason whereof he must needs hate evil. Now it is so that we are full of corruption, there is nothing but evil in us: and

therefore God must needs hate us. And if he hates us, woe worth us: for then are we damned. Then it stands us on hand to be made righteous before we can be in God's favor. That is to say, it behooves us to be purged of our faults and misdeeds, for else (as I said) we shall never be able to conceive that God intends to show us mercy.

But in acknowledging ourselves to be sinners, we perceive by and by that God must needs hate sin, and that although he hates sin, yet notwithstanding he finds means to save us, which is by forgetting our offenses, and by cleansing and purging them with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our spiritual washing. God then purges us in that wise, to the end we should be received of him, and being made partakers of his love, be assured of our salvation. Thus you see why the Scripture uses the word Justify: But the Papists descant upon it like blind buzzards. What, say they? should we be justified by faith? Faith is no such virtue as makes men perfect: and how then shall it make us righteous? They consider not that this righteousness whereof the Scripture speaks, is God's covering of our sins (as I declared afore) and his taking of them quite and clean away for the sake and by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the virtue of the Sacrifice of his death and Passion.

However the case stands, it is said that we are counted righteous before God, because he releases and forgives our sins. And after the same manner does Saint Paul speak of it in the fourth to the Romans, where he says that David has well declared in effect, how we are justified by faith, when he says, "Blessed is the man whose iniquities God has forgotten, and whose sins he has covered." And in another place he says, that our Lord Jesus Christ who knew no sin, nor had any spot in him, was made sin for us: that is to say, received all the condemnation of our faults, to the end that we should become God's righteousness in him, that is to say, to the end that, being grafted

into his person, and made one body with him, we might be taken for righteous, because there was such perfection in his obedience, that our sins were buried and rid quite and clean away. Thus much concerning the word Justify.

Now as touching the word Faith [or belief], Saint Paul adds for a declaration, that they had believed in Jesus Christ. If a man asks an unlearned person what Faith is: he will perhaps answer that it is to believe: but he shall not be able to tell what is meant or imported by any of them both. Will we then have the understanding of them according to the raw capacity of the unskillfullest sort? We must always mark, that our Lord Jesus Christ is set to be the butt of our faith and belief. Do we obtain salvation by faith? It is as much to say, as we believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. But let us now consider why our Lord Jesus Christ is set before our eyes for our faith to aim at, and to rest wholly upon. It is because we shall find in him whatever belongs to the making of us righteous.

I have told you already, that we are taken for righteous before God when he forgives our sins, and calls them not to account anymore. And how shall we obtain that, but by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed to wash us with? For inasmuch as he has made full amends for us by his death and passion: therefore God is appeased towards us, conditionally that we seek not to pay him with any other thing, than with the sacrifice that was offered up to him by his only son our Lord Jesus Christ, who is called God's well-beloved son, to the end that we should be beloved in him: and the righteous, to the end we should be made partakers of his righteousness: and the holy, to the end we should be made holy in him.

Thus then you see why we must have an eye to our Lord Jesus Christ when we intend to know what the word Faith imports. But the

Papists stand willfully in their own conceit, because they never tasted what it is to believe: and that do they show well enough by their allegations. How is it possible (say they) that a man should be justified by believing, seeing that the very Devils do believe? It is true, and Saint James uses the same reason. Howbeit in that place he mocks at such as pretend a vain and fond cloak of Christianity and faith, and in the meantime show no fruits at all of it.

But the Papists beguile themselves yet much more grossly, in saying that Faith is to believe in God, and that God is the mark that faith aims at, so as it seems to them, that to make up belief, there needs no more but to imagine that there is some one certain God that made the world, and which governs all things. And so they fall fast asleep in their ignorance, and yet cease not to take themselves for good Christians and Catholics (as they themselves babble) although they be altogether dulled indeed. But it is no wonder that they fight so against the doctrine of the holy Scripture, and with such unamendable willfulness deny that a man can be saved by faith, seeing they have neither discretion nor understanding: for they wot not what the matter means.

So much the more therefore does it stand us upon, to mark well what Saint Paul tells us here: that is to wit, that if we look not unto Jesus Christ, we know not what faith is. And the reason thereof is, for that we know not what it is to have forgiveness of sins, to come unto God, to be able to put our trust in him, and to call upon him: neither do we know any more what it is to have our consciences quiet, and to hope for the everlasting life. All these things we want till Jesus Christ be set before us, and till we have cast our look upon him, so as all our senses be settled upon him, and as it were shut up there.

You see then that the faith whereby we obtain grace, is that after we once know ourselves to be wretched creatures, and that there is nothing but loathsomeness in us, we seek the remedy of it in our Lord Jesus Christ, and understand that he was offered up for us to redeem us from the curse wherein we were plunged, that he has made us clean by his blood, that by his obedience he has put away all our offenses, and that for the same we are assured that God accepts and receives us for his children. Thus you see how this text is to be understood.

And whereas Saint Paul says, that he himself and all the Jews that were converted unto Christianity, did look to be saved by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ: he adds also the reason why: namely, because no flesh shall be justified by the works of the Law. He had well used that word, if he had applied it but to his own countrymen: but here he speaks of all men in general. And whereas he says no flesh at all: first he betokens that the Jews differ nothing at all from the Gentiles in the means of obtaining salvation.

Wherefore although the Jews, being circumcised, were taken as it were for God's heritage, and sanctified unto him: yet notwithstanding they could not have any hope of salvation, but by his mere grace. Lo how they be matched with the Gentiles and ranged in like degree with them. Again, Saint Paul meant here to deface utterly all the overweening that men conceive of their own virtues. There are many who know they have overshot themselves so far, that they cannot challenge any glory to them as though they had deserved aught at God's hand.

Wretched drunkards, unthrifts, and such as have given themselves over to all naughtiness, will be ashamed to advance themselves, and to brag that they can bind God by their deserts and well-doings, for

even before men they be fain to hide themselves because of their lewdness. But as for those that have some cloak of hypocrisy, and show some sign of holiness before men: they by and by become drunken with it, and so harden themselves, that they believe they deserve Paradise, and that God is greatly bound unto them. Of which sort are these Pope-holy ones, who although they be full of all filthiness, so as there is nothing in them but ambition, covetousness, cruelty, and such other like things: yet howsoever the world go, forasmuch as they have good store of their Church stuff and other counterfeitings, they bear themselves in hand that God sees not a whit into their lewdness, but persuade themselves that God ought to accept them for their own merits' sakes. Also, such as hear Mass devoutly, such as run from the Tavern [or from the Alehouse] to the Chapel, specially such as buy pardons and such other like stuff, and such as keep fasting-days and holydays, will be puffed up with such an overweening, as to think they have bound God unto them.

But Saint Paul, in naming all flesh, shows that men must not set themselves asunder, as though one were righteous, though another were not so: but must all stoop and humble themselves and pass condemnation, assuring themselves that all their virtues, (yea even of the most excellent men of all) are but filthiness before God. For although a man be perfectly righteous to our opinion, so as he does no man harm, but has steadfastness in himself to withstand all vices, and is chaste and sober, and (to be short) is taken and esteemed to be as an Angel: yet notwithstanding he has nothing in him but corruption. And how can that be? Because we may not rest upon the outward appearance, for (as the Proverb says) all is not gold that glisters.

It is not for us to judge what is vice, and what is virtue, except we could enter into a man. For if a man yield not unto God that which

belongs unto him, what is to be said of it? He robs not men, but he robs God of his honor. Again though men give him never so great praise and clap their hands at him: yet shall he but burst for vainglory and pride, and nothing shall be able to frame him to humility, save the knowing of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, they who make a goodly outward show in their life, shall nevertheless be still condemned before God.

This is the thing whereby Saint Paul intended to forestall all the vain trust that men can conceive or nourish concerning their own deservings. But there is yet more. For he speaks not only of such men as were after a sort forsaken of God, and were not renewed by his holy spirit: but when he says All flesh, he comprehends the faithful also. For although God's holy spirit dwell in us after he has drawn us to the knowledge of his Gospel and grafted us into the body of our Lord Jesus Christ: although (say I) that God's spirit dwell in us: yet are we all comprehended under the word Flesh, in respect of that which we have of our own.

Saint Paul then gives sentence here, that no flesh shall be justified, because the faithless are condemned in Adam, and abide in their condemnation, and the faithful are always imperfect, so as they have many vices and blemishes: by means whereof they be condemned as well as the others, and so this condemnation is general, That he who will be justified by the works of the law, shall always be found guilty, yea even the holiest men that ever were.

Let us take Abraham who was a mirror of all perfection: let us take David who excelled in all virtue: let us take Noah, Job, and Daniel who are reckoned up for three righteous men by the Prophet Ezekiel: and let us take such other like: and yet nevertheless, even they also

are ranged in the same array, that is to wit, that they could not obtain righteousness before God, but by Grace.

Now then I pray you what shall we do? Must not the Devil needs drive them headlong into terrible pride, which at this day do stay still, that they may be justified by their own deserts or meritorious works as they term them? For who is he that can match either David, Noah, Abraham, or Daniel? Had not men need to have profited well in God's school, and to be inflamed with a true zeal of giving themselves wholly unto him, that they may be utterly convicted, that they be yet very far off from being come to the point which we see David, Noah, and Daniel to have been at? For as much then as we know this: let us mark, that here the Holy Ghost beats down such as mount up too high, to the end we should be the more ashamed that we have not one drop of desert of glory: and seek all that pertains to our salvation, in the mere grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus you see that this saying where Saint Paul avows that no flesh shall be justified, ought to be understood as though he had said: If men look upon themselves in their own nature, they shall find nothing but evil, notwithstanding all the fair shows that they can have. They may well be highly praised and esteemed in the world, and they may well beguile themselves by vain self-soothings: but until such time as God have wrought in them to change them, it is certain that there shall be nothing in them but filthiness, and all the virtues that men make account of, shall be stark vice, to lead them to destruction and to plunge them in Hell.

For although those who are renewed by God's grace and have already profited in his obedience, have some virtues which he loves and esteems: yet they are not able to bring anything that may pass account before him: for they shall always find themselves in arrears.

And that goodness which is in them, they have it of him, and yet is that goodness also corrupted with their sins and infirmities: by reason whereof they are utterly bereft of all trust in their own righteousness: and so if we now seek our righteousness in the law, we are beguiled, we shall not find it there, we are all of us condemned from the greatest to the least.

But here we see much better that which I touched before: namely that when we perceive and find by experience, that we want all that ever pertains to the life of our souls: we must resort to Jesus Christ as to our refuge, so that the true preparative to make us believe in Jesus Christ, is to be touched with a lively conceit and feeling of our own sins. And for the same cause also he says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will refresh you, and you shall find rest to your souls." Again it is said expressly, that he is sent to preach the message of gladness to the poor, to set free such as are in prison, and to comfort such as are utterly oppressed and as it were overwhelmed.

Those then who take pleasure in their sins, will never come to our Lord Jesus Christ. True it is that they will boast enough of faith, according as many scorners of God do unhallow that word as holy as it is. Every man will be counted a Christian, and they that be furthest out of square in all wickedness, will say they believe as much as any other man. But when a man speaks after that manner, it is a token that he has not one drop of faith. For the faithful will surely say, "I believe, howbeit with so great weakness, that I see well if my God should not pity me, that little which I have would soon vanish away utterly."

Therefore they that vaunt with full mouth that they have a perfect faith, are but dogs and swine which never tasted what the fear of God

or what religion is. But however the world go, the name of faith shall be shamefully defiled by those dogs, which do nothing else but mock God. For they have no skill to discern between good and evil. They are so blockish, that they do as it were welter in their filthiness: insomuch that a gross drunkard that is past all shame, and therewithal has overglutted himself also, would fain continue still in his disorderliness.

Besides this, the whoremongers, the perjurers, the blasphemers, and such other like will protest well enough that they have faith: but yet for all that, it is certain that they were never in any towardness to come to our Lord Jesus Christ. And why so? For they have not considered that they cannot be justified but by grace. However let us mark, that to be thoroughly persuaded, that we cannot be justified by the law, we must set God before us in his judgment seat, and every of us summon ourselves before him, and morning and evening bethink us that we must yield up an account of our whole life.

Thereupon let us understand, that we should be overwhelmed a hundred thousand times, if God should not pity us, and bear with us of his infinite mercy. That is the way for us to know that we cannot be justified by the law: for we are as good as damned, so oft as we appear before God. It is meet for us to be put in such fear, as we may have neither release nor rest, till our Lord Jesus Christ have succored us. You see then how it behooves us to be laden and overtraveled, that is to say, to dislike of our sins, and to be grieved with such anguish, as we may be pinched with the sorrows of death, to the end we may seek all our ease in God, assuring ourselves that we cannot otherwise obtain salvation, neither whole nor in part, but must be fain to have it given us.

For Saint Paul does not set down any mean way here, as though he said that we should find that which we want, in Jesus Christ, and be able to have the rest of ourselves. But he says that for as much as we know once that we cannot be taken as righteous for our own deserts, nor for our own works, only faith must content and suffice us. Wherefore let us understand, that there is not one whit of our salvation out of Jesus Christ, but that we have there both the beginning and the end of it, that is to say every whit of it: and let us abide continually in that lowliness, knowing that we bring nothing with us but damnation, and that all that ever pertains to our salvation must be received of God's only free mercy, so as we may say that it is by faith that we be saved, that is to say, because God the father has appointed his son our Lord Jesus Christ for us to rest upon, that he might both begin and finish our salvation, in such wise as the whole must be fathered upon him, and we learn to renounce ourselves, and to give ourselves fully and wholly unto him.

And now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our sins, praying him to make us so to feel them, as we may dislike more and more of them, and grow and go forward in the amendment wherein we ought to spend our whole life, and learn to magnify his goodness in such wise, as it has been showed to us in our Lord Jesus Christ, so as we may be wholly ravished with it: and that the same may be, not a glorying of it with our mouth only, but a putting of our whole trust in him, so as we may be settled in it more and more, till we be gathered up into the everlasting life, where we shall have the reward of our faith. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people. &c.

The Thirteenth Sermon,

which is the seventh upon the second Chapter.

> 17 But if we who seek to be justified by Christ are found to be sinners, is Christ therefore the minister of sin? No, not so.
>
> 18 For if I build up the things again which I had cast down, I make myself an offender.

We have seen already that to dismantle all the pride and self-trust which men place in their own works and merits, Paul cited that the Jews, who had great privilege above other men, could not, for all that, earn God's favor except by believing the Gospel. Yet, it was a good assumption that the Jews had some righteousness in themselves by which to earn God's favor, because the law was given to them with the promise that whoever performed those things would live by them. Therefore, one might have judged that the Jews, even in regard to themselves alone without Christ, could have been justified before God to some extent; otherwise, it would seem that the law was unnecessary. But when they come to our Lord Jesus Christ, there they perceive themselves to be wretched sinners, lost, and condemned. It should seem then that Jesus Christ brings sin, for before his coming, the Jews were considered God's children. They bore the badge of holiness in their bodies, and moreover, it was said to them that they were the holy and chosen people of their God. Now

then, seeing they become fellow-like with wretched sinners, and there is nothing but cursedness to be found in them, so they are forced to flee for refuge to the mere grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, it seems that Jesus Christ brought sin into the world. Truly, so will men judge of him according to their own opinion, albeit foolishly.

For it behooves us to note that our Lord Jesus Christ does not bring sin but reveals sin. For although the Jews exercised themselves in keeping the law, yet that only served to prove to them more and more that God would never show them mercy except through the means of the Redeemer. No doubt that in living chastely and soberly, and moreover in obeying God, they had some appearance of righteousness, but that came wholly of grace, and we must not attribute that to men which belongs to God, for by that means, God would be deprived of his honor. Then if the Jews, being governed by God's spirit, had some willingness and desire to lead a holy life, it must not be accounted that God was indebted to them for it; contrarily, they are much more bound to God. But on the other side, we have to note (as we shall see more fully in due time and place) that there was never yet any man so perfect but there was always much to be blamed in him. Therefore, we have to conclude that the Jews could not be so well accepted by God, but that they needed his mercy, and their salvation must necessarily be wholly grounded upon the forgiveness of their sins. Also, regarding ceremonies, they believed that there was great holiness in them, which hypocrites have always used as their cloak. But however they fared, it is certain that the Jews were more damnable than all other men. And why? For (as Saint Paul says) without the law, sin does not upbraid men, to the extent that men fall asleep and flatter themselves in their vices when they do not have that Summoner to cite them before God's judgment seat.

Then, whereas the wretched Gentiles might have some defense and excuse, at least that they are not so guilty before God, the Jews, in offering their sacrifices, had it witnessed to their face that all of them were worthy of eternal death and so consequently doubly guilty in comparison to the Gentiles. And therefore, in the second letter to the Colossians, Saint Paul uses this similitude, that the Ceremonies of the law were as evidence to bind a man more tightly. Truly, just as although a debtor is not condemned by the order of law, nor has he bound himself before a notary, nor given assurance in writing under his hand and seal, yet he ceases not for all that to be bound [in conscience] to pay his debt; even so, although the Gentiles had not any authentic matter of record by which to be condemned, yet they ceased not to still be worthy of death. But as for the man who has passed bonds by the order of law and entered his debt in the common records, what shall he say more? There is no escape for him; he must answer [the debt] out of hand. Now, the Jews were in a similar plight. For their washing of themselves when they went into the Temple, and in their own houses, and everywhere else, was a confession that there was nothing but uncleanness in them. Again, when they killed the beasts and saw them slain before them, surely the same was as a vivid picture of their own death and cursed state. And yet could not the brute beasts nor the shedding of their blood clear them, nor likewise the water, which is a corruptible element and cannot reach the soul. So then, the washing which they used had been a foolish thing if it had not directed them to the spiritual washing which we have in our Lord Jesus Christ. Likewise in baptism in these days, if we think ourselves to be made clean by the water, what an abuse is it? All these things must serve to lead us to the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, I conclude that whereas the Jews were exercised in the law, the same was a greater evidence against them and bound them more closely to subjection to God's judgment and eternal death than the Gentiles were.

And so we see how Jesus Christ was not a bringer-in of sin but a discoverer of sin. For the Jews thought themselves well-shielded under the Ceremonies and made a shield of them to defend themselves from God's displeasure, considering all other nations unholy, under the opinion that there was nothing but uncleanness in all the world besides, and that all holiness was in themselves. See what their arrogance was. Yet when Jesus Christ came and put things in order, he showed them that they should be obliged to show other men by their own example that their salvation was to be sought elsewhere than in their own merits and that it behooved them to come to him with such humility as to confess that they brought nothing with them but utter cursedness. And by that means, our Lord Jesus Christ revealed the mischief that had been hidden before, just as diseased persons shall often not perceive the festering of some sore that will breed some deadly disease until the Surgeon finds it out, who cannot do his duty in curing it until he has searched the sore to the bottom which was unknown before. Even so, our Lord Jesus Christ was forced to reveal the wretchedness that was in the Jews so that they should return to him and confess that they had nothing in them worthy of God's favor, nor any other refuge than to his mere mercy. Thus, you see in effect what we have to consider for the solution of the question and doubt which Saint Paul puts forth here.

Likewise in these days, if a man speaks of the Gospel to such as think they serve God and hope to win heaven by their own deserts, they are grieved at it because that gate is shut against them by the presumption which they have conceived beforehand, saying: "What, I pray? Shall I have lost my time when I have been so devout all my life long?" As for the man who shall have heard a Mass or two, or mumbled up a sort of prayers, or gone on pilgrimage, or lashed out his money and substance (without sparing) upon pardons,

indulgences, and such other things: if one tells him that we are all wretched and that there is nothing else for us to lean unto but the mere grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and that all that ever we are able to bring unto God is but filthy and loathly, he will storm and reply, "Is it possible that God should have no regard for so great pains as I take to serve him? Must not all of it pass into my account and be allowed to my salvation?" They would fain accuse God, yes, and we shall see many that will not stick to rail upon him with open mouth because they are loath to lose what they have done. Although the hypocrites perceive much lewdness in themselves, yet they would fain hide all under their cowls. For they break out in this manner: One says, "I have gone woolward"; another, "I have risen at midnight to serve God"; the third, "I have refrained from eating flesh"; and another, "I have been shut up in a Cloister as in a prison, and finally, I have been dead to the worldward, and shall all this be unprofitable to me, so as God will have no regard of it?" Such murmurings as these we shall hear daily. But let us see if they can make their case the better for all their replying. For when they have well examined what is in them, they shall find that all their doings are but as a painting to overlay things with, like a man who intends not to repair his house, leaves the holes unmended within, and does but daub them over on the outside so they are not seen, and afterward whitewashes them, so that finally, it is nothing else but a plastering or whitewashing, according also as our Lord Jesus Christ uses the same similitude against the hypocrites that did no more but blanch things. However, in the meantime, God regards not the outward appearance, as it is said in the first of Samuel, but searches men's hearts and the truth and lays open the things that were hidden before, according also as it is said in Jeremiah. Since it is so, then all such as allege or set forth their own devotions may perhaps have some fair show before men, but surely, before God, all is but lying. And as soon as God but blows upon their painting and starch, it shall

scale off like the painting of harlots that take great pains to starch their faces, and yet the Sun does no sooner shine upon them, but a man shall see the filthy scales fall off, and their foulness is discovered to their shame. In like taking are all hypocrites when they will needs color things after that manner before God; their shameful lewdness must needs be brought to light.

Therefore, let us mark that our Lord Jesus Christ, in condemning the whole world by showing that none can be saved but by the free goodness of God his father, which he offers and imparts to us, brings not sin (for we have that already in us) but utters and betrays it so that we should be convicted of it, and all the pride wherewith we were made drunken before be laid down, and nothing remains in us but lowliness to confess unfeignedly that we are undone, and that there is no other shift for us but that God utter the infinite treasures of his mercy upon us. You see then that all mouths shall be stopped, and men must not beguile themselves anymore by surmising to find any righteousness in themselves.

Furthermore, Saint Paul uses here a double answer to show that it is nothing so. However, before he answers, he sets down a precise word, saying: "God forbid." As if he should say, it is a horrible blasphemy to intend to lay the blame of our sins upon our Lord Jesus Christ. For (says he) if I pull down the thing that I have built up, there shall be contrariety in me. And in speaking so, he brings us back to the common doctrine of the Gospel. For our preaching of the end whereunto God has sent his only son is to show that he has brought us righteousness and is come to put away sin, which holds us as it were under Tyranny, till we be delivered and set free from it by the grace which was purchased for us in the death and passion of the Son of God.

Now then, seeing it is so, we see that our Lord Jesus Christ is not the bringer in of sin, but is come to destroy sin (as Saint John says in his Canonical Epistle) and we also do see it to be so. For what else does the Gospel teach us but that we are full of all wickedness, and must be fain to be made clean by him who is made the Lamb without spot, and also that he has brought us the spirit of holiness? For as much then as men, so long as they are cut off from Christ, have nothing in them but cursedness, so as they are utterly rotten and steeped in their sins, and that Jesus Christ is the party that makes them pure and clean by the shedding of his blood to wash them withal and by bringing us the spirit [of regeneration] to renew us with, that we might give ourselves to the serving of God, have his Image repaired in us, and walk in truth and uprightness.

For as much as it is said so: we see that our Lord Jesus Christ is not the bringer in of sin. And why so? For let us consider what we are, and we shall find that there is a gulf of all manner of wickedness in every one of us, and in all mankind. But our Lord Jesus Christ comes to remedy it. You see then that the sin was in us before: but our Lord Jesus Christ is forced to uncover it. What harm does a Physician by letting blood? Behold, a wretched man has a disease that is not perceived: his blood is altogether corrupted, and yet it is not seen to be so as long as it lies within the veins. But let him once be let blood, it will appear that it was no blood, but filthy corrupt matter. Again, what filthiness voids out of a man's body when he is purged for some disease? Now shall the Physician be blamed for it, or the medicine that was given him? It is well known that the purgation serves to deliver the body that was half rotten before.

So then if our Lord Jesus Christ does by the light of his Gospel reveal the spiritual diseases that were in us, and the filthy uncleanness which is loathly before God and shameful before men, and does

purge us quite and clean thereof: ought he to be charged with any blame or reproach for his labor? What an unthankfulness were that? Therefore, here is a sufficient answer to beat back the blasphemies and grudgings of the enemies of the Gospel, which burst for pride and cannot endure to be tamed.

Let them allege what they can to prove that they have some righteousness and holiness: and yet shall it always be found that there is nothing but uncleanness in them, which they wist not of, and yet it shows itself continually. Mark that for one point.

Secondly, Saint Paul adds a more large and easy declaration when he says that he is dead to the lawward by the law itself: and that he was crucified with Jesus Christ, to live unto God. Now when he says that he was dead to the lawward by the law: it is in way of mocking such as pretend to be justified by keeping of the law. For I have told you already how all his disputing and striving was against such kind of folk. They were but deceivers who went about to mingle Jesus Christ with the law of Moses, yea even to get righteousness. For it is certain that our Lord Jesus Christ is not contrary to the law, but rather his Gospel takes witness of the law, as it is showed in the first chapter to the Romans.

Nevertheless, when the matter concerns justification, that is to say, when men come to scrutinize, to know how and by what means God takes and accepts them as innocent, pure, and without spot, then must the law be separated from Jesus Christ. And why? For the law brings nothing in it but cursing: and Jesus Christ brings the remedy of it. Therefore, the enemies of the Gospel against whom Saint Paul now disputes would have mingled the law with it, and have made men believe that although they were justified by our Lord Jesus Christ, yet notwithstanding they should mingle the ceremonies with

him as a part of their salvation, and that by means of them they should purchase grace and favor before God.

But Saint Paul cuts off all this gear, and says that there is none but only Jesus Christ [that can do that] and that men must seek none other helps in that case either one way or other, but simply content themselves with his grace, and not give the law any room in that behalf. For he says, as for me, I am not dead through the Gospel. As if he should say, will you make me believe that I can get God's favor by means of the law? Nay, I tell you contrariwise, that it is not the Gospel which has condemned me, it is not the Gospel that has showed me my filthiness, to make me ashamed of it, it is not the Gospel that has bereft me of all hope of salvation: but it is the Law, which has showed me that I am stark dead, that I am damnable before God, that I am undone and damned: This comes not from elsewhere than from the law. And would you have me to seek righteousness there? It is all one as if you would give me a poison to eat, to the end I should take nourishment of it. However (to say truth) that inconvenience is not to be blamed upon the Law, for it should redound to the dishonor of God, from the Law came.

But however the case stands, considering the corruption that is in us, the Law cannot but kill us, as we have seen in the second to the Corinthians, and as Saint Paul declares more fully in the seventh to the Romans. For he says, that when men believe themselves to have life: that is to say, when they believe themselves to be righteous, and to stand in the grace and favor of God: it is a sign that the law is dead to them, that is to say, that it hath not the power and strength to show them that which else it should do. For to what end was the law given? To set the rule of good life before our eyes, and that rule is called the righteousness which God allows.

Secondly, the law ought to be as a looking glass to us, wherein to behold our own deformities, blemishes, foulness, filthiness, and iniquities, so far out of all order, as we may be as it were swallowed up in despair at the sight of them. Now before we have the law, we see none of all these things: that is to say, we know not what manner of ones we be, nor what evil is in us. But when God sets his demands before us, and we perceive the same thoroughly: then are we at our wits' end, and utterly out of hope. The Law then is dead: that is to say, it is as it were thrust underfoot and as good as buried, so long as we think ourselves to be alive, and conceive any foolish imagination of being righteous, and of obtaining heaven by our own good works. But when the law lives: that is to say, when God gives it power to touch us, then are we dead, then is it as a sword to thrust us to the heart.

Therefore we must needs receive a deadly wound, so soon as we have perceived what the Law contains. After that manner speaks Saint Paul in the text which I have alleged. And now, following the same matter, he says that he is dead to the Law by the Law: as if he had said, "Come not hither to slander the Gospel, as though it were the cause of our damnation, or an entrance unto us to be cursed before God, to have the knowledge of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in us. No, no. But it is certain that the Law (when it does its office, and we read it in such wise as becomes us) does always kill us, and we lie as it were plunged in despair, till our Lord Jesus Christ have reached us his hand to lift us out of it. Thus then am I dead unto the law, that is to say, I can have no life, I can have no assurance of soul health, I can have no comfort, rest nor contentation, and to be short, there is nothing in the law whereby I may come unto God: but clean contrariwise, it shaketh me off, it thrusteth me back, it banisheth me from the kingdom of heaven, it cutteth me quite off from the hope of salvation, it maketh me a poor, cursed, and wretched creature, and to

be short, it sendeth me to the bottom of hell. You see then what I have won by abiding in the law. And Saint Paul speaks of himself rather than of any other body, to the end that the things which he speaks may be the better received, as of a man of experience.

And it is after the same manner that he speaks in the fore-alleaged seventh Chapter to the Romans. For there he sets not forth this man or that man for an example, but says, "I myself was sometimes alive": that is to say, at such time as he was a Pharisee, and accounted a holy man, yea even for one of the excellentest in all Jewry, in so much that he was a mirror of all perfection, and as a little Angel: then (says he) I was alive, howbeit but by hypocrisy. For he made himself to believe wonders, and he was so puffed up with pride, that he held scorn of Jesus Christ. Lo in what blindness Saint Paul acknowledges himself to have been. And he adds anon after, that he wist not what was meant by, "Thou shalt not covet." It might be thought strange that a man which had not only been at school, but also been a great teacher of others, and thereto a very zealous man as he himself affirms, should be so dulled as not to know his own faults. But Saint Paul shows the reason of it. For (says he) I looked no further than to the outward honesty, that there might no fault be found in me before the world, nor any man know any evil by me. But when I understood what this saying, "Thou shalt not lust," meant, and perceived that God condemns all the affections, and thoughts of men: then I perceived that the worst was behind, as the common Proverb says: for it is the last commandment of the law, wherein God makes so lively, and deep a search as nothing can be excepted from it.

Whereas it is said in the law, "Thou shalt not have any strange gods: Thou shalt not make any image to worship it: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: Thou shalt keep holy the day of rest: Thou shalt honor thy father & mother: Thou shalt not kill: Thou

shalt not commit adultery: Thou shalt not steal": All this is well (will we think), we must abstain from all whoredom, violence and extortion: we must abstain from deceit and robbery: we must live soberly. Here too, we must abstain from blasphemy, and we must honor God. All this will easily be granted. But there is a back look that we perceived not, which is, "Thou shalt not covet" or lust: that is a privy nipper. Truly it seems not to be very big or great: but yet for all that, it is such a stinger, as passes all the rest in biting. For by the end and winding up of his Law, God searches out all that ever is in man. He sets down that commandment, to try out the things that were hidden: and when he says, "thou shalt not covet," it is a piercing even into the marrow of men's bones. So then Saint Paul confesses that he knew not what sin meant, till he understood what was meant by the commandment that forbids men to covet or lust. And therefore in this text he charges not the Gospel, but the Law with it. Wherefore let us remember upon this text, that all they which deceive themselves by any opinion of their own merits, never tasted what the Law of God is, nor what it meaneth: I speak of the greatest doctors that are in most estimation, as (in good faith) it is to be seen in the Papadome. For even those that are taken to be the pillars of the Church, (notwithstanding that they profess Divinity) know not one word of God's law, to apply the same to his true and natural use. For they have nothing in them but hypocrisy, and they bear themselves in hand, that they shall please God with a rattle, as if he were a little babe. They do but toy with him, and yet you shall see them stand so much in their own conceits, as they cannot abide to be condemned. And if a man tell them that we must seek our salvation in Jesus Christ: yea, say they? and what shall become then of our free will? what should become of our own merits and satisfactions? To their seeming it were much better to pluck the sun out of the sky, yea and God out of his seat too, than to bereave man of that prerogative, or of the thing that he can bring of himself to compound with God

and yet for all that, it is certain that there is nothing in them but stark filthiness. For men see that there is neither fear of God, nor uprightness, nor equity, nor aught else [that is good] in their life. They be so full of pride that they be ready to burst again, and they be full of envy, rancor, and all manner of looseness. And yet for all this, they will needs hold God bound unto them: but that is because they never knew the law.

So then, when our Lord teaches us and shows us how we ought to walk in this world, let us learn to lay the doctrine that he sets forth and our life together, and there we shall find the right perfection of the law, and that in ourselves there is nothing but horrible confusion: we shall see hell ready prepared for us. By that means it will be easy for us to give over all the deserving which we shall have fancied in ourselves, so as it shall be soon beaten down, and our mouths stopped, and we become like poor dead folk without any breath, because we shall perceive well enough that we cannot come unto God, but must needs thunder against us if we bring any foolish imagination of our own deservings. See how the law slays us. But when we have passed through such death, that is to say, when we be already rightly humbled and utterly dismayed: then here is a remedy, which Saint Paul sets down, saying: "I was crucified with Jesus Christ, even to live unto God." Now he shows here that our Lord Jesus Christ not only brings us remission of our sins, but also sanctifies and regenerates us by his holy spirit, in so much that whereas there was nothing but stubbornness in us before, now we be given to serve God, and to please him. And for the better understanding of that which Saint Paul tells us, let us mark that we receive two principal graces of our Lord Jesus Christ: The one is the forgiveness of our sins, whereby we are assured of our salvation, and have our consciences quieted, and whereupon it behooves us to be grounded, so as we call upon God as our father. Who gives us the

boldness to lift up our heads to heaven, and to call God our father? Again, what makes us so bold as to glory that we be companions and brothers to the Angels? It is because our sins come not to account: for we must always have recourse to the washing of them away, which was done by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. You see then that our righteousness is that God accepts us, albeit not in respect of our own worthiness, but in respect of the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby all our misdoings are wiped out. That is the first benefit which we have by our Lord Jesus Christ.

The second is, that whereas we be froward of our own nature, and all that the Papists term by the name of free will is but frenzy, and that however great account soever men make of themselves, all is but naughtiness, and we be full of vice and corruption: instead of being so, our Lord Jesus Christ gives us the grace to be sorry for our sins, and to labor to do good: for so long as we abide in our own nature, every of us soothes and flatters himself in his evil. But when we have once tasted the inestimable love of our God, and perceived what our Lord Jesus Christ is: then we be so touched by his holy spirit, that we condemn the evil, and desire to draw near unto God, and to frame ourselves to his holy will. We be sure of that once, and although we go halting, yet do we continually sigh to see our own imperfections and infirmities, and perceive full well how it is the spirit of God that moves us thereto, when our chief desire is to forsake the sinfulness that is in us, and comes of our flesh, so as we wish nothing else but that God should be glorified in all our life, and faithfully obeyed in all things. That is the second benefit which our Lord Jesus Christ brings us: and they be two things knit together by inseparable bond, so that like as the light of the sun cannot be separated from his heat: so these two graces (that is to wit our righteousness, and the remission of our sins) are inseparably matched with our renewal, which is done by the spirit of sanctification. Thus you see two graces inseparable:

and like as when we say that the Sun is hot, it ceases not to shine also, and yet notwithstanding the light of the sun is not heat: so when we say that we be justified by the remission of our sins, it is not meant that our Lord Jesus Christ does thenceforth suffer himself to be mocked and despised, but that we have need to be thoroughly cleansed, so as we may learn to renounce the world, and ourselves, to the end to stick unto him with true obedience. However the world goes, the thing that Saint Paul speaks in this text, shall always be found true, namely that he was crucified with Jesus Christ, to live unto God. Then if any man accuse the Gospel that it gives liberty to do evil and to sin: we may always answer, how so? By the law we be always dead, for there we see our own cursedness which will leave us dismayed in despair. But in the Gospel, although we be crucified, that is to say, although there be a spice of death in the Gospel, yet is that death a quickening death, and the cause of life. For so long as men live to themselves, they be dead unto God: they be wretched carcasses full of rottenness. But when they die in themselves, they live unto God.

And for that cause Saint Paul in the twelfth to the Romans calls us living sacrifices, where he tells us that we must be transformed and utterly give over our own reason and our own will to yield God such service as is meet for him to have. He says, "Offer up yourselves as living sacrifices." So then, in the Law there must needs be a deadly death, a death that leaves us utterly overwhelmed and sunken even down into hell. But in the Gospel there is a quickening death. And why? For we are crucified with Jesus Christ, to live unto God, that is to say, our old man (as Saint Paul terms it in the sixth to the Romans) and that which we have of our own nature, is done away, albeit not at the first day, but by little and little. But however the case stands, we shall perceive that our Lord Jesus Christ mortifies all that was in us of our own, or of the world, so as we are not so greatly

given to nestle here below, because we see it is a miserable state to live here, and our very care is to stick unto God. Thus, you see how we may be crucified with our Lord Jesus Christ.

But what is meant by that crucifying? Verily, it is a certain kind of death. However, that death brings us to life, which thing the death which the Law brings does not. Now then we see the very intent of Saint Paul, and the natural meaning of this text. Therefore, nowadays when the enemies of the truth blaspheme the Gospel, we have here an answer to stop their mouths. And if they hold on still, let them bark like dogs, but they shall not be able to bite, do what they can. See here what the Papists flush forth when we preach that men are justified through God's free goodness. "O," say they, "are they so? That were the next way to give every man the bridle to live after his own liking, and to cause that there might be no more remorse nor scruple of conscience, so as every man might have leave to do what he listed." That is the common blasphemy of the Papists.

Again, when we show them that they cannot bind us by their traditions, and that it is but a tyranny which they have usurped in robbing God of his right, and that the liberty was purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ, to the end that we should not be tied to the things which men would lay upon us of law and necessity in matters concerning the spiritual government of our souls. "O," say they, "see what comes of it: their desire is nothing else but to wallow in all pleasure, and to lead a loose life." Surely, we may easily answer to all this. For the doctrine that we bring serves not to stir up men's lusts, nor to give them too great and lawless a liberty: but to the clean contrary.

However the case stands, it ought to suffice us that if we should abide in the quagmire of the Papists, surely there would be nothing but

death for us. For were they not too fast asleep and utterly dulled, undoubtedly they should be tossed with such unquietness and heart-biting, as they should need to see that that is not the thing whereupon we must rest. But behold, they be so rotted in their ignorance, that they have not any feeling of God's justice at all. But as for our parts, for as much as we know we have such a freedom purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ, and are sure of our salvation because God does freely forgive all our faults, and do feel already by the working of God's holy spirit, that he draws us to him, and are mortified to live unto him: Let us go forward with a cheerful heart.

And although there be never so many infirmities in our nature, yet notwithstanding let us not doubt but God accepts us, for all our imperfections. But the Papists cannot have so much as one good purpose to serve God, saving that they are utterly bewitched [to believe so] through vain self-trust. And why? For they ground themselves upon their own merits, and (to their seeming) that is the mean to purchase grace. But now what is it that they can do? Put the case that they brought a hundred times more with them than they have to bring, and that God governed them by his holy spirit, so as they had some manner of feeling of the Gospel, though it were but half a feeling: yet should they come far short of discharging their duty, yea or of the hundredth part of it towards God. But in the meantime, it is well known that all that ever they do is but pelting trash: and as for the law of God, it is not worth with them, and yet in the meantime they busy their heads about their own inventions.

However, let us still put the case that they endeavored to walk in the fear of God, and that they had learned aright to do the things that God commands them: yet for all that, they could not make their boast that they were come to the perfection of that righteousness

which God requires of us. And when they had tormented themselves never so much, how should they be able to serve God with a cheerful courage, unless they knew themselves to be in his favor, notwithstanding that they be so blameworthy before him? But as for us, we on our side are able to serve God with a free heart, notwithstanding that our consciences find fault with us, and we know that there are many sins in us. And why? For we ground not ourselves upon our own merits, but upon God's mere mercy: and thereby we are taught, that God receives our works though there be much faultiness in them, and that we are in his favor although there be many vices and blemishes in us.

And that is the cause why he says by his prophet that he will accept the service which we do unto him, as a father accepts the service of his child. You see that a child is willing to obey his father: and when his father says to him, do this: his father takes his doing in good worth, though the child knows not what he does, yea and sometimes though he mar a thing, yet his father is contented to lose the thing when he sees that the child was willing and desirous to serve him. But if a man take a servant for wages, he will look to have him do his task. And why? For he looks for his wages: and a man will not abide to have him mar the work that is put into his hands: yea and if it be not well done, he will not be contented with it. Now our Lord speaking of the grace of the Gospel, says he will receive our services, as a father receives the obedience of his child, though all that ever he does be nothing worth: that is to say, he passes not a whit for the perfection that is in them, for he shall find none at all in them: but he bears with us of his goodness. He shows himself so kind and free-hearted towards us, that whatever we do, he takes it in good part, although it be not worthy, nor do deserve it. You see then that the way for us to have a free courage to serve God, is to assure ourselves

that he blesses all our works, because that whatever spotiness is in them, is cleansed away by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To be short, whereas God shows himself pitiful towards us, and uses inestimable mercy: let us understand that he does it not to the end that every of us should run a scatter-loping, and take the bridle in his teeth, and play the horse that is broken loose: no no, but contrariwise it is to the end, that the sword of God's word should strike us to the heart, and make such a search there, as we might be rightly humbled to crave pardon at God's hand. Not that we should have the heart-biting which the Papists have, which would pluck us back and hinder us from coming unto God, making us to say, wretched creature what dost thou? What canst thou tell whether God love thee or no? Let us have no such nips, but let us be fully resolved that God beholds us with pity, and takes our works in good worth: not for any desert or worthiness that he finds in them, but because we are joined to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now therefore we see what Saint Paul meant to say. Also we see how that doctrine served not for that time only: but that the same is as profitable and needful for us at this day, as ever it was [for any heretofore.] For inasmuch as God's enemies fight against the Gospel, and spew out their blasphemies: it stands us on hand to have wherewith to resist them: and not only them, but also Satan, who has at all times had the sleight to make us believe men, that they could live of themselves and by their own deservings: but that is but to lull us asleep in death.

And therefore let us assure ourselves, that it is better for us to die to the law, than to live to it: that is to say, let us assure ourselves, that if God should enter into account with us, we should be utterly undone and damned. And being so dismayed, let us suffer ourselves to be

crucified with our Lord Jesus Christ: and since we know that he has reconciled us to God his father by the sacrifice which he offered, let us also suffer ourselves to be governed by his holy spirit, and to be renewed by him in such wise, as being dead in ourselves we may live truly unto God, giving over all overweening of our own righteousness, and fighting against all the lusts of our flesh, and withdrawing ourselves from the world.

And now let us cast ourselves down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our sins, praying him to make us so to feel them, as it may be to pluck us back from the filthiness wherein we be plunged, and to join us so unto our Lord Jesus Christ, as he may draw us to God his father, and make us come still nearer and nearer unto him, till we be fully joined unto him. And so let us all say, Almighty God heavenly father. &c.

The Fourteenth Sermon,

which is the eighth upon the second chapter.

20 So, I live: [yet] not I now, but Christ lives in me, and whereas I live now in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

21 I refuse not the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain.

We have seen this morning to what end we are offered up in sacrifice unto God when our Lord Jesus Christ knits us together in his body. It is not so that we should lie still in the death into which we are already plunged by nature, but rather to make us partakers of the heavenly life. Now, the Apostle, having spoken in that manner, magnifies God's grace, saying that he himself no longer lives, but Jesus Christ lives in him. This is as much as if he had said that all of us, by nature, have nothing in us but wretchedness. Therefore, whatever good God bestows upon us, it becomes us to acknowledge and confess that it comes from Him and to serve Him for it. For faith always brings with it this humility, that men embrace themselves to give all praise to God.

But by the way, it may seem strange that a faithful man should boast that Jesus Christ lives in him, and yet he is still mortal. As long as we live in this world, we are subject to many infirmities. Therefore, this saying might seem to be a vain speculation or a fantastic conceit, that Jesus Christ lives in us. But St. Paul brings us back to faith and tells us that although our life appears corruptible outwardly, and we are subject to all the adversities of the world, faith quickens us so that our Lord Jesus Christ does not cease to make us partakers of His heavenly life. Indeed, we possess it, inasmuch as we must no longer consider the state of the faithful according to what may be judged of by our natural wit, but mount up higher. For the life which our Lord Jesus Christ imparts to us is a hidden treasure that we attain to only by faith, which rises above the whole world.

Now, it behooves us to hope for the things which we do not see and which are hidden from us. God is highly honored by us when we make such an account of His word and promises that all the things we see in the world cannot hold us back from continually seeking Him, going to Him, and employing all our wits about Him.

Therefore, first, we have to gather from this text that a man has never profited well in the Gospel until he attributes all his welfare to our Lord Jesus Christ. For if we reserve even a little to ourselves, we are unthankful to God outright, and His grace cannot be darkened by us without us being deprived of it as we are worthy.

In that regard, it appears that all those who trust in their own merits are still full of pride and are mortal enemies to God's glory. It is true that they will not profess it with their mouths, but for all that, the hypocrites who hope to be righteous by their own worthiness adorn themselves with God's feathers. Humility is the principal virtue among all others. For what are all their merits? Conversely, when the faithful humble themselves, it is not to purchase grace in God's sight as though they were worthy of it, but to confess, as truth is, that they have nothing to boast about and must receive all things from God's sheer liberality.

At least, it serves to make us acknowledge how greatly we are bound unto Him, seeing He has shown Himself so kind towards us as to spare nothing for us. That, therefore, is the thing that Saint Paul shows us here. And it behooves us to weigh well the second point where he says that we live in the flesh, albeit by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. This phrase "live in the flesh" in this text signifies as much as to be a wayfarer here upon earth and to pass through this transitory life. For when he speaks of living in the flesh in Romans 8, he means to be given to wicked lusts, as those who have no fear of God, who give themselves to do whatever they want. Therefore, those who follow their own desires like brute beasts live in the flesh.

But in this place, Saint Paul compares this outward life with the heavenly life which we possess by faith. For how shall a man differentiate between the faithful and the faithless? Both eat and

drink. Surely, the faithful eat and drink soberly. Yet, you shall see many of the faithless sort very well restrained, not given to any drunkenness or excess. But however they fare, one would deem at first sight that this life is common to all men. Nevertheless, the faithful often drag their wings after them and nothing else but droop in this world and finally die just like all other men. Then, if one looks only at the outward appearance, there is no diversity between them.

In short, a man might say it is but lost labor to believe in Jesus Christ. For we do not receive the reward of our faith here, and although God calls us to a further thing, we all have one common and similar life, in that all of us must come to death. How then does Jesus Christ live in us? For His living is hidden. Saint Paul brings us back to faith.

Now remains to know what the nature of faith is: It is to behold the things that are incomprehensible to our senses, to forsake the world, and to seek the kingdom of God, and to hold ourselves to the pure and simple word that proceeds out of God's mouth, without respect to anything that we can perceive here. If we do not have this groundwork, we shall never understand what Saint Paul tells us in this text. For when men have read it a hundred times, yet they shall not know what difference there is between living in the flesh and living in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then there is an outward state, in respect to which Saint Paul comprehends all things that concern this transitory life. There is also an inward state which is hidden from us, that is to wit, the state which is promised to us, and which we wait for by hope. For the outward man must needs be defaced and decay by little and little until it be utterly done away with. Accordingly, although it is promised to God's children that God will give them new liveliness

and make them as it were to cast their feathers, yet notwithstanding, you shall see them sometimes so diseased as it is pity, and the strongest men of the world grow old and come to death. Seeing it is so, what preferment have they above the unbelievers? Great: however, the same cannot be perceived by eyesight.

For we have an inward man which lies hidden within us. And what meant Saint Paul by that? He meant that God works in such a way in us by His Holy Spirit, as we are always assured of the heavenly life that is prepared for us. And although we do but glide away here below and be as strangers, yet there is an everlasting heritage which cannot fail us. According as the outward man decays (says Saint Paul), so the inward man renews. For the more that the faithful see themselves decay, the more are they warned and provoked to look upward.

For we know that such as are strong and lusty do besot and forget themselves, and therefore our Lord is fain to tame us in such wise, as we may renew by decaying: I say in such wise as we may be, as you would say, new-cast in a mold again, to the end that the hope of the heavenly life may be established in us, and we have our sight cleared to behold the thing which otherwise would be wrapped up from us.

Mark how gold and silver do greatly waste when men make them to pass the furnace. When it is cast into the fire, it is a great mass of metal; but when it is taken out again, there is but a small quantity of it. And yet the gold (if it were not so fined) would never serve to any purpose, nor would silver neither. Even so is it with us: we could never be renewed to come to the kingdom of heaven except we died first. We must ever go forward to that utter defacement and not rest by the way upon anything that we see with our eyes. For this earthly life is but a shadow and a smoke that slides and vanishes away. And

yet, nevertheless, we are renewed thereby within. Not that all men have that benefit: For the faithless do well enough find their own weakness and are enforced to feel the summonings of death, especially when they are grown old, for then they perceive that any little blast is enough to cast them down, and thereupon they fall to storming and could find in their hearts to fall out with God and nature.

However the world goes, though they rot, yet they are not renewed. For one grain of corn may well rot, and yet not take root to spring again and to bring forth fruit, and another grain shall rot likewise, albeit forasmuch as it is in good earth and has taken root, it will bring forth fruit in seasonable time. So then the faithful come to decay, and therewithal are renewed and gather new force. And why? For they rot in this world to be restored and renewed again in the heavenly heritage. The faithless also do go away to; they rot likewise, they slip aside, and they vanish quite away. But they have no advantage by it, because they are not restored to eternal life.

So then let us mark well that whereas Saint Paul says we live by the faith of Jesus Christ, it is to awaken us so that nothing in the world may keep us from resting continually upon God's promises. When we look upon all the things that are about us, there is nothing but death. But what for that? God has given us His word, that being dead in our own nature, we have our life elsewhere, namely in our Lord Jesus Christ, inasmuch as He was purposely sent to bring us from death to life. Seeing then that we have that promise of God, you see how He may be honored at our hands. And inasmuch as the case stands so, that only saying ought to suffice us. And if we settle and resolve ourselves fully thereupon, it is a token that we set our hands to God's truth as faithful witnesses thereof, as Saint John says. Contrariwise,

when we doubt or are in a stammering, then has God's word no authority nor reverence among us.

For if we look no further than to the things that are before us and to the things that are near at hand, we cannot acknowledge that God is faithful, and that the things which God has uttered with his own mouth are infallible. Moreover, in so doing, we turn away from our Lord Jesus Christ, who nonetheless is the pledge of all that is contained in God's word. Seeing we have the word, we must no more ask (as Moses says) who shall climb up above the clouds? or who shall go down into the deep? or who shall go over the sea? The word (says he) is in your mouth and in your heart, and we must content ourselves with it. And moreover, seeing that we have our Lord Jesus Christ for a larger confirmation, we know that he went down into the hells, that is to say, bore the curse that was due to us for our sins, and answered as our pledge and surety before the judgment seat of his father, and afterward went up into heaven, and in our behalf took possession of the heritage that he had purchased for us. For he was exalted up in our flesh and nature. Seeing that we have such an assurance, must we not necessarily be too wretched if we cannot hold ourselves to it?

Again, the matter wills us to look still back to that which has been said, namely, that we hope not for things that are open and manifest, but for the things that are unknown to worldly perception. Then since it is so, let us learn to live by the faith of Jesus Christ: that is to say, although we be miserable in this world and be fain to endure never so many heartbitings, griefs, anguishes, troubles, and distresses, yet notwithstanding let us continue in this constancy of believing that there is nothing but singular happiness in all our miseries, because God blesses and hallows them for our Lord Jesus

Christ's sake, and all is turned to our help and welfare as it is said in the eighth to the Romans.

Therefore, as we have seen in another text, God must utter the perfectness of his strength in our weakness, and we suffer him to make us to stoop, in such sort as this world may not keep us back from having the promises of the Gospel thoroughly printed in our hearts, nor hinder us to be glad and cheerful in the midst of our miseries and afflictions, nor boldly to despise all the slanderings and mockages of the faithless when they offer us reproach, saying, "God's, you silly wretches, think yourselves to be princes when you believe the Gospel. But alack, poor souls, where is the joy and happiness which you say is promised you of God? Where is the inestimable benefit which you make so great account of? For you have no more than those whom you call God's enemies, reprobates, and cursed caitiffs." But (as I said), all this gear must not thrust us out of the way, for we must come back unto faith.

Although then that here beneath we perceive not the things that are promised us in the Gospel, yet let us assure ourselves of them out of all doubt. For (as says Saint Paul) our life is hidden, and the time of the discovery thereof is not yet come. And where is our life but in our Lord Jesus Christ? Now the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is apparent enough: howbeit, that is but in part: we have but a taste of it: and things are so troubled and disordered in this world, that if we will judge of our salvation by the outward appearance, what would become of it? Therefore let us suffer our life to be hid till our Lord Jesus Christ comes, and then shall we perceive that we have not been beguiled in putting our trust in him, and in admitting the doctrine of his Gospel.

You see then after what manner we must live by faith: that is to say, we must not be so nice as to seek a quiet life here and to have all our commodities and ease here. For in so doing we should forgo the thing that God has promised us, we should forget him, and it would be an utter destruction of our faith. But let us take the mirror of God's word, and there look upon the things that surmount all our wit and are set far out of this world, and are utterly invisible, and let us lift up our eyes thither, not so far forth as our own reason and skill shall be able to guide us (for that is not enough), but so as we may climb above the world and forsake the present things, to the end to hold ourselves fast in God's promises, and to be patient in all afflictions and miseries wherewith we shall be exercised, and against which we must be fain to fight until we receive the fruit of our victory, when we are conveyed up into the rest of heaven.

Thus, you see what we have to gather upon this saying of Saint Paul, which might seem dark at the first sight. But when we have, on the one side, marked well what our state is while we be in this world, and on the other side considered what the nature of faith is, we shall easily perceive that there is no darkness at all in it. And now Saint Paul adds expressly that Jesus Christ loved him and gave himself to death for him. This is an exposition of what we saw earlier. For men do oftentimes misconstrue the word Faith because they consider not what the pith of it is. And indeed, every man will be called faithful, and yet even among those that make a profession of Christianity, you shall scarcely find one of a hundred that has so much as one drop of faith. For (as I said before) it is never sought what is meant by faith. The word is very short, but it draws a long tail after it, as we see by the addition that is set down here. For Saint Paul declares that he lives by faith because Jesus Christ had loved him and delivered himself to death for him. As much must we do. For inasmuch as we see that the Son of God; the Lord of glory, the head of the Angels, he

by whom all things were made, and by whom all things are still maintained, yields himself to death, yes, and to so vile a death that he took our curse upon him, and not only was hanged upon a Cross, which was an irksome thing to all the world, but also was pronounced accursed by God's own mouth: seeing (say I) that we have such a price to ransom us from death and to purchase us life and salvation: have we not cause (if we think well upon it) to overleap all the lettes that Satan can cast in our ways to make us turn head or to retire back, that we might not continue in the certainty of our faith? Surely the victory will be easy enough for us against all temptations if we can consider of what value the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is, and what it importeth. So then Saint Paul arms us here, to the end we might hold out with invincible constancy against all the stoppages that Satan laboureth to lay before us, to hinder us from keeping on our course.

When the faithful are pinched with hunger or thirst, they are troubled with looking here and there for the promise that they shall be heirs of the world, and in the meantime do well-nigh starve for famine and penury. But if they look to our Lord Jesus Christ, that will dispatch them of all their trouble and sweeten all the bitterness that might have put the promises of salvation out of taste with them. Therefore, whenever the faithful are in any peril or are persecuted, so as they have many wrongs and injuries done to them, and yet are not succored of all that while, they might think thus with themselves: Where is God? He has promised to dwell in us, to keep us as the Apple of his eye, and to be our shield and fortress: and yet in the meantime we are cast up to the spoil. Wherefore it is certain that we shall be undone at every blow. But when we come to the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must conclude that the Son of God was not offered up in vain. Seeing then that our Lord Jesus Christ spared not himself, but abased himself so far as to suffer so

slanderous, yes, and cursed a death, and afterward also the pains of Hell, albeit but for a while, to the end to set us free and clear, and to purchase us grace before the judgment seat of God his father: should that doing of his be unavailing? Is it possible that it should be? No: For if Heaven and earth were turned upside down, it were not so great a confusion, as to imagine that the Son of God has suffered in vain. Then see we now why Saint Paul tells us that he lived by faith. For it behooves us to be settled upon the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, assuring ourselves that it is able enough to draw us out of the dungeons of death.

And furthermore, it behooves us to look upon our Lord Jesus Christ, not only as dead in the infirmity of his flesh but also as risen again through his divine and heavenly power, as is said of him in another Text. And therefore when there is any speaking of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, it stands us in hand to consider what the same importeth: that is to wit, that it is a sacrifice to make an atonement of Reconciliation between God and man, an obedience to cover all the naughtiness that is in us, and a washing to scour away all our uncleanness and filthiness. For as much then as we know that there is such power in the death and passion of the Son of God, and that thereupon we march further, that is to wit, to the glory whereunto it leadeth us: let us not anymore imagine that man ought hereafter to continue still in his own nature, but that he ought to live in the faith of the Gospel, assuring himself that he shall not be disappointed in resting upon the promises that are contained there.

Thus, you see in effect whereunto we should refer this saying, where Saint Paul tells us expressly that the Son of God gave himself. And he contenteth not himself to say that Christ gave himself for the world in common, for that had been but a slender saying: but [shows that] every of us must apply to himself particularly the virtue of the death

and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whereas it is said that the Son of God was crucified, we must not only think that the same was done for the Redemption of the world: but also every of us must on his own behalf join himself to our Lord Jesus Christ, and conclude, "It is for me that he has suffered."

Likewise when we are baptized, as it is not for any one man alone, so is not the water sprinkled upon all men in common: but every man is baptized separately in his own behalf, to the end that every of us may apply it particularly to himself, to say that we are all members of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also when we receive the holy Supper, every man takes his own portion, to show us that our Lord Jesus Christ is communicated unto us, yea even to every one of us. Saint Paul therefore purposely uses that manner of speech, to the end we should not have any cold imagination, after the manner of diverse ignorant persons, which take themselves to be Christians, and yet in the meanwhile are as wretched beasts.

But when we once know that the thing which was done for the redemption of the whole world pertains to every of us separately: it behooves every of us to say also on his own behalf, "The Son of God has loved me so dearly, that he has given himself to death for me." Furthermore, the word Love is not superfluous here: for Saint Paul's intent is to magnify the gracious goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ: as if he should say, that we be very wretches if we accept not such a benefit when it is offered us, seeing that God in sending us his Son had no other respect but to our miseries which he intended to relieve. Also our Lord Jesus Christ did so neglect himself, that he spared not his life for our welfare. And what was the cause of it? The love that he bore us. Seeing it is so: must we not needs be worse than out of our wits, if we accept not such a benefit? But it is a very common doctrine in the holy Scripture, that God so loved the world,

that he spared not his only Son, but gave him to death for us: and also that our Lord Jesus Christ, at such time as we were his deadly enemies as Saint Paul says, did confirm a marvelous love towards us, in that he offered himself in sacrifice to make atonement between God and us, and to do away all our sins, so as they might no more come to account. Lo here a warrant of our salvation, so as we ought to think ourselves thoroughly assured of it. However, Saint Paul meant purposely here to rebuke men's unthankfulness, in that they accept not the benefit which God grants them so bountifully, yea and of his own free goodness. For it behooves us to call to mind how Saint John in his Canonical Epistle says that we loved not God first: (as if he should say, we did not prevent him, as those think they do which say, "I have done him such service and such." For alas what is it that we can do to him?) but that he loved us, [yea even] at such time as we were his deadly enemies,) and came even then to seek us out in the very deepest of the bottomless Dungeons. And thereupon Saint Paul adds, that he does not despise or shake off the grace of God. This is the knitting up of the things that we have hitherto seen. For here he meant to show that the Devil must needs possess those that make none account of God's mercy, that is uttered in our Lord Jesus Christ, and daily offered us in his Gospel. For look how often the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is preached unto us, and the infinite goodness of our God talked of: so often is this message renewed unto us, that our Lord Jesus Christ calls us unto him, to the end we should forsake the world and being out of all hope in ourselves, fasten and settle our whole trust in him. Since it is so: it is good reason that we should not reject the grace of God. And Saint Paul in saying so, meant to call back such as had gone astray before, and to show them the way, as if he had said, whereas the poor ignorant souls that never heard word of the Gospel might be excused: we must needs be worse than damnable, seeing we refuse the grace of God when it is offered us: for it smells of such an

unthankfulness, as can by no means be excused. Saint Paul therefore does here make mention of those whom our Lord Jesus Christ calls to the hope of salvation by his Gospel, and yet do still welter in their own wretchedness, and become brutish, not knowing whether there be a better life or no; or else of such as are sufficiently tormented with inward heart-bitings, and yet seek no remedy nor comfort.

Yet notwithstanding, all they to whom our Lord Jesus Christ has not preached his Gospel shall not fail to perish without mercy. They cannot defend themselves by ignorance: I say that all the heathen folk and idolaters that ever were must have their mouths stopped. And what shall become of us then, which have had our ears beaten daily with the message that God sends us: which is that he requires nothing but that we should be drawn unto him, whereunto he encourages, yea and beseeches us, as we have seen in the second to the Corinthians? It is not a great shame for us, that God should so far abase himself in the person of his only son, that he should beseech us? "Let us fall to atonement," says he. And what has he done on his side? What has he offended us? Nay, contrariwise, we cease not to provoke him daily against us, and yet he comes to say unto us, "I will fall to atonement with you," whereas notwithstanding there is nothing but spitefulness in us, we be like little fiends, and to be short, we be damned and forlorn, and yet comes he to seek unto us, and desires nothing but to have the atonement made. After that manner speaks Saint Paul word for word. But now what will become of us, if we reject such grace, seeing that God offers it, us so freely? This is what is meant by that saying. And thereupon he concludes in the end, that if we seek righteousness in the Law, Jesus Christ died in vain. As if he should say, that if we intend to enjoy the grace that is contained in the Gospel, we must utterly give over the fond opinion of our own merits. For men are deceived by bearing themselves in hand, that there is ever somewhat of value in them: and to be short,

they cannot find in their hearts to come as poor beggars before God, but will always bring some present with them. And yet notwithstanding all that ever we think ourselves to have, is but abomination.

Therefore Saint Paul shows us, that there is no other means for us to receive life at our Lord Jesus Christ's hand, and to be made partakers of his death and resurrection, and so to attain to the heritage of heaven by his means, than to be utterly voided of all the foolish overweenings, which the children of this world conceive, when they imagine with themselves, "Oh as for me, I have some virtue in me, I have some towardness," and to lay it all down and cast it quite away. For until we have forgotten our own deserts, surely we shall never be able to conceive the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do we then come unto him? Let us come utterly empty. For if we make any countenance of having aught, it is nothing else but wind. Truly whenever men are puffed up with pride: they become so full that they are ready to burst, howbeit all of it is but wind. But yet howsoever we fare, that wind holds us back from receiving the benefits that are purchased and brought unto us by the Son of God, and which he communicates to us by his Gospel. Thus you see whereunto the conclusion tends which Saint Paul makes here. Now the Papists will grant well enough that we be not able to purchase salvation, except we be helped by our Lord Jesus Christ: howbeit they imagine that men may half save themselves, and that look what wants is supplied by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc. so they suppose themselves to have a good and available starting hole. But in saying so, they show themselves deadly enemies of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and upholders of the case and quarrel of the false apostles and deceivers that had corrupted, defiled, and falsified the pure truth in the Church of Galatia. For those sorts of men could well enough confess that Jesus Christ was the Savior of the world, and

they would have been ashamed to say that Jesus Christ was nothing, nay rather they professed Christianity. And what deemed they of Jesus Christ? That he came to help men's infirmities, because they were not able to discharge the law to the full, and that forasmuch as they could not have so great and large perfection as was requisite, therefore it behooved them to be helped by Jesus Christ: and even as much do the Papists say at this day. But Saint Paul concludes on the contrary part, that then Jesus Christ had died in vain. If any man reply, no not so: for there should come some fruit of his death and passion, by helping us to the forgiveness of our sins: and although we have means to satisfy God withal, yet would not the same suffice, unless Jesus Christ should work therewith.

I say if any man make such reply: let us mark that Saint Paul held this for a certain and undeceivable principle, that do the best we can, there is nothing but cursedness in us, till God have received us of his mere grace. Lo wherein the Papists beguile themselves, and not they only: for it has been a common error among the Turks and among all the Heathen men that ever were. The Turks can confess well enough that they have need of God's mercy, and that has always been an opinion throughout the whole world: but they have intermingled their own satisfactions with God's grace, as if they should say, although God be pitiful towards us, yet must we procure favor in his sight by our own deservings. After that manner were the Heathen folk wont to speak. And what say the Papists nowadays? All one thing. For after they have once granted themselves to be wretched sinners, and to have need to be succored by our Lord Jesus Christ, and that his death and passion are available to make them way unto God: they interlace their own free will, and their preparations, and thereto say that they deserve on their side, and that although Jesus Christ helps them, yet he does not do all himself. And in very deed that is the flat doctrine of the Papists word for word. For they say we

cannot deserve aught except Jesus Christ go before us and show us the way, for they say that he has purchased us the first grace, and that it lies in us to follow on and to attain to the second. And if a man asks them what is meant by that first grace they say it is the occasion of meriting or deserving: for that is their terming of it, and their manner of speech. And this occasion of meriting is nothing else with them, but that men are able of themselves to bind God to them by their own satisfactions.

But Saint Paul tells us that it is too outrageous, yea and too devilish a traitorousness to have such pride: and therefore he concludes that Jesus Christ should have died in vain, if we should seek righteousness in the law. Will we then possess our Lord Jesus Christ? It behooves us to know wherefore we come unto him: namely because that by the Law we are already condemned, cursed of God, cut off from hope of life, and full of all corruption, so as God must be fain to cleanse us by his Holy Spirit, and forasmuch as there are many infirmities in us, we must always come to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to confess that there is nothing in us but all cursedness and misery: we must needs come to this conclusion of Saint Paul's, that Christ had died in vain, if it behooved us to obtain righteousness by the law, whether it were wholly or partly. We must needs confess that, and the veriest idiots are able to perceive it, in so much that if we receive not Jesus Christ with that condition, it is certain that his coming shall profit us nothing at all. It will be but as a wind to blow us away together, so as we shall be no more able to take hold of God's mercy that is offered us in Jesus Christ. Now seeing it is so: let us learn to leave such manner of mingling, and acknowledge ourselves beholden to our Lord Jesus Christ for all things: for when we go about to interlace our own merits with the free remission of our sins, it is but a falsifying of God's truth.

Besides this, when we have learned to rest ourselves after that manner upon him: let us be taken in love with the spiritual benefits which he brings us, and let not the afflictions and adversities of this world hinder us from holding on our course, and from the overcoming of all temptations and distresses, but that we may have full joy in the midst of all our sorrows and troubles, assuring ourselves that all that ever we can suffer in this world, is nothing in comparison of that which is prepared for us in the kingdom of heaven. And that is the thing whereunto Saint Paul leads us. For first of all he exhorts us to a holy and well-ruled life, and to be lowly as becomes us, to give ourselves wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ.

And secondly he exhorts us to arm ourselves with patience, that we may overcome all the assaults and distresses that come upon us, and walk in such wise in this world, as we may always go forward to the heavenly heritage, which we see not, and which surpasses all our understanding, not ceasing for all that to assure ourselves of it, since we have so good a promise of it made unto us. And further, seeing we have the earnest penny and pledge of it given unto us in our Lord Jesus Christ: let the same serve us for a full assurance, to show us that we need not run at random, but have a perfect faith and a firm and substantial hope, forasmuch as we have already in the person of the Son of God, a full performance of all things that we can wish.

But now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our sins, praying him to make us feel them more and more, and to touch us in such wise with true repentance, as the same may provoke us more and more to seek forgiveness and mercy at God's hand, and therewithal also to beseech him to govern us so by his Holy Spirit, as we may be encouraged more and more to forsake all the lusts of our own flesh, and all that is of our old Adam, till we be come to the perfection whereunto he allures us, and from which

we be so far off as yet. That it may please him to grant this grace not only to us, but also to all people etc.

The Fifteenth Sermon,

which is the first upon the third Chapter.

1 O you unwise Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, to whom Jesus Christ has heretofore been portrayed out before your eyes, and crucified among you?

2 I would know but this one thing of you, received you the spirit by the works of the Law, or by the preaching of faith?

3 Are you so unwise, that when you have begun in the spirit, you will now end in the flesh?

We see how God goes about to win us by gentleness and fair means until our naughtiness and stubbornness force Him to deal roughly with us, because we do not allow ourselves to be handled gently by His hand. Throughout the whole doctrine of the Gospel, God stretches out His arms to bring us in unto Him and to receive us in His fatherly love, or rather (as He likens Himself by Moses) He is as a hen that spreads out her wings to gather her young chicks under them. You see then that God, of His infinite goodness, allures us to Him, but we are like wild beasts that will not suffer themselves to be guided by Him. Therefore, in respect of such our frowardness, He

needs to use roughness and to show us our unthankfulness, to the end we may learn to be ashamed of it.

That is the cause why St. Paul, having shown that all our welfare lies in Jesus Christ, and that if we will be partakers of His righteousness and of the benefits that He is willing to impart unto us, we must utterly renounce ourselves and acknowledge that there is nothing but sin and corruption in us, now sharply rebukes those who would mingle their own devotions with the grace that is offered them in our Lord Jesus Christ, for they had been faithfully instructed before. If St. Paul had begun in some place where men had never heard one word of the Gospel before, he would not have used such roughness, for he would have pitied the blind and ignorant wretches.

But forasmuch as the Galatians had been taught faithfully by him, and he had taken pains to train them to the Gospel accordingly, and they thereupon had shrunk back and suffered themselves to be turmoiled with false opinions, therefore he is so rough with them, according also as he himself shows, that the reason thereof was, for that Jesus Christ had been crucified among them, and that they having seen the treasures of God's infinite goodness laid forth after that manner before them, had no excuse to return again to their pelting trash, in hope to be justified and to purchase salvation by the ceremonies of the Law.

Thus in effect, the thing which we have to gather upon this text is that if we desire to find a pleasant taste in God's word, we on our side must be teachable and not stubborn. For we must call to mind how it is written in the eighteenth Psalm, that God will always deal mildly with such as be of a meek spirit, and that He will be rough and sharp towards such as use stubbornness and cannot abide to submit themselves unto Him. All they then which have a neck of brass and

cannot find in their hearts to stoop under the obedience of God, shall find themselves matched with too strong an adversary, and that they must needs be bruised and broken in pieces if they will not bow.

Furthermore, let us mark that when God corrects our vices, we must not chafe and storm as many do, who do nothing else but gnash their teeth when they are rebuked, saying that they will not be handled after such a fashion, and that their nature requires to be taught by gentleness. Yea verily, but that their sturdiness shows the clean contrary. For they that speak after that manner would very fain be flattered. And although they overshoes themselves into all evil, yet will they not abide to have their galled backs rubbed, but rather that men should wink at them and conceal their naughtiness. But if their faults be laid before them, by and by they rankle against the Gospel, and whereas they showed some good sign of zeal before, they utter such spitefulness afterward as a man may perceive there was nothing but venom and bitterness in their heart.

It is a sure token that such folk never wist what it is to profit in God's school, at leastwise purely, as St. Paul says in another place. God's word, says he, is good, not only to teach, to the end we may know what is for our behoof, and be able to discern between good and evil, but also to rebuke and correct us. For there are many negligent folk, which have need to be pricked forward with hard strokes of the spur: some had need to be embraced by reason of their overweening, and others grow altogether past recovery if they be not overmastered by strong hand.

Thus you see how all of us must suffer patiently when our Lord uses such roughness, acknowledging the same to be greatly to our behoof. However, let every one of us examine his life well, and there is none of us but he shall find that he provokes God to use such sharpness

towards him, as if a father be as kind-hearted as is possible to be wished, yet if he have unruly children, so as they be rude and froward, he shall be provoked after such a fashion that he shall as it were change his nature, because he knows not at what end to begin with them, and is fain after a sort to transform himself. Even so is it with us. For we have a Father which in goodness surmounts all that can be seen among men: but we on our side (as I said before), instead of yielding obediently unto Him as we ought to do, and instead of offering ourselves readily to walk as He commands so soon as He but speaks the word, do nothing but stray. We have our lusts always inordinate and boiling, we have our replies always ready coined, and although our mouth speaks not, yet it appears that there is no such calmness in our hearts as to be contented to submit ourselves to God as we ought to do.

Seeing then that we are convicted to our faces by experience that God had need to be so rough and sharp towards us, let us suffer Him to do whatsoever He knows to be for our welfare. And no doubt but the Galatians were as naive as we, and had as eager ears as we have: and yet they were forced to be rebuked so sharply because of their ingratitude. As for Saint Paul, we know he endeavored by all humility and meekness to draw all such to the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, as were committed and appointed to his Apostleship. He likens himself (and not without cause) to a nurse, which will bear with her nurseling, and not spare anything to show the love that she bears it. We shall see hereafter that he will say, "Be you as I am, for I am as you are. I seek nothing but to fashion myself unto you, and to bring to pass that we may agree in one." And yet notwithstanding, necessity has constrained him to cry out as you hear now, "You unwise, you fools, you undiscerning or witless as beasts, who has bewitched you after that sort? Must you not needs be possessed with the Devil?" Here are very hard words, and no doubt but the Galatians

were grieved at them at the first sight. Yet nevertheless it was meet for them to feel that Saint Paul used not that manner of speech and language without cause.

Therefore whenever we are rebuked, let us blame our own faults for it, and yield ourselves guilty: for we shall gain nothing by checking again. When we have disputed what we can, we may perhaps justify our case before men: but we shall always be guilty before God. Moreover, it behooves us to mark well the reason that is added here by Saint Paul, when he says, "You must needs be bewitched if you obey not the truth, seeing that our Lord Jesus Christ has been as it were painted out lively before you, yes, and even crucified among you." In speaking after that fashion, Saint Paul shows with what force and effectualness he had preached the Gospel. Therefore he likens the doctrine which he had brought, unto a picture: and thereunto enlarges it yet better, saying that the matter which he had preached among the Galatians, ought to avail as much as if they had seen the Son of God crucified among them, and his blood shed out for the spiritual washing of their souls. For so much then as they had been taught so faithfully, they could no more excuse themselves of their backsliding. But first of all we see here which is the true manner of preaching the Gospel: namely to give knowledge of God's love towards us, in that he spared not his only Son, but gave him to death for us: according as in very deed all the treasures of wisdom and understanding are laid up in our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is said in another place to the Colossians. Since it is so, if we be desirous to profit well in the Gospel, let us learn to acknowledge the grace that is purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ: for without that, all that we have is nothing. Many will brag that they are well learned in God's word: but the true trial to know whether it be so or not, is if we perceive how great need we have, that God should pour out his mercy upon us, to succor us by drawing us out of the gulf of Hell, and

thereupon conclude that we cannot be cleansed and washed from any of all our spots, but by the blood of God's Son nor obtain righteousness but by the obedience that he has yielded: nor have any satisfaction for us but by the sacrifice that he has offered: nor come in God's favor but by his means: nor open our mouths to call upon him but by his intercession.

Therefore when we be thoroughly persuaded of the gracious benefits that are brought us by the Son of God: then may we say we have some understanding in the Gospel: but without that, we have nothing but imagination and folly. Mark that for one point. And therewith let us mark, that it is not enough for us to know slightly that our Lord Jesus Christ has bought us so dearly: but that we must continue still in the doctrine of the Gospel, till it be thoroughly printed in our hearts, as though his blood gushed down, to apply the fruit that comes of it to our use: and that is to the end to awaken us out of our drowsiness. For we shall see many that take themselves to be very great Clerks, if they understand but three or four words of the Gospel at a glance.

And yet the same shall soon be defaced and put out of remembrance, because that whereas we ought to seek to be filled with the benefits that our Lord Jesus Christ has brought us, they hold themselves contented with a taste of them. God then punishes the unthankfulness of such folk and their despising of his goodness. And therefore it stands us so much the more on hand, to put forth and apply all our endeavor to be well settled in the aforesaid doctrine, that is to wit, of knowing whereunto the death and passion of God's Son, and the inestimable benefits which we have received, do avail us. Again on the other side we are warned, that our sins are the heinous before God, if after we have been taught his will, we turn head back again, and sin, not through ignorance, but through

contempt and willfulness. For if we shake off his yoke, it is a sure proof that we are loath to be subject to him, and play the wild beasts. True it is that even the ignorantest folk in the world are reproved by their own sinfulness, for as much as hypocrisy reigns in all men: but yet if comparison be made between those that never heard one word of the truth, and us that have our ears beaten with it, and are provoked without end or ceasing to come unto God: we are much more faulty than they.

Behold, the Turks believe that they worship the God that made heaven and earth: howbeit for as much as they refuse our Lord Jesus Christ, they have but an Idol. The Papists also are deceived in their fond devotions. And yet for all that, they are not a whit the less guilty before God. But what for that? If we that know the way of salvation, which hear God's voice ringing continually in our ears, which are enlightened with the sun of righteousness, even with our Lord Jesus Christ, If we (I say) become as good as brute beasts, and discern not between good and evil: must it not needs be that we are (as you would say) bewitched? For seeing that God is so gracious unto us, as to come to us and to teach us so familiarly: surely he has just cause to complain of us as he also does: "My people" (says he by his Prophet Micah), "what can I do more for thee than I have done?" Then if God pleads against us, and charges us with all the means which he has given us to make us wholly his, that he might enjoy us without gainsaying: and we on our side cast a stop in his way, and are loth to bow down our necks to receive his yoke, or else are fickle-minded and fleeting to forsake all again today or tomorrow, and had rather to be beguiled by the crafts and illusions of Satan, than to be guided by the truth which is certain: must it not needs be that we are as monsters, that is to say, folk, that make utter defiance to nature?

Therefore let us learn to look better upon ourselves here: for look what was once said to the Galatians, is spoken still at this day unto us. For it was not for that people's sake alone that Saint Paul wrote: but the Holy Ghost quickens us up still now, and tells us that if we have once received the doctrine of the Gospel, and afterward start away from it, so as if a man trace us he shall find no constancy nor steadiness of faith in us: we are so much the more damnable, and cannot shield ourselves with anything: for when we shall have taken all the covert in the world, we shall abide convicted of such lewdness, as in the end we must needs have our mouths stopped, and God must set us forth as an example of all unthankfulness, inasmuch that we shall become odious both to men and Angels, because we made no better account of the doctrine of salvation, which is so precious a seed as we see that the Scripture speaks of it.

You see then that the thing which we have to bear in mind, is not that the only Galatians are rebuked here by Saint Paul, but that we be taught in their persons, to walk in fear and awe when God shall have been so gracious to us, as to call us unto him, and to show us what his will is. And it is not for naught that he uses so sharp and rigorous words, as to call them fools and witless, and consequently to say, "Who has bewitched you?" But we hear how that in the fourth to the Ephesians, concerning the using of the Gospel, he says that when we have once been taught it, we must not be as little babes that are led to and fro, and made to believe that the Crow is white: but we must be so settled in it, that although the Devil stir up never so many troubles, false opinions and lies, yet we may still hold our own, and keep on our pace, assuring ourselves that God's truth is infallible. Thus you see that the end whereunto the Gospel ought to serve us, is not only to show us what is good for us, but also to arm and fence us against all encounters, and against all Satan's slights, so that if there rise up any heresies or other corruptions, we may still maintain the

battle valiantly, and get the upper hand by our faith, and not be piped any more into the fowler's snare, according to the similitude which Saint Paul uses.

Now then seeing it is so: it must needs be that we are bewitched and possessed with the Devil, if such a remedy suffice us not, after that God has manifested himself unto us, and we know (yes, even fully and assuredly) that it is he who speaks. If we are not moved by his authority, what will become of it? Again, whereas we have our Lord Jesus Christ shining upon us as it were at high noon days: must it not needs be that we are at defiance with nature as I said before, if we seek here and there for byways, when the right way is laid before our eyes?

So then it is not without cause that Saint Paul speaks so roughly to that people, which had changed the doctrine, after that God had granted them the grace to have his truth showed unto them. But we must call to mind also, how God upbraids his people of old time by his Prophet Jeremiah. "Go your ways over the sea" (says he), "and into the Isles, and into far countries, and you shall see every nation worship his own Idols without changing. And wherefore then are you so variable? As for those, they know not whereupon they be grounded. They have but a certain opinion, which carries them away and beguiles them: and yet notwithstanding they hold on still without turning aside, and stick wholly to it: and why then should you which know what God you obey, be so fleeting?"

Now therefore let us mark well, that if we be lightly turned and thrust aside from the doctrine of the Gospel: there shall need none other witness against us at the last day, than the wretched unbelievers which follow their own superstitions: for we see they be wedded to them. Look upon the Turks and Pagans, look upon the

Jews and Papists. They know not what God they worship, they have but a weaning in stead of faith: and yet notwithstanding a man cannot pluck them from their false fancies, and they are so given unto them as a man can never remove them. Then if we on our side knowing that it is the living God who calls and teaches us daily, and that the thing which is uttered by men comes of him and of his holy spirit, and having record of the law and the Gospel which cannot fail, if we (I say) having such a resting stock for our faith, be afterward unconstant, so as our ears itch to receive every new toy, and men make us to alter our mind in less than the turning of a hand, what else betokens it, but that we willfully refuse God's grace, as if we would shut the gate against him that he might not come in unto us?

Or else, if after we have once known that he offers us so inestimable a benefit in his Gospel, we cast it down and trample it under our feet: think we that God will suffer his grace to be so lightly esteemed and held scorn of? No. For we cannot despise the doctrine of the Gospel without unhallowing the blood of God's Son, which he did shed for our redemption: for the one cannot be separated from the other. Whenever and how often soever God speaks to us, and offers us forgiveness of our sins, showing himself ready to receive us to mercy: so often is the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ sprinkled upon us. All the teaching in the world cannot do us any good, except our Lord Jesus Christ be with it, to apply the shedding of his blood unto us. And if we despise the doctrine of the Gospel, it is all one as if we did spit at the holy blood of God's Son, which thing is an intolerable traitorousness. Therefore let us look narrowly to ourselves, and weigh well this text, to the intent we stand steadfast: and forasmuch as God has called us to so great a good turn, and we now know that it is not by happenstance that the Gospel has been preached, but because it was God's will to utter the infinite riches of his goodness

towards us: let us stand in it, and so stick to it, as nothing may thrust us from it, nor by any means ever shake us down.

In effect, what we have to bear away in this text. Moreover, we are warned also, which are the true pictures or paintings to lead us to God. The Papists say we must have remembrances to teach us, and that images are the books of the unlearned who are not apt to conceive higher doctrine: but has Saint Paul spoken here but to three or four folk? No: It is generally, and to all Christians without exception, as well to great as small, that he says that when the Gospel is preached, then Jesus Christ is painted out lively, and we must look upon him, not with the fleshly eyes of our bodies, but with the spiritual eyes of our faith. Then seeing it is so, let us learn that we have no need of images and puppets to teach us what is necessary for our salvation, neither need we a piece of wood, stone, or other such pelting stuff, to put us in remembrance of God (for in all those things there is nothing but vanity and leasing): but we have need to have God's word preached, and to endeavor and travail to make the same familiar to us, that we may there behold God in his lively image, that is to say in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ his only son, according also as Saint Paul says in the second to the Corinthians, where he protests that the doctrine which he brought unto them, was not hidden from any but the unbelievers, such as perish, whom the Devil possesses, and which have their eyes sealed up. And no wonder though they see not a whit in the open light. But yet in the meanwhile the doctrine is so manifest unto us, as we may easily perceive God's will. For he shows us it familiarly enough as often as the Gospel is preached, inasmuch that we need not to make much running up and down, not to fetch far windlasses: we need no more to say, who shall stie up above the Clouds? who shall go beyond sea? who shall go down into the deep? Have we God's word? at leastwise have we it preached purely? Then is Jesus Christ as it were in the

middles of us, and shows himself as it were hanging upon the Cross, witnessing what he did for us, when he suffered death to reconcile us to God his father. There he sets us down a sure and undecayable pledge or warrant, and let us content ourselves with it. For when we have pleaded never so much, it will not excuse us: our case will always go against us, if we be not well assured in our consciences, that we have wholly leaned unto God's word, which (as I said) brings us so near unto God, that it is the very union itself, which we have with him in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in good sooth, we see how God doth as it were stoop to our rudeness and infirmity. For does he speak in so lofty and dark a style as we can understand nothing? No: but contrariwise he abases himself, and thereto thinks it not enough to have spoken, but also adds Sacraments to his word, which are the true pictures that we ought to have. Like as when we see the water of baptism, it is a picture which shows us that we be full of filth and uncleanness, till we be washed: and by whom? We must seek our washing from above. Besides this, it shows us that we must be renewed by the Holy Ghost of God. That then is a good picture. And why? Because it bears God's mark, and is matched with his word. As much is to be said of the Lord's supper. When we see the morsels of bread and the drops of wine. Very well, they be the Creatures whereof we have been wont to take nourishment and sustenance for our bodies: but the same do lead us to the life of our souls, and give us to understand, that we have no life but in our Lord Jesus Christ. And the cause why the wine is added, is to show that he has such virtue in him, as we need not to seek any part of the things that we want, any otherwhere: but that he serves us for meat and drink and all. These (I say) are the good images that God has set afore us: and now if we be still soaring in the air, and gadding after our own lusts, to say I would fain have more: it is a disdaining of the grace that is offered us. So much the more

therefore does it stand us on hand to mark well this strain, where Saint Paul by the power and in the name of God condemns, yea and with the power of the Holy Ghost thunders, against all such as have been taught the Gospel faithfully, and afterward do turn aside and slip away from it. And thereupon he adds, that he would fain have it known by what means the Holy Ghost is received. For if they had received the Holy Ghost by the works of the law: Saint Paul would have granted that there was some righteousness to be had by it. But forasmuch as they had received him by the Gospel: it must needs be concluded, that they ought to have rested upon the record that God gave them so apparently. And for the better understanding of the thing that he meant to say here: let us mark that God's spirit is given in common to all the faithful, for so much as they be regenerated and made new creatures. Besides this, there are spiritual gifts, which God distributes according to such measure and portion as he thinks good, but yet they redound all to the common welfare of the Church.

If we be Christians, we must needs have God's spirit, as we shall see hereafter. For he is called the earnest penny, and the seal of the heritage that is promised us, and which we look for. You see then that God's spirit must dwell in us, if we be his children. But besides this, there are also gracious gifts: as for example, there was in old time the gift of tongues, the gift of prophesying, the gift of healing, and such other like. And even still at this day, God shows well that he has not utterly forsaken his Church. For although visible gifts reign not now as they did then: yet notwithstanding we may see still, that God does by some means or other utter his operation among us.

Furthermore, Saint Paul speaks here to all men. And therefore (according to the common and ordinary meaning of it) we will take this word Spirit, for the renewal which God works in his children, as it is said in the third Chapter of Saint John. For inasmuch as we are

born of flesh, there is nothing in us but utter corruption, and we tend always towards the earth. No doubt but men glory in their own wisdom, and moreover think that they have a free choice and will of their own, to take the good and leave the evil, but those are but dreams. For it is certain that so long as we be let alone in our own nature, we tend evermore unto evil, and the scripture also condemns us of it, saying that there is not any thought conceived in man's mind, but the same is lewd, and all our affections are enemies and rebels against God. Therefore let us not beguile ourselves any more with vain flatteries, but acknowledge ourselves to be utterly marred in Adam, so as there is nothing but sinfulness in us.

Notwithstanding, God provides for that mischief, when he touches us to the quick by his holy spirit, and so purges our hearts as we desire to obey him, and although we be not so perfect as were requisite, yet we fight against ourselves, and go forward still to goodness. And surely when God's spirit is as a bridle to us to hold us back in his obedience, it is a sure token that God dwelleth in us, and governs us as his flock, and holds us for his children. For we cannot be counted Christians, without this record, that God warrants himself to be our father, and that his holy spirit is as a seal thereof, according as I have already alleged the record of Saint Paul, out of the first to the Ephesians.

And now he says, that the Galatians had received the spirit of God by the preaching of the Gospel. Then seeing it is so, it was to be concluded, that the works of the law could not justify them. And why? For we must always come back to this principle which we have treated of, namely that in the Gospel we be utterly stripped out of all the goodness and virtue which we thought ourselves to have, and that God does us such shame, as we be fain to come to him as quite confounded. For although God sets our cursedness before us in the

law: yet we perceive it not so well there, as in the Gospel. And we see how the hypocrites do always flatter themselves, and think to perform the things that are commanded them. But in the Gospel there are two things. For God shows that there is nothing in us but poverty, so as we must be fain to come to beg his grace, with utter acknowledgment of our baseness, how that we have done amiss, and have not one spark of virtue in us worthy of commendation.

Now then, seeing it is so, Saint Paul does not without cause tell us here, that such as receive God's spirit by the preaching of the Gospel, must be void of all trust in their own merits, and acknowledge themselves beholden all wholly to God's mere and free mercy for their whole salvation. And why so? For they be things that can no more match together than fire and water, that we should be justified by the Gospel, and also justified by the law. What then? Is the Gospel contrary to the law? No: for (as I have declared already) God is author as well of the one as of the other, and there is no contrariworking in him, but the question here concerns the case of our salvation.

God has given men his law to show them the way to live well, and thereby intended to bring them to such condemnation, as if he should prefer an indictment against them, and put a halter about their necks: For truly in the law we see nothing but Hell gaping open upon us, that God's vengeance is ready beforehand to encounter us, and that he is armed against us as our enemy. Those are the things which the law sets before us.

But now the Gospel is given us for a remedy, to the end that when we be so in despair, we should flee to the grace that is offered us in our Lord Jesus Christ, and understand that there is none other way to do

us good than the forgiveness of our sins, whereby God does so put away and wipe out our offenses, as they come no more to account before him. The thing then wherein our righteousness consists, is that he burdens us not any more with the evil that is in us. And although we see God's intent and determination to be such, both in the law and in the Gospel: yet are we sure that there is no contrariety in it.

Besides this also, if we be not justified by the Gospel, how can we attain salvation by the law? It is true that the law is a preparative to bring us to the Gospel: for so long as men be puffed up with pride, God's grace has no entrance into them. If a vessel be full of wind, let a man labor to put what liquor he will into it, and he shall not get it in, because the wind beats it back, and hinders the putting of it in. And we may perceive it even in man's body: for we must be fain to take similitudes of worldly things to lead us to higher things. If a man be hungry, and yet notwithstanding have his stomach so puffed up as it cannot abide anything: he may well be full: but what for that? All is but wind, he has never the more nourishment within for all that, but rather the wind hinders the entering in of any good sustenance to nourish and maintain him. Even so is it with the foolish presumptuousness that is in us. We bear ourselves in hand, that we be well furnished with all things that we have need of: however, that is but wind however we fare, and that wind shuts out God's grace from entering in.

But by the Gospel our Lord brings us low, and shows us our wretchedness. And therefore it behooves us to come to it with a consideration that our Lord Jesus Christ is set forth unto us there, to the end that we seeing that there is not one drop of goodness in us, should seek it in him, yea even all wholly and not by pieces. Thus then you see why Saint Paul reasons, that for as much as we have

received God's spirit by means of the Gospel, it behooves us to hold us thereunto, and not go to the ceremonies of the law, nor to any other thing one or other, but be contented with that perfection, seeing it is given us and we may enjoy it without gainsaying.

For although this matter was written to the Galatians: yet is it common to us also at this day, as well as to them. Let us mark (I say) how our Lord Jesus Christ wrought in us. And first of all let us practice that which is showed us in the second to the Corinthians: which is, that it behooves us to be wholly new fashioned again, and to have God's spirit dwelling in us. So then the true mark whereby we may discern whether we be God's children or not, is God's spirit. But bring we that spirit with us from our mother's womb? Alas no. Neither comes it any whit the more by our own deservings, as I have told you already: but because it pleases God of his gracious goodness to give us it, thereby to draw us to him.

If we have any desire or willingness to walk in the fear of our God, or if we would fain be able to call upon him with a pure conscience: it is a token that God's spirit dwelleth in us. We need not to seek any other witness, nor to make any longer scanning of the matter. But now, have we gotten and obtained this spirit by our own merits? No surely. Then must we needs conclude, that seeing we have it of gift, it was given us by means of the Gospel. For in the Gospel God utters his mighty power and working to the salvation of men, as it is said in the first to the Romans. Now if the Gospel be the instrument whereby we receive God's spirit, shall we go seek other means?

Were not that a renouncing of the power which is apparently known to us? It is all one as if we would willfully leave the way that is showed us of our God, to seek byways after our own fancy. And if the Galatians were without excuse for their turning away from the

Gospel to the law: what shall we be in these days, if we will needs be wrapped in the superstitions that men have forged in their own shops?

As for example, the Papists think to be justified, not by the ceremonies that God had commanded in old time, but by the dotages and gewgaws that they themselves have devised. For as for the thing which they do nowadays term God's service, what else is it than a certain hotchpotch, whereinto every man has cast his own piece and collop? Seeing then that the case standeth so, it is not a despising of God, and a withdrawing of ourselves from him, by rejecting of his grace, to the end he should not have any access at all unto us, when we will needs mingle men's inventions with the pureness of the Gospel?

Must we not needs be worse than mad in so doing? Then let us know at one word, that we cannot be Christians, but the Holy Ghost must hold us in such humility, as to make us confess, that all our welfare comes of God's mere grace, and so cleave to our Lord Jesus Christ, as we not only take him for a piece or portion of our trust, but be fully satisfied with him as having drawn of his fullness, assuring ourselves that he is the full perfection, not only of all wisdom, but also of all righteousness and happiness, and that in him lies and consists all our welfare, which welfare we possess when we have the Gospel and the preaching of faith, and when we be cast down in ourselves, and utterly bereft of all presumptuousness, which keeps us back from coming unto God.

Furthermore, let us be so enraptured, seeing that our Lord Jesus Christ has so bountifully given us all that was requisite for our salvation. I say let us be so enraptured with it, as all things else that

can be laid before us, may be but as smoke to us, and we utterly despise and abhor them, to show how well we have profited in the Gospel, and therewithal be so constant and steadfast in ourselves, as never to be thrust out of the way, whatsoever the devil whispers in our ear.

And moreover, for as much as we are so weak, gross, and heavy, that although God does daily provoke every of us to come unto him, we come but as it were halting and creeping: let us enforce ourselves more and more to beseech God to strengthen us with his holy spirit, and to make us profit more and more in the knowledge of his Gospel. And let us not do as those do who imagine themselves to be come to full perfection at the first day, but let us labor to go forward more and more in the hope of the heavenly life, and to gather such strength as our faith may grow from day to day, till we come to the blessed stop, whereof Saint Paul speaks in the fourth to the Ephesians: which is, that we cleave fully to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us so to feel them more and more, as the same may cause us both to dislike them, and also to ask forgiveness of them at his hand, that by that means he may be glorified by us, and we so confirmed by his holy spirit, as we may not doubt but that he dwelleth in us, and that as he has once adopted us for his children, so he will hold us still for the same. And so let us all say, Almighty God heavenly father. &c.

The Sixteenth Sermon,

which is the second upon the third Chapter.

3 Are you so unwise, that when you have begun by the spirit, now you end in the flesh?

4 Have you suffered so much in vain? At leastwise if it be in vain.

5 He therefore that gives you the spirit, and works mightily in you: does he do it by the works of the law, or by the preaching of the faith?

We know that all the doctrine of the Gospel tends to draw us out of this world and to make us come unto God. But that is impossible unless we be lifted up continually more and more. Therefore, if we intend to profit in God's school, we must labor to correct the infirmities that are in our nature as if we were always at the point to be taken out of the world. True it is that God, of His goodness, stoops down unto us, but that is not to hold us here beneath. Likewise, when He sends us mortal men to be as His messengers and exhorts us to come unto Him by such means as are fittest for us, and thereto gives us His Sacraments, which are earthly and visible signs, therein we see how He vouchsafes right well (as you would say) to make Himself low, to the end we should not have any excuse to say we were not able to mount up to such a height.

But however the case stands, if we look well upon the Gospel, we shall find that the mark whereat it aims is to bereave us of ourselves and of all that belongs to our flesh, to the end we should come unto Him. But on the contrary side, men abuse the favor that God shows them in setting such visible signs before them by bearing themselves in hand that the whole perfection of their holiness is to be found

there, and that that is the thing whereto they must hold them. And the same is not a vice of two days or yesterday's breeding, but it has reigned from the beginning of the world and continues yet still, and (which is worse) men think it not enough to overthrow the thing that God had set up to draw them unto Him, but they do also forge and frame many hindrances to keep themselves aloof from Him.

This would be dark if it were not declared by example. God had in His law ordained Sacrifices, shadows, and figures for a time; yet He did it not for any pleasure that He had in those bare things but by reason of the rudeness of the people (who were as then like little children) whom He meant to train still forward to a spiritual service by means agreeable to their rawness. That is the cause why the Ceremonies of the Law are said to be as it were fleshly. For why? God intended to teach His people grossly to come thither as they ought to do. But however they fared, the pattern that was showed unto Moses in the mount was heavenly.

Then were there two things in all the Ceremonies of the Law. For when men washed themselves at their entering into the Temple, when they offered the Sacrifices, when they used lights and perfumes, and when the Priest clothed himself with his special apparel: all those things (as in respect of the outward show) might well be called fleshly and temporal: but (as in respect of their end) they were spiritual.

But what did the Jews? They gazed upon the figures without considering wherefore God had ordained them and bore themselves in hand that they had very well discharged their duty, in coming to Church and in doing the things that were commanded them outwardly. But truly they disguised God after their own fancy, as He Himself mocks them for it by His Prophets, saying that He dwelleth

not in houses made with men's hands, and that the very heaven is not able to comprehend His majesty, which is infinite.

Furthermore, the Papists at this day, thinking it not enough to abuse the things that are contained in God's law, have so put to piece after piece as there is no end at all of their folly; and yet notwithstanding they entitle them to be the service of God. But whatsoever they say, they be nothing else than jingling tricks and masking toys.

But now let us come to that which is spoken here. Saint Paul compares the spirit with the flesh. What means he by the spirit? All the doctrine which God sets forth to us in His Gospel. For there is a spiritual guiding, so as we be no more held under the old shadows as the Jews were. You see then that God in these days reveals Himself fully unto us and having beaten down and disannulled all the shadows of the Law, shows us that He will have us to come right forth unto Him and not have anything remain to hold us back here beneath anymore.

Under the law only the Priest preached near unto God, and all the people kept themselves afar off. But we have our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Priest, by whom the way is opened unto us in His blood to make us come unto God His father, as the Apostle speaks of Him in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Then if we receive the Gospel as it becomes us, God will deal with us after such sort as if we were meet to come near unto Him, and will leave all the things which He had ordained in old time for such as were more rude and gross.

Thus you see why Saint Paul upbraids the Galatians with their beginning in the spirit, that is to say, for that they had had the doctrine of the Gospel, which had showed them the things that had been hidden from the Jews or at leastwise had been showed them but aloof under dark shadows. Thereupon he upbraids them that

they intended to end in the flesh, that is to say, with these lower things. And it is all one as if he had said, God has been so gracious to you as to have taught you His will out of hand, and you will needs be held still in your Apsie and in your first principles. He has given you a high and perfect knowledge whereby you have perceived the inestimable love which He bears you in our Lord Jesus Christ: and will you now return again to your Apsie and forget the things that have been taught you? Were not that a perverting of all order and a putting away of the grace that He had offered you?

But we know that naturally when men intend to learn anything, they begin at the smallest points, and afterward in all crafts and all trades, proceed by little and little through experience. For if a man should teach a child high sciences without teaching him first his Apsie, and to write and read, and afterward his grammar to guide him forth by degrees: what a thing were it?

Again, when a child is well advanced and comes to man's age, if he should be set back again to his Apsie after he has well profited, it would be a plain mockery. Likewise, it is with handicrafts. For it is well known that he who comes newly into a shop shall not be of skill to understand as much at the first day as he shall be at the end of a year or twain: but first he must be taught his principles, and afterward grow more and more in cunning. But if he who has learned his craft do at the four years' end turn back again to that which he ought to have known the first day: in so doing, he shall show himself to be a beast and that he has lost his time.

But now let us apply this lesson to ourselves. Truly, for as much as we be heavy and earthy, we had need to have the things chewed unto us which we be not able to digest. Yet notwithstanding God is so gracious and chary to us as to teach us spiritually, that is to say, after

a higher and more excellent manner than he taught the fathers under the Law. We see that Abraham had not this privilege; and yet, nevertheless, he is the father of the faithful, and it behooves us to be fashioned like unto him, as we shall see a while after.

We see that David was an excellent King and Prophet, and yet notwithstanding he saw not the things which we see now, but only in a shadow. As much is to be said of all those whom God guided under the ancient figures. And for that cause our Lord Jesus Christ says that the eyes are happy which see the things that we see since his showing of himself to the world, and that the ears are happy which hear the doctrine of the Gospel as it is preached unto us.

Seeing then that God comes after that sort unto us and becomes so familiar with us: if we shrink back and take Ceremonies and figures instead of the good doctrine, as though we might not come at him: is it not a kicking against him as it were in spite of him? And does not that rebelliousness show us to be unwilling that God should be merciful and bountiful towards us, as he shows himself to be? Now then, we may easily understand what Saint Paul means here. For he upbraids the Galatians with their going backward like seacrabbes, in that whereas they had been trained in the spiritual doctrine of the Gospel, they turned back again to the shadows of the Law. Likewise, if we in our time, after we have once acquainted ourselves with such order as is according to the Gospel and be inured with such service of God as is ruled by his pure word, would needs afterward be mingling of fancies with it, and say, it will be good to do thus and thus yet: it were a turning back again to the flesh, that is to say, whereas God has advanced us on high, we would draw down: and that is a manifest fighting against him. Wherefore let us learn to apply this doctrine to our own profit, and for as much as God has given us his word purely preached among us, if we once know how he will be honored and

served, let us not swerve from it, neither to the right hand nor to the left, but let us so profit in the word that is preached faithfully unto us in the name of God, as it may appear that we desire to make it available.

And surely the further forward that we shall have been in it, the less excuse shall we have if we turn back afterward, as we see many do, which wax cold or else would fain row between two streams, and whereas it were to be looked for that they should have gone continually forward and have come nearer and nearer unto God, they be still musing upon a sort of silly toys. And nowadays they that would shun persecution find such shifts as these: They disguise and falsify God's word by mingling and turmoiling men's inventions with it. So much the more, therefore, does it behoove us to take heed to this doctrine, where Saint Paul tells us, that if God has once set us forward, we must no more return back to our Apsie like little babes. For it is a shame for us when we have once profited in the Gospel, or at leastwise have had leisure long enough for to profit, and yet notwithstanding it shall seem that we never heard one word of it, according as the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews upbraids the Jews, saying: You ought all of you to be teachers in respect of the time that you have been taught, and yet notwithstanding you be still like young beginners.

Thus you see the first point that we have to mark upon this text. Now he adds consequently, Have you suffered so many things in vain? If at leastwise it be in vain. Here he wakens up the Galatians by telling them that God had done them the honor to make them as witnesses of his Gospel, and yet notwithstanding that afterward they had swerved from it. And this is a thing well worth the marking. For sometimes God does us so great an honor as to serve his turn by us, so that his word is by our means maintained before men. Now if

thereupon we swerve aside and hold not out to the end in such constancy as appeared to be in us, it is a double shame, and also it is to be taken for the greater crime, because the occasion of offense is double: and moreover it is a villainous unthankfulness if we continue not in the serving of our God when he has reached us his hand after that manner. And this is so much the more to be noted because we see many men brag and boast themselves to have wrought wonders if our Lord Jesus Christ have served his turn by them in anything. What say they? Have not I done this and that? They will allege their own abilities: in so much that (if you believe them) God is greatly bound unto them. But put the case they had done a hundredfold more than they speak of: yet are they even therefore so much the more beholden to God. For it came not of their own good towardness, but of God who governed them by his holy spirit: and if they overshoot themselves afterward, their fault and offense is so much the worse. And why so? Because they ought to go forward, and they go backward. And moreover they cause many more to stumble than they should have done if they had not been set forth to the view. For when God lifted them up as it were upon the stage, it was to have them seen afar off. By means whereof they trouble an infinite multitude of people, and therefore their fault is so much the heinouser. But yet is that vice too common.

For nowadays, those who think themselves to have done anything for the Gospel will needs be exempted from all law and rule: in so much that if a man blames them for doing amiss, what (say they?) ought I not to be borne withal? For I have done this and that. To be short, men will dispense with themselves after that manner, and (which is worse) they advance themselves proudly against God when he does them the honor to employ them about his service. But let us mark how Saint Paul says here, Have you suffered so much in vain? He takes occasion to blame the Galatians so much the more sorely,

because they had already suffered for the Gospel's sake, and been persecuted, and endured many troubles both in their goods and in their persons. How now (says he)? What is to be said of all that you have suffered? Is it not a record that God had called you to the magnifying of his name? For in good faith the things that we suffer for the Gospel's sake ought to serve us for a badge, as if God did set us in some honorable office. The greatest honor that we can have is to be witnesses of God's truth, so that although we be subject to lying, yet notwithstanding he justifies his eternal truth which proceeds from himself, even by us who are wretched creatures, which are but wind, smoke, shadows, and less than nothing.

Seeing then that God appoints and ordains us to be lawful witnesses for the advancing and enlarging of his Gospel by us: has he not just cause to complain if we swerve aside from it after we have suffered for it? Therefore, let all such look narrowly to themselves, as have had any good beginning. And there is not any warning better worthy to be taken heed unto, than this. For seeing that the least of the Church have enough to bind them to Godward for his choosing of them from out of the world, and for his directing of his Gospel unto them, in so much that he has left the great ones and such as take highly upon themselves by reason of their great excellency, and preferred the lesser sort and such as are despised to the worldward, and shall surely have the harder account to make if they shrink away afterward: what shall become of those whom God vouchsafed to have to be his standard-bearers, and whom he preferred in such wise, as they ought to have been an example and looking glass to others? What excuse shall there be for them if they give the slip? And especially if they that have suffered for the name of Jesus Christ, and for the doctrine of his Gospel, so far forth as to have been kept in prison and to have been tormented, yea and to have been brought even unto death's door, do afterward start aside: is it not an

abolishing of God's grace so far forth as in them lies? So little then ought any man's suffering for the Gospel serve to excuse him or cause him to be borne withal: that such as have suffered most ought to bridle themselves shortest, knowing that the honor which God does them holds them so much the more bound unto him, and that it behooves them to be the more watchful and warier, that they give none occasion of stumbling to anybody. For when folk shall say, how comes this to pass? Such a one should have been a martyr of God, he has endured much for the maintenance of the truth, and now behold he has become a renegade: it is a putting of the Gospel to shame and reproach, and what a thing is that? By that means the name of God shall be greatly misreported. And therefore let us mark well, that if we have for a time served God, and he has made our labor fruitful, so as the Church has been profited and edified by it: we must walk in the greater carefulness, and take good heed that we play not the shrewd cow, that gives a good deal of milk, and when she has done, strikes down the pail and spills it. For if we do a hundred times more harm than we did good: what can we allege for our defense? How can we say that we have suffered for the Gospel?

Wherefore if we purpose that God should allow of our service, let us learn to be constant, firm, and fast settled, that we never swerve aside from our calling, but continue and go forward in it more and more. However, for as much as this upbraiding was very rigorous, Saint Paul mitigates it, saying: If at leastwise it be in vain. Wherein he gives the Galatians an inkling that he hopes much better of them, and that although they were start aside for a time, yet it would not endure long, but that upon warning and exhortation they would return again into the right way. And in this text we see that when we be rebuked by God's spirit, it is not to make us fumish, nor to drive us to such a desperateness that we should take the bridle in our teeth and fall to chafing: but rather to draw us to repentance. God then

intends not to make us so dismayed as to leave us in the briers: but after he has showed us our faults, he calls us always home again to him, and calls us to repentance, and shows us that he is ready to receive and take us to mercy, as often as we be touched with true lowliness to be sorry for our sins, and to acknowledge them unfeignedly and freely.

Since it is so, let us on our side be well advised, that when we are told of the faults that we have done, we play not the mad Bedlems, nor go about to win anything by starting aside or dragging back: but yield ourselves guilty, and be so meek and patient-minded, as to suffer ourselves to be blamed after as we have need. And when rebukings shall seem somewhat with the sharpest and pricking to us: let us always bear in mind, to consider to what end they tend, and what fruit follows them, and that although God rebuke us thoroughly, yet he is ready to forget all our faults afterward. You see then what we have to remember: as if Saint Paul should say, that although we to the uttermost of our power have abolished the grace of God: yet notwithstanding he on his part is loath they should perish and would fain make them to prosper. And thereto he rebukes us, to the intent we should not continue unamendable. Therefore whenever we shall have been so far overseen as to stray from the right way: yet let us know that our Lord calls us back to him, and gives us a means to return again, if our fault be not matched with willfulness.

Now after that Saint Paul has spoken so, he adds again, that God had dealt forth the gifts of his holy spirit among the Galatians, yes, and that by means of the gospel, in so much that the same ought to have been enough to hold them to the doctrine which they had received, without turning aside or wandering away from it. Whereas he speaks here of God's spirit, he means not the grace that was treated of this morning, which is common to all the faithful: but uses another kind

of reasoning (as we shall see by the sequel): namely that besides God's showing of himself generally to all the Galatians, that he had adopted them for his children: he had also ordained Prophets among them, and men endowed, some with the gift of Tongues, some with the gift of healing, and othersome with such other like. But all this came to them by means of the Gospel: and therefore their turning back again to the Ceremonies of the law, was a burying of all the operations of God's spirit. I have told you already how we must bear in mind that God communicates his spirit to all [his]: for without that, we could not be Christians, because there is nothing but evil in our nature. God must be fain to reform us and bring us back to himself, so as we may become as it were new creatures.

You see then that God does make us generally all partakers of his holy spirit, by means whereof we are touched with the fear of him, enlightened with faith to seek our salvation in Jesus Christ, and cheered up to resort unto God, to call upon him, and to yield ourselves obediently to his will: and to be short, so you see that God's spirit is common to all the faithful, and to all his children. But yet does he grant us other special graces besides, as when he gives us men that teach us his word faithfully, or that govern the commonwealth wisely, or which have other gifts: for in so doing he gives us certain tokens that he dwells among us, and thereby also he binds us so much the more unto him. Let us mark the reason that Saint Paul sets down here. He blames the unthankfulness of the Galatians, for that they considered not how it came unto them by the preaching of the Gospel. And he says it purposely, because men will always make fair protestations enough, that they mean not to reject God's grace, and yet do show the clean contrary in their doings. As how? They that are loath to suffer themselves to be taught, and would drive away all the ministers of God's word if they could, and they which through envy and spitefulness, could find in their hearts

to abolish the remembrance of all those whom God has established to maintain the welfare of his people, they (say I) do show well enough, that they would have God to hold himself afar off from them: and that they are loath to come at him. For he sets before them the means to come to him, and they vouchsafe not to take it, but do thrust it from them. So then, whereas Saint Paul finds fault with the Galatians, it was not for that they protested openly with full mouth that they would none of God's spirit, or that they held scorn of his gifts: but to show them that they had very ill regarded God's uttering of the gifts of his spirit in their Church.

What ought we then to gather upon this text? That if God gives us means to come unto him, we must take them aworth, even by fashioning of ourselves unto them. For if the Gospel be preached among us, and we willfully forget what is told us: it is all one as if we rejected God, and turned our back upon him, of purpose to stray away from him. Wherefore if we intend that God should continue his grace towards us: let us hold us to the means that he has ordained for us: that is to say, let us suffer ourselves to be taught by such as he sends unto us, let every of us exercise himself alone also in reading the holy scripture, let such as have done good in edifying the Church have room and place among us, and let us not shut the gate against the holy Ghost. This in effect is the thing that we have to bear in mind.

Furthermore, for as much as Saint Paul's intent here is to bring back the faithful to the Gospel: let us assure ourselves that if we swerve never so little from it, we are straight in the highway to destruction. And so there is none other knitting of God unto men, than by means of the Gospel which must go as a chain that cannot be broken betwixt them. And Paul does purposely once again call it the preaching of faith, to show us how great need we have that God should prevent us.

For until such time as he has reached us his hand in our Lord Jesus Christ, and drawn us out of the gulf of confusion wherein we be by nature, what are we?

Moreover, we see how bountiful he shows himself towards us, in that he gives himself fully to us in the person of his only Son: surely it is much more than if he gave us heaven and earth, and all the goods that are in them. For what are all other things in comparison of our Lord Jesus Christ? Wherefore let us mark, that seeing that God having declared unto us that we be utterly unfurnished of all goodness, adds that he will not keep back anything from us, nor show himself a niggard towards us, if we seek to him for all things that we want: we must be contented with it, and if we swerve never so little one way or other, we deserve well to be utterly bereft and dispossessed, even of that which we have received already.

And thereupon Saint Paul brings us back to the example of Abraham, because he is the father of all the faithful, and moreover because in his person it pleased God to show how we may become righteous to be saved: for there is none other way to bring us to the kingdom of heaven than the same that he went. There is but only one way, and that is set forth to us in the example of Abraham. Saint Paul, therefore, says that Abraham believed God, and the same was reckoned to him for righteousness: and therefore that if we will be Abraham's children, we must believe. Here we have to call to remembrance the thing that has been declared already heretofore: that is to say, what this word faith or belief imports. It is not a single believing that there is but one God which governs the world: but an assuring of ourselves that he takes us for his children, and that we may fully and freely call upon him as our father, because he accepts us for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Then if we be sure of the favor and fatherly love of our God, and take such warrantize of it by his

promises, that we have our look wholly fastened upon our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we find means to come unto God, and to go freely unto him: that is the very thing which Saint Paul meant by that word Faith. And so, when he says that to be Abraham's children we must be faithful: it is all one as if he said, that we cannot be faithful Christians nor members of the Church, but by faith: that is to say, except we be bereft of all opinion of our own deservings, and moreover so beaten down and dismayed in ourselves, as we may not wot where to become, nor seek any other means of salvation, than in the free goodness which God offers us, when he tells us that we are undone and damned in our sins, and yet notwithstanding, that we must not cease to have full hope and trust of salvation, in Jesus Christ.

Thus you see what it is for a man to be a Christian: that is to wit, to be utterly out of heart in himself, in consideration that he brings nothing with him but sin and cursedness: and yet upon the feeling of himself to be so utterly void of all well-deserving: to come unto God to be clothed with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. For it is not enough for us to be out of heart in ourselves, as we see that Cain was, who being as it were upon the rack confesses his fault: (howbeit, that was but through despair, and so consequently there was nothing in him but murmuring and blasphemy against God: & in like case is it with all reprobates or castaways) but we must so taste of the love of our God, as we may be able to settle ourselves upon it, and be out of all doubt that he will receive us if we come to the Gospel, at leastwise if we come in such wise as our hope be grounded, not upon our own self-weening or imagination, but upon God's promise, and for that we cannot be disappointed in waiting upon him and in holding ourselves assured of his word. Thus you see in effect what it is to be faithful: for we must always have an eye to the disputation that Saint Paul undertakes. He strives against such as pretended to purchase

righteousness before God by the works of the Law. If there were no more but this saying to be of the faith, without considering what matter Saint Paul treats of here: that manner of speech were but dark. But when we see how Saint Paul declares expressly, that all such as go about to purchase favor at God's hand by their own deservings, are puffed up with pride, and that their presumptuousness shuts the gate of Paradise against them, and that God vouchsafes not to hear them, because they defraud him of his due honor, and would fain as it were deck themselves with his feathers, and that they are traitors in robbing him of his righteousness: forasmuch as Saint Paul handles that point: there is now no doubt but he takes all those to be of the faith, which distrust themselves, and are utterly out of all hope in themselves, and yet notwithstanding do return unto Jesus Christ, resting, leaning, and trusting wholly unto him. Those therefore are the true children of Abraham.

But now let us see how few Christians there are in the world. True it is that the word Christian runs roundly in every man's mouth: but in the meantime it is foully defiled, and God must needs disclaim all such as pretend after that fashion to be his: like as in the Papacy every man grounds himself upon his baptism or christendom. And surely in baptism we have on God's behalf an infallible pledge of our salvation. But what for that? They take but the visible sign, and separate it from our Lord Jesus Christ. And in very deed the Papists know naught at all of that which is told us here by Saint Paul: but (which worse is) they have their freewill, their merits, and their satisfactions: instead of God's service, which they thrust underfoot and falsify, they have gewgaws yea and abominations of the Devil's own forging: and therefore they be sufficiently convicted to have no Christianity in them. And for our part, although we have not the idolatries and superstitions that reign among the Papists: yet are we

not so grounded in the Gospel, that every of us can offer himself frankly unto God, and fully and freely call upon him, quietly suffering him to guide us: but we shall see many that are but wretched beasts. True it is that they will well enough protest themselves to hold nothing at all of the Pope's abuses and superstitions: but if a man talk to them of the grounds and principles of the gospel, they wot not what thing it is. Othersome which ween themselves to be great Clerks, when it comes to the trial, do show that all was but a countenance, and that they did but prate like pies in a Cage. So much the more therefore does it behoove us to bear well in mind, how Saint Paul tells us here, that we cannot be Abraham's children nor members of the Church, except we come thither with belief of the Gospel, so as every of us renounce his preconceived opinions of his own merits, and assure ourselves that we are utterly damned and drowned in despair, and thereupon resort to the mere grace of God, and to the mercy which he offers us in our Lord Jesus Christ, so as we fall to dipping of ourselves in the blood which he has shed to cleanse us withall, assuring ourselves that there all our debts are released, and God's wrath and vengeance so appeased, as we cannot fail but to find him favorable.

However, for the better understanding hereof, let us also mark after what manner Abraham believed God. And it behooves us to have the definition of this word Faith: for without that, all this doctrine would be to no purpose. I have told you already that whereas the Papists strive against us: they know neither why nor wherefore they do it, nor whereat they bend themselves, but rush forth overthwart, awry, and at all adventure. For they never wist what faith meant, and that do they show well enough, I mean even the greatest doctors of them, for all that they will say is that faith is to believe in God: and if they believe in God, so do the Devils too. But when as Saint Paul speaks here of faith, he means not that we should have but only some guess

that there is a God who reigns in heaven: but that we must take him to be our father, assuring ourselves thoroughly of it by the promises which he gives us, and so link ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ, as we doubt not but that all that ever he has is proper and belonging to us, because we are members of his body.

But when the Papists talk of faith, they say it is a confused thing, and that it serves not to make us good men so as we might be saved by it. We see then that the Papists go brutishly to work, as folk utterly dulled by Satan. And it is a just punishment of God upon their pride, because they cannot find in their hearts to humble themselves, by confessing themselves to owe all unto God, and that there is nothing in them worthy to be accepted at his hand, but that they must be fain to receive the mere grace that is offered them. Thus you see after what manner we must take the word Faith.

But here is yet one point more which serves greatly to that purpose: which is, to know after what manner Abraham believed God, and that shall be the conclusion. If Abraham had believed no more but that there was a God in heaven: that would not have served to have justified him, for the Heathen folk believed as much. Again, if Abraham had believed that God was judge of the world: that would not have served his turn neither. But when as God said unto him, "I am thy plentiful reward, and I will be thy God and the God of thy seed after thee, and moreover all nations shall be blessed in thee": by accepting such promises wherein God acquainted himself with him, and witnessed to him that he took him for one of his household and as his own child, and became his father: Abraham was justified by accepting that promise. And why? For as soon as God offered him his goodness and grace, he believed the word and received it: and then was he full sure of his salvation.

Now may we much better judge what it is to be justified by faith: namely that it is not a confused opinion of believing that there is a God, but a holding of him for our father and Savior, and that because he shows himself to be so by his word, and also gives us a good pledge and earnest penny of it in our Lord Jesus Christ, insomuch that there he shows himself to be joined and united with us, and that although we be wretched creatures and have nothing in us but all mischief, yet he fails not to take us for his own, and to admit us into his favor: the reason whereof is, because our Lord Jesus Christ is the means betwixt him and us.

Therefore when we have that promise, and rest wholly upon it, and doubt not but that God does and will show himself gracious to us unto the end, and therewithal call upon him and resort only unto him, giving over this world, and continuing in the hope of the heavenly life: then are we sure that we have faith, and are justified: and that was the manner of our father Abraham's believing: and without that, let us assure ourselves there is no Christianity at all in us. For (as Saint Paul says in the tenth to the Romans) until we know what the Gospel is, we cannot call God our father. We cannot call upon God (says he) except we knew him, and believed in him. And how is it possible for us to know him, till he be revealed unto us? Therefore faith must needs go before. And whereof comes faith? Of hearing, says Saint Paul.

Then must we be trained in the Gospel, or else we can have no faith. And hereby we see yet better, that all that ever is termed faith in Popery, is but stark dotage. And why so? For there God's word is hidden, and the greatest brutishness that can be, is taken for greatest devotion. When men babble they wot not what, when they gad on pilgrimage and never come at God, when they busy their heads about

fond Ceremonies and hear not so much as one word of good doctrine: oh, that is great devotion and holiness. But we see how there is no Christianity without faith, nor faith without teaching of the Gospel: and so consequently we cannot be Christians, till God have given us the grace to taste of his goodness and mercy, as it is daily set before us in the Gospel: assuring ourselves that he accepts us in the number of his children, so as we may be bold to call upon him, and continue therein to the end, at leastwise in waiting for the full performance of the things which he reveals unto us now by his mouth, that is to say by his word.

But now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our sins, praying him to make us feel them more and more, and that the same feeling of them may draw us unto him with true repentance, so as we may not only ask him forgiveness of them, but also so reform and change ourselves, as we may truly bear the mark of his children, when we shall appear before his judgment seat, and as our Lord Jesus Christ also may repair the Image of his father in us, in such wise as he may acknowledge us for his members. And in the meantime, let us beseech him to bear with our infirmities, till he have utterly cleansed us of them. That it may please him to grant this grace not only to us, but also to all people. &c.

The Seventeenth Sermon,

which is the third upon the third Chapter.

> 7 Know you therefore that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham.
>
> 8 And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, showed glad tidings beforehand unto Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all nations be blessed."
>
> 9 Those then which are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.

If we were such as we would be taken to be, that is to say, if we were Christians, we should be well acquainted with this manner of speech of being justified by faith. But there are very few to be found even among those that boast themselves to have profited in the Gospel, which know what is meant by the righteousness whereof the Scripture speaks so much. However the case stands, either we must have skill of that article, or else we can never have any assurance of our salvation, nor resort unto God in our need to call freely upon him. And that is the cause why Saint Paul stands so much upon that matter.

The last Sunday we saw how Abraham was counted righteous because he had believed God: and I told you that thereby is showed us, that no man can bring any worthiness of his own, wherewith to win God's favour, but that we must be fain to receive it of his free gift. For the word believing, has a respect to the promise, inasmuch

that God's free offering of himself unto Abraham, was the cause that Abraham was counted righteous, because he accepted the favour that was offered him of free gift, being well assured that of himself he had nothing but all iniquity and cursedness. And thereupon Saint Paul concludes, that such as are of faith are the children of Abraham. It is certain that Abraham is the father of all the faithful, and of all God's children: and therefore it follows, that either we must be fashioned after his example, or else the gate of life and salvation is shut against us, and we be quite and clean banished out of God's kingdom. Here Saint Paul shows us the way: For we come not of Abraham as concerning the flesh, neither belong we aught at all unto him: and yet notwithstanding it behooves us to be of his race: the only way whereof, is to be partners of the promise that was given unto him, and to receive it as he did (here you see what it is to be of faith) so that when we once know and find by proof that we cannot deserve any favour at God's hand, nor be allowed for our own works and merits, we repose our whole trust in his goodness, and apply this promise to ourselves, which is that he adopts us for his children. Thus you see Saint Paul's Text made plain enough. However he adds, that that promise served not for the Jews alone, but rather that all men in general are comprehended in it. For without that addition, the doctrine that we have treated of would serve us to no purpose. God chose Abraham and his offspring: So then, are we shut out from the hope of salvation: for his choosing imports a forsaking of all those whom he chooses not: but he has chosen the lineage of Abraham, and so by that means it seems that all of us are forsaken. But the promise which Saint Paul rehearses consists of two parts. The one is, that God would be the protector of Abraham's lineage, and should it out from the rest of the world. The other is, that all nations should be blessed in Abraham and in his seed. Now if God had placed his Church in the only household of Abraham, then should we at this day be miserable.

But for as much as in the second part we also are joined in it, and God enlarges his goodness and mercy further, which he had appointed to one certain lineage: by that means we become partakers of salvation: And that is the thing which Saint Paul treats of here, when he tells us that the Scripture foreseeing that God not only justifies the Jews, but also uses the like mercy towards the Gentiles, which were as good as cut off from the house, says, "All Nations shall be blessed in thee." Then is there no speaking here of some handful of men, or of some certain people: but without any exception, God opens the gate to all such as had erst been quite and clean past hope. And thereupon also Saint Paul concludes, that they which are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham. As if he should say, when God justified Abraham, he had not respect neither to Circumcision, nor to anything that he had wherewith to win favor after the opinion of men: but received him in another cue, that is to wit, as a believing man. God therefore contented himself with Abraham's faith only. And in that respect also it was his will to make him the father of the whole Church. Seeing then that God made no account of anything else in Abraham but of his faith: let us conclude that God does now still receive us to him in likewise, if we have the like faith that Abraham had, though not in like measure, and that God takes it in good worth, though we do but follow him aloof. Then belongs not this blessing to Abraham's fleshly offspring only, but also to those that were strangers to him, so there be the like substance and fashion of faith in them.

However, to the end we take profit by this doctrine, let us remember what I have touched already, that is to wit, what it is to be of faith: namely, that it is a reposing of ourselves wholly in God's mere mercy. But Saint Paul sets down a comparison of things contrary, and which can no more agree than fire and water: that is to wit, of being of the law, and of being of faith. Yet it follows not that the law comes not of

God: inasmuch that if we reject it, at whom does such contempt point? Is not God's authority impeached thereby? But in these words of Law and Faith, Saint Paul respects not simply the doctrine of either of them, but the hope of salvation that men may conceive of them. For the righteousness of faith has its record of the law and the Prophets, as Saint Paul says in the third to the Romans. They are not contrary things: but the diversity of them is in this, that such as misconceive themselves, and are blinded with hypocrisy, think to purchase favor in God's sight by keeping the Law, which thing is impossible. Those therefore are of the law, which hold of the Law, as though they were able to earn the heritage of the heavenly life at God's hand. On the contrary part, they that are needy, yea or rather utterly empty of themselves, acknowledging that they have not so much as one drop of grace in them: they are of faith. For why, they forsake themselves, and seek their righteousness elsewhere. They come and offer themselves like poor beggars unto God, to the end he should fill them, whereas they were utterly empty before. Therefore mark it for a school-point, that by the force of faith we must be quite rid of all self-trust, and of all overweening of our own merits, and have our whole refuge to God's mere goodness. But truly we cannot come right forth unto God, without some means: our Lord Jesus Christ must be fain to make us way thither: and all this is comprehended under the word faith. For faith is not an imagination of men's own forging: it is an assuredness which we conceive of God's goodness, when he comes to us and utters familiarly the love that he bears us. Then must the promise go before, or else there shall be no following of faith. To be short, whosoever has not been trained in the Gospel, can have no faith at all. For God must first have told us that he loves us, or else we cannot rest upon his goodness, nor call upon him as our father.

Now let us see what this promise is. God not only says that he will have pity upon us, but also tells us that although we be wretched sinners, yet he will not cease to accept us, because he buries all our sins, namely by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ: for that sacrifice must needs come forth everywhere, where any mention is made of the forgiving of sins. Never can there be any pardon gotten at God's hand, except there be bloodshedding with it for a satisfaction. So then the foundation of this promise where God says that he will be merciful to us, is Christ's shedding of his blood to wash away our spots, and his offering up of himself for a full amends, to pacify the wrath of God his father. Thus you see how that if we be of faith, we have our eyes fastened upon Jesus Christ, and our rest and quietness is altogether in his death and passion, which is the only means to reconcile us unto God.

Also let us mark, that to be blessed, and to be justified, are all one thing, accordingly as Saint Paul declares here. Hardly shall a man find one among thirty of such as are called Christians, that can skill to define this word justify. And surely it is a foul shame that we should have our ears daily beaten with the Gospel, and yet notwithstanding be ignorant of the chief article of our faith. Then to be justified, is not to have any righteousness in a man's self, but to be admitted for righteous at God's hand though we be not so. And here you see why I said that we have a good opening of this doctrine, in that Saint Paul sets down the word Bless, instead of the word Justify, which he had used before, according to the fourth of the Romans, where he says that the righteousness of faith, is that our sins are forgiven us. Forasmuch then as God is favorable and loving to us, and receives us as his children: therefore it is said that we be justified before him. And why justified? Because he cannot love sinners, till he have forgiven their sins, and put them quite away. We know that

forasmuch as God is righteous, he cannot agree with sin, but must needs always hate it.

Then since the case stands so: if we intend to have his favor, we must needs be first cleansed of our offenses. For so long as they come to reckoning, God must needs hate us, and curse us. But contrariwise when he wipes away all our sins, then receives he us to mercy. And by that means do we begin to be blessed of him. Are we then blessed, that is to say, be loved of God? Verily we are therewithal justified also: that is to say, whereas there was nothing but sin in us, God makes us partakers of the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the obedience that he yielded is conveyed over unto us. As for example: If I owe a sum of money, and another pays it for me, although I lay out nothing out of my own purse, yet am I quit. I had not wherewith to pay, but I found one that discharged me. Even so is it with us: who being destitute of righteousness, have Jesus Christ for our surety, and he has satisfied God his father for us. By means whereof our sins are quite wiped out, so as they come not anymore to account or remembrance before God, and therefore we are justified or blessed, that is to say, whereas God must heretofore have held us as accursed and damnable, now he holds us for his children.

And herein also we see the fondness of the Papists, who cannot find in their hearts to be persuaded that we are justified by faith, because that (to their seeming) faith is not so excellent a virtue as some others are. For a man shall not be perceived to do much in holding himself to God's promises, and in resting upon them. Men will say, very well such a one is a wretched sinner, and knows that he indeed needs to be succored by God's goodness, and that is the cause why he rests thereupon. But the man whose conversation bears a goodly show, and is magnified everywhere, shall be counted the righteouser. As for example, if a man be liberal and deal freely of his goods, and

also show himself well disposed in all other parts of his life, such a one shall be counted more excellent than a believer. Besides this, they do also allege Saint Paul's saying in another place, how that Charity is above Faith and Hope. Yea truly: but the question is not here, whether of them is the greater, higher, or nobler virtue.

When we say we are justified by faith, it is not meant that there is any worthiness or desert in our faith, as who should say, that God were bound unto us, and therefore received us for it: but that because God has shown himself merciful towards us, and promised to be our Savior, we being first bereft of all trust in our virtues, do come unto him by faith, knowing well that if he considers us in ourselves, he must needs curse and abhor us. Seeing then that faith brings not anything on man's behalf, but receives all things of God's mere and free goodness: there is no questioning what worthiness is in us. And so we see that faith not only helps us to the attainment of our salvation but also brings us all perfection.

Now after that Saint Paul has said, that all the heathen are blessed in Abraham, he adds that it is together with the faithful Abraham. As if he should say, there is no other means to make us find favor in God's sight, than only faith. There is no seeking of help elsewhere in that behalf. For that is yet too gross an error wherewith the Papists are entangled. For although they know not what faith means, nor what it is to be justified: yet are they enforced to say that faith helps to salvation. Howbeit they add, that it is but partly, and that charity, and all other virtues work together with it, and that if men purpose to be allowed of God, they must deserve well at his hand, so that all is nought worth, without obedience and holiness of life. It is true that faith cannot be separated from the fear of God: but the matter here is nothing else but to know by what means God acknowledges us for his children. But if he have respect to our works, woe be to us. Therefore

he must be fain to turn away his countenance from the considering of our persons, and to receive us only in our Lord Jesus Christ, or else (in his looking upon us) to mark nothing but our miseries, that he may be moved and provoked to mercy.

You see then that God has a double respect in justifying us. The one is that he beholds our miseries: for inasmuch as he sees us so plunged in all confusion, he is moved to pity. Again, to the intent he may no more be an enemy and take part against us which are sinners, he must be fain to look upon our Lord Jesus Christ, and upon his righteousness, that the same may do away all our offenses. Now Saint Paul says here, that we cannot be blessed but with faithful Abraham. As if he should say that Abraham though he were never so holy a man, brought nothing of his own with him when he obtained righteousness before God. Faith (as I have said already) does utterly bereave a man of all the worthiness which he supposes himself to have. Seeing that Abraham had none other help than faith: it follows that he renounced all his own works, as which in very deed were nothing worth. Then since it is so, let us learn to leave such mingling, which brings nothing but corruption before God: and let us be contented that we be allowed at God's hand if he finds us faithful. If a man pose us, and say, had Abraham's virtues no favor in God's sight? It is easy to answer, that Abraham of his own nature had nothing but all manner of iniquity. He had been a castaway, if God had not plucked him out of the dungeon wherein he was sunken, according as he himself shows in the last chapter of Joshua. Consider (says he to the Jews) from whence I took your father Abraham. Did not his fathers serve idols? Then did I pluck him out of the bottom of hell. So, Abraham had not aught whereof to boast. For he could not have done any good, if God had not prevented him with his grace. But now after that God had given Abraham so great and excellent virtues, that he is become as a pattern of all holiness: yet were not those virtues

able to justify him, for there was always some fault to be found in him, either more or less. Let a man enforce himself as much as possible to obey God: and yet shall he always go limping. Now there cannot be so little a fault nor so small a blemish in our works, but the same is enough to make them foul and loathsome before God. Thus all Abraham's virtues, if they had been examined straightly, could not have brought him aught but damnation. As much is to be said of David, and of all others. Besides this, when we fall to scanning whether God loves us, and acknowledges us for his children: it must not be thought he does it for two or three good deeds, but for such a perfect obedience as we fail not in any one iota.

But surely although Abraham had some perfection in part of his life, yet could he not be justified by it. For he was continually a man, that is to say, a sinner: and God held him so at the staff's end, to the intent to humble him, as he does all the rest of the faithful. Then could not Abraham bring aught of himself, for look what goodness soever he had, he held it of God and of his free goodness. And moreover, the same was yet still insufficient to save him: for by nature he was utterly lost and damned, as all the rest of Adam's line is. Therefore it stood him in hand, that God should receive him through pardoning of his sins, and look upon him singly in his faith.

But let us also mark that God's justifying of us is by faith, that is to say, by his own mere and alone goodnesse, and that thereupon it behooves us to rest in his promise, by the virtue whereby he allows and accepts us, yes, and our works also: not in respect that they come of ourselves, but for that we do them by the grace of his holy spirit: and therefore does he accept them and allow them as righteous, yes even so far forth as to reward them as the whole scripture does plentifully witness. And yet does all this also proceed of faith. For when we are justified, that is to say, accepted for righteous before

God: then also are our works justified, that is to say, God accepts them for rightful, although there be not any worthiness in them, nor any cause at all why he should receive them.

Then like as we ourselves are justified by God's only free goodness, when we receive his promises by faith: even so are our works justified by the selfsame means. After that manner was Abraham justified in his person: and then likewise were his works also justified before God. But however the world goes, if you consider the original cause and wellspring of all: you must needs conclude that nothing else was made account of but only faith. For had God listed to sift Abraham's life, he had been condemned as all other mortal men are. But his intent was to take him for his own, and nothing persuaded or moved him thereunto but his own mere mercy.

Also, Abraham had his eyes shut against all vain trusts wherewith men deceive themselves: he knew there was nothing able to bring him to life, save the only mercy of God. To be short, like as Abraham had no regard but of God's mere mercy: so God had no regard but only of Abraham's faith: and by that means was he justified. So then let us leave all things that men imagine to bring themselves in favor with God by mingling this and that with faith: for they are all but falsehoods and illusions of Satan: and let faith have such foundation as this: that is to wit, that with all humility we acknowledge ourselves to be then righteous, when God forgives us our sins, and that by the same means our works also are reckoned for good and righteous, because God lists not to sift them narrowly, but takes them in good worth of his fatherly goodness.

Thus you see what we have to gather upon that text. Now, that the blessedness of Abraham belongs unto us, and is meant unto us, it appears by that which I have touched already, and by that Saint Paul

avouches, that all nations should be blessed in Abraham. And now remains to see the reason that Saint Paul adds on the contrary part. For men by their good wills can never find in their hearts to give over the opinion which they have of their own righteousness, except they be compelled and enforced to it. For although we be seeped in so many vices as is ugly to behold: yet the worst and deepest rooted vice in our nature is pride or presumptuousness, which is a self-willed weening that there is somewhat in us: in so much that although God tell us that we be right naught, and that there is nothing in us but lewdness, filthiness, and uncleanness, and that all the virtue which we dream upon is but vanity and leasing: yet can he not compass to humble us, till we ourselves perceive our own need, and have it proved to our faces. And therefore it behooves us to mark well the reason which Saint Paul adds here to draw us to the pure faith, and to turn us away from all the vain trusts which we can have in our own deservings.

"All they (says he) that are of the law are accursed. For it is written, Cursed be he that continueth not in all the things that are written and contained in this book, to do them." When as Saint Paul says that all they which are of the law are cursed: he means that so long as men rest and muse upon their own works, and think to obtain grace by that mean before God: they be cursed. For (as I have declared heretofore) like as he that forsakes himself, and renounces all that he has of his own, and grounds himself upon the only mercy of God, is of faith: so contrariwise, he that thinks to bring any service wherewith to bind God unto him, or imagines to recompense him with his merits, is of the Law.

But Saint Paul says that such are cursed. And why? He alleges the saying of Moses: "Cursed be he that performeth not all that is written here." It had been said before, "Cursed be he that serves strange

Gods: Cursed be he that blasphemes God: Cursed be he that breaks the Sabbath day: Cursed be he that is stubborn against his father and mother: Cursed be he that defiles another man's wife." After the rehearsing of all these Curses, and after the solemn uttering of them, it behooved the people to answer Amen, Amen, as if there had passed some covenant, and that God on his side had made demand, saying: "I will have you to serve me after this manner, yea even without failing in any point, and in such wise as you keep touch with me through stitch in all things that I command you:" and the people on their side should answer, "Amen, yea Lord we be contented to be all damned if we serve thee not:" and then afterward God should come and conclude, "Cursed be he that performeth not all that ever is contained in this book," that is to say, which misses in any one point, and the people should answer again, "so be it." Now seeing that the law curses all such as perform it not to the full: let us see if there be any one that does it. It is certain that all men from the greatest to the least are guilty. For why? let us consider the sum of the Law, which is that we should love God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our power, and with all our strength, and our neighbor as ourselves and then let every of us try his own life, & he shall need none other judge than himself to condemn him. For although we loved God with an uncorrupted and sound heart unfainedly: yet can it not be, but that we must be drawn diversly with many vanities.

Yea put the case that a man were as perfect as an Angel: yet could he not love God as he ought to do, for it would behoove all our wits to be employed in the love of him. But now let us mark if we cast not many vain looks when we open our eyes; or if that when we open our ears, we be not given too much fond talk that tends not to the honor of God, or which is not utterly void of sin if at leastwise it be not wicked. But however the case stands, we should so dedicate our wits wholly unto God, as that we should not think upon anything wherein he

should not be glorified. And where shall one be found that does so? Nowhere but (which worse is) besides that we have our wits far haled and drawn away from the love of God: we see that they tickle us daily unto naughtiness, and that we do not so soon stir a hand but it is to put it to many things of no value. As much is to be said of our feet, of our eyes, and of our ears.

Again, what a dungeon is there in man's heart? what a number of crooked lusts are there, so snarled one within another, as there is nothing to be found among them but confusion? In so much that it is upon very good cause that Jeremiah cries out: "O what a maze is the heart of man, wherein there is neither end nor measure to be seen, so that although a man should sound and gauge himself never so deep, yet it is not possible that he should attain to the knowledge of the hundredth part of his naughtiness. There is none but only God that can be judge of it." So then, let us mark well, that although God have begotten us again by his holy spirit, and that we strain ourselves to the uttermost to serve and honor him: yet must we needs come far short of the end, and be still but on our way thereward, yea and go always halting.

And moreover beside our slowness, we meet with many falls, and many shrewd rushes, we limp on the one foot, and stumble on the other, and divers times we tumble over and over. Lo what our life is. Therefore by the Law we see we be all of us accursed, yea even when there is no manifest sin in us. For (as I have declared already) if there were no more but this, that no man discharges himself of the full performance of the Law: it were to be concluded thereupon, that all of us are condemned by the Law, and therefore that it stands us in hand to seek our righteousness elsewhere, that is to wit, in the mere mercy of God.

Now then we see how Saint Paul shows us, that all such as have any vain trust in their own merits, are rank traitors to God, and make war against him. For he does as it were drag them forth by the hair of their heads, and show them the distress wherein they be, and what a stubbornness is it if they will not come unto him? Must not the devil needs have dulled them?

We see then that Saint Paul's meaning here was to drive men to seek their righteousness and salvation in the only grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: for without that, the other should never befall us, because we always surmise some value to be in ourselves, and that self-estimation or overweening does so blind us, that we cannot glorify God in his righteousness by keeping our own mouths shut till we be convicted, as we see in this text.

Furthermore, let us mark that Saint Paul has taken here a principle which the Papists cannot find in their hearts to agree unto. For among other things, they say, cursed and banned be he who shall say that God has commanded us more than we are able to do. They excommunicate and accursed all such as are of opinion, that the righteousness of the Law overreaches all the ability of man. For it seems to them, that God ought not to command us any impossibility, and that either we must have wherewith to perform the Law, or else the Law should be to no purpose. So do they think, and so do they say: but the Holy Ghost says the flat contrary: for God is not bound to fashion himself to our ability. It becomes us to regard what we ourselves ought to do. Who is he that dares step up, and say that he ought not to love God with all his heart? For seeing that we be his, is it not reason that we should be wholly dedicated unto him? You see then that we be indebted unto him of the perfect love which he requires.

Again, if we talk of our own strength, it is not to be said that we be able to discharge ourselves of our duty, as in respect of the love which we owe unto our God. As for example, if a man have wasted all his goods in riot, and have not aught left wherewith to pay his creditors, shall that discharge him of his debts? If any man says, it is not through our own default: Yes, surely it is. For in as much as we be corrupted in Adam, original sin holds us sufficiently convicted and guilty before God, so as it is no excuse to say, I am weak or rather utterly untoward, and I can not so much as think one good thought, according as Saint Paul declares. It is true that we cannot think so much as one good thought, and that our hearts are full of sturdiness and malice, so that all our affections are enemies unto God. So speaks the Scripture: but however the world goes, we cease not to be still bound to our duty. Wherefore let us mark, that the Law is commanded us, though it be impossible for us to fulfill and perform it. And if it were not so, Saint Paul would not have said in the eighth to the Romans, that God performed that thing by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was impossible to the Law. In saying so, he shows well that we are not able to perform all that God commands us. For if we could bring that to pass, surely we should be justified by it. For it is said that all such as fulfill the Law shall live therein. If any man could be found that had performed it, he should live. But Saint Paul takes the same reason afterward to show, that it is a folly to think to get righteousness by keeping of the Law: for no man can bring it to pass as is required.

Now then as touching this text, let us understand that Saint Paul presupposes that no man is able to perform the Law, though he strain himself never so much: insomuch that although he be governed by the Holy Ghost, yet shall he never be able to bring it to pass during this sinful life, because God gives us his grace by measure. It is true that he could give us such perfection as nothing

should be amiss in all our life, but that we should have a full and more than angelic conformity to all his commandments. However, although he holds us in awe, although he change us and fashion us anew, although he rein us back to the obedience of his will: yet is there no full perfection in us. And why? For he intends to hold us still under the bridle of humility, he will have us to know our own weakness, and to groan for it before him: and he will have us to pass judgment, and to know that we be always indebted unto him. For as much then as God does not in this present life give us such perfection as were requisite to the full performance of his whole law: therefore we can never do thoroughly the things that he commands us. And for as much as we be not able to perform them therefore this judgment is hurled down upon our heads, that he is cursed who fulfills not all the things.

It behooves us to mark well that saying: for it is not said, "Cursed be he that rejects the Law, or who keeps no point at all of it: but, Cursed be he that discharges not himself of it point by point, and through stitch," as I said before. And for that cause also Saint James (to the end to beat down men's pride) says that he who fails in any one point is guilty of the whole. We will think this to be very rough dealing at the first sight. What, say we? Will God forget all the good that a man has done, for the committing of some one only fault? That would be counted cruelty among men. Yea, but Saint James adds a reason, saying: "He that forbade to murder, forbade also to commit whoredom: and he that forbade to steal, forbade all the residue too." Then if I think myself to have satisfied God in forbearing theft, and in the meanwhile am a whoremaster: have I not offended the majesty of God? And therefore we must leave all these piecings: for if we bring God some one piece, & let all the rest alone, what a dealing will that be? We see that one man is given to one vice, and another to another, and so every man would be privileged and dispensed with

under color that he had done this or that, notwithstanding that he missed in some other point. But God has not separated his commandments asunder. He has not said to one man, "thou shalt not steal," and to another, "Thou shalt not commit adultery": but he says to all men without exception, "Abstain ye from whoredom; abstain ye from theft, abstain ye from murder." Therefore we must examine our life, not by any one commandment alone, but by all the whole law together.

But now let us see if we can find any man that is faultless. You see then that we must needs be confounded, so long as we stand to be judged by the law. For if Abraham, who was the most excellent that ever could be picked out among men, should be driven to enter into account by that: it is certain that he should not miss to be damned. Seeing it is so, let us bear well in mind that it is not for us to dispute any more: for when the Papists speak of the righteousness of faith, they do but dally and scoff with God, as if he were a little babe. Let us keep ourselves from such scornfulness: and when God pronounces this horrible sentence, that all they be cursed which fulfill not all that is written, let us conceive such a terror of it, as we may quake before his majesty, yea and every of us become his own judge, and willingly yield himself guilty, and being so convicted of our wretchedness bewail our utter failing in all things, and thereupon embrace the righteousness that is offered us in our Lord Jesus Christ, taking all our contentment and rest there.

Now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us so to feel them, as we may not only ask him forgiveness with true repentance, but also pray him to hold us up all the time of our life, till he have taken us hence into his own kingdom, and in the meanwhile to reform us more and more by his holy spirit, to the end we may have

sure record that we be of the number of his children, by governing ourselves after that manner in fear, and seek nothing else but to give ourselves wholly unto him. And so let us all say, "Almighty God heavenly father," &c.

The Eighteenth Sermon,

which is the fourth upon the third Chapter

> 11 That no man is justified by the law before God, it is manifest: for the righteous shall live by faith.
>
> 12 And the law is not of faith: but the man that does those things, shall live in them.
>
> 13 Christ has ransomed us from the curse of the law, in that he became accursed for us, (for it is written, cursed is he that hangs on tree.)
>
> 14 That the blessedness of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, to the end that we might receive the promise of the spirit by faith.

We have seen that if men are not worse than mad, they must needs (for all that ever they have) seek their salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ. For if they stick to the law, they shall find nothing there but damnation, as has been showed already: and that does every man

find sufficiently by his own experience. And certainly when Saint Paul goes about in the Epistle to the Romans, to show that men beguile themselves too grossly by trusting in their own merits: he says that the law can work nothing but God's wrath and vengeance. For although we be already sufficiently condemned ere God opens his mouth to give sentence against us: yet notwithstanding, our naughtiness is yet deeper ingrained by the law, when he says that if we transgress but some any one point, we become enemies to God, and his wrath must needs be kindled against us. What shall we gain by disputing, when the determinate sentence is pronounced by the heavenly judge? There is neither appeal nor pleading that will stand us in stead. So then, let us understand, that to have the true knowledge of the Gospel, we must hold us wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ, that we put not our hope of salvation in any other thing than in his only mercy: and for the performance thereof, let every of us have an eye to his own life. For if men sift themselves thoroughly without hypocrisy or feigning, surely all cause of pleading will soon be rid away.

The Papists will not in any wise grant that only faith should make us acceptable to God, and that is because they never felt thoroughly what it is to come before God's judgment seat, but have always as it were played with the shadow of it. And therefore no marvel though they pardon themselves in all things. But the very way to bring us to the truth and to the pure and right religion, is for every of us to look into his own life, what it is. Now if there were but one mite (as you would say) amiss, it is certain that we were forthwith in danger of eternal death. But surely every of us shall find himself a sinner, not in some one point alone, but in a hundred thousand: not in some one fault, but in infinite sorts of faults. And when we shall have perceived never so many miseries in ourselves, God knows yet many more without comparison than we can: for he sees much clearer than we

do, as says Saint John in his canonical Epistle. Thus then is our pleading utterly void. Thus is sentence given that we cannot be justified by the law, but by faith only.

And now the Apostle, going forward with his matter, uses another reason, which is that if we seek righteousness in the law, the same will be a clean contrary one to the righteousness which God's children and chosen people obtain by faith. For what manner of one is the righteousness of the law, says he? [This it is.] He that does those things shall live in them: that is to say, whoever obeys God and does his commandments, shall have salvation for his labor. Lo here a fair promise: but what good will it do us? If we will assay to do the things thoroughly which are commanded us, we shall every one of us see that God shows us our condemnation so much the grievouser, as if he had set it down before us. What would become of our salvation, if we should seek it in ourselves, and be fain to earn it?

Now, therefore, when we hear that God is ready to recompense all such as shall have served and honored him by keeping of his law: it seems to us before we go any further, that we have gotten a marvelous advantage, Tush (say we): behold, God binds himself to us, and warrants us the heritage of heaven if we serve him and fulfill his will. [Yea:] but when we have compared our life to his doctrine, we shall find that his showing of himself so liberal and bountiful towards us, to bind himself to us for our serving of him and for our keeping of his law, is a plunging of us much deeper into the gulf wherein we were before. What shall we do then? We must resort to the remedy which the Apostle sets down here before us by the mouth of Habakkuk: which is that the righteous shall live by faith. Therefore let us refuse the promise of the law because it is not for our behoof, and take the free-given goodness of our God, who reaches out his

arms to receive us, so we be clear rid of all self-weening. That is the thing which is set down to us here by Saint Paul. And it is a reason that holds of contraries as they term it. As for example, if a man should say that fire heats: and another willful body should hold the contrary it might be said unto him, see if you or frost do heat or no: does it not appear that they be things diverse, repugnant, and unmatchable?

Again, if it should be demanded whether the heat of the Sun is behooful for this life or no: what a thing were it if there were no Sun in the world? we should all of us be choked with the filthiness of the air, all the corruption whereof is cleansed away by the shining of the Sun. Then like as men may reason upon contraries in the order of nature: so the Apostle says that we cannot be justified both by the law, and by the free favor of God: that is to say, if we be well-liked at God's hand, our coming into his favor must be through his own free-bestowed goodness, because he loves us in our Lord Jesus Christ, and not for any worthiness that can be in ourselves. However, for the better understanding of this doctrine. Let us mark well how it is told us here, that the righteousness of the law is the fulfilling of God's commandments. And hereby it might seem to us that the doctrine of the law were sufficient to save us, for as much as God having rehearsed the ten commandments that are contained in the law, has finally told us that that is the thing whereby we should live, the thing whereby we should direct our life, the infallible rule, and that we must not seek any other perfection of righteousness than that. And that is the very matter wherein we strive so much against the Papists, because that whereas God requires obedience, they think to do him as good service with the things that are of their own devising. Wherefore let us mark that the full perfection of all holiness is contained in the Law. Yea, verily as in respect of doctrine. For it is not lawful to add anything to it, and men do but over-labor

themselves in vain when they bring in I know not what devotions of their own devising. But it is not enough for us that the doctrine of the law does sufficiently show us what righteousness is: we come to this point also, namely whether we be able to do the things that God has enjoined us. I told you this morning, that we come far short of that.

And so the promise of the law is nothing to our behoof, and the Papists do foully overshoot themselves in that behalf. For they hold still this fantastical opinion, that God has not commanded anything which we are not able to perform. But we see the clean contrary by Saint Paul. To confirm their error, they allege, that then God mocks men, in telling them that he who does those things shall live in them. But this knot is easy to be untied. For if God gave men no remedy, it is certain that they should be utterly abashed when he says, that he who does these things shall live in them, that is to say, no man shall live. At the first blush (as I said) we may seem to have won the goal, seeing that God has told us, that by keeping his law we shall obtain his favor, and that there is a crown of glory prepared for us whereof we cannot fail: but when we have cast our cards, we must be fain to come to this point, that no man can attain to life by his own purchase or earning: for why, no man performs the law. It is not said, he who does but some one part or other of the law, shall live: but he who does all that is contained in it. What manner of thing then is the righteousness of the law? It is a full and perfect keeping of it, without missing or failing in any point at all. But such a one is not to be found among men, and therefore it follows that all of us are disappointed, and shut out from the promise that is given us in the law.

Yet it is not to be said that God mocks us, when he holds us at the staff's end, because men deceive themselves through their own pride, by boasting of their own deservings. He has good reason to hold them so at the staff's end: and if there were no law nor any such

promise, what would come of it? We know that the heathen men would always need to be in God's favor for their own virtue's sake: and yet in the meantime they knew there were many faults in them, and for that cause they retained the use of sacrificing. It is true that they understood not the end of them: yet nevertheless, their sacrificing was a plain confession that they were endangered unto God, and had need to be admitted into his favor. Likewise the Papists do at this day pack together a great deal of pelting trash, to make atonement with God. And so you see that the heathen men did at all times keep the same trade which the Papists keep at this day. But however they fared, their intent was to be saved at God's hand for their own deservings. However, God tells us that if we think he owes us anything of duty, we deceive ourselves: notwithstanding, he promises of his own free goodness, that if we keep the law we shall be reckoned for righteous before him.

But now, do we keep it? No, we come far short of it, in so much that if we consider how much we fail of it, we must needs be abashed at it. You see then how it is not without cause that God has given us that promise, though we reap no profit nor advantage by it. For it has a respect to the correcting of the pride wherewith we be so sore infected, that we must be cleansed of it by some violent remedy, or else we shall burst. And what remedy is that? Behold, God talks to us thus: Go to, you murmur at me, if I handle you not after your own liking: but I tell you, that I will not only pour out my gracious gifts and benefits upon you in this world: but also do lay up an everlasting heritage in store for you, so you serve me. Serve me, and make me a good account, and then shall you be sure that I will recompense you, both in this life and in the life to come. God's speaking after that manner is to none other end, but to stop men's mouths, and to make them acknowledge, that if God punishes them and sends them never so many afflictions, it is rightly done in so much that all such as shall

have well sifted their own lives, shall be driven to confess, yea even unfeignedly, Alas, if we be not worthy to eat bread for the sustenance of this transitory life upon earth, how can we by our own deserts get the heritage of heaven, which is a glory that belongs only unto God? How can we attain to it by our own strength? You see then that men's combs are quite cut, by God's giving of this so large and liberal promise unto them. And therewithal we have to note, that the same promise is free of itself, and yet fare we never a whit the better for any piece of it, till we have utterly let go our hold of it. This would be dark if it should not be laid forth more at large. The heathen men (as I have said already) did fully persuade themselves that they should be recompensed at God's hand, if they lived after an honest and unblamable fashion among men. But that was great folly, or rather stark madness. For how can God become indebted unto us, as it is told us in the seventeenth of Saint Luke? Though men could do better than the Angels of heaven, could they bind God to them by it? No: for they are his beforehand by nature: accordingly also as our Lord Jesus Christ alleges the similitude of a servant, not of such servants as are now-a-days, but such slaves or bondmen as were in those days. If a bondsman had been slain a hundred times for his master, yet was it at his master's will whether he should live or die still. Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ makes his allegation in this wise. Go to, you are but poor mortal creatures yourselves: and yet if any of you have a bondsman, he will hold him as an Ass or an Ox: and when the servant after sore travail and labor with great pain all the day long, returns home at night, his master will not make him to sit down at the table with him: for he has done no more than his duty and that which he was bound to do. Now then, shall God be of less authority or in worse case than mortal men? For so much as you are his, although you endeavor to walk in his obedience, yet can he not be any whit beholden to you. And so (as I have declared already) whereas God has said in his law, that he who does these things shall

live in them: what moved him to such bountifulness as to promise us everlasting life? It was not for that he owed us anything. Kill we ourselves a hundred thousand times to serve him, yet cannot that bind him to yield us any recompense. However, of his own superabundant goodness he comes and says, Although I owe you not anything at all, nor you be able to bring aught that may deserve any recompense, (for you are bound unto me in all points and all respects:) yet will I reward you for your labor. Go to therefore; settle yourselves to your duty, and do the things that I command you, and you shall not be disappointed of your payment.

Thus you see in effect what we have to remember, as I must tell you yet once again hereafter. Now the Papists will well enough grant this in part, but not commonly. For the most part (I mean of those that are the Pope's right champions) can no skill of those principles at this day. Yet will some of them grant, that whereas God has in his law promised the reward of life to such as serve him: it is to show that works are not of such value as to deserve everlasting life, but by reason of the promise.

But presuppose that God has bound himself as he has done: and then they think that we deserve: and why? For else (say they) God's promising that he who does those things shall live in them, is in vain. But they like wretched beasts (as I said before,) consider not that God says it not to show that men are able to purchase salvation by their own deserts: but rather to hold them convicted, and to bring them to true humility, which they shun continually through their foolish overweening and vain gloriousness. Now then we see that Paul's meaning is in effect, that if we go about to be justified by the law and by our own works, we must not leave anything behind nor forget anything: for it is said, he that does all those things shall live in them.

But now where is that man who is so forward, that he can boast of the full discharging of his duty towards God? None but hypocrites that are besotted in their own devilish pride, or heathenish folk that scorn God and never were moved to true repentance, but have always had their consciences asleep or rather bewitched: none (say I) but such folks do think themselves to deserve aught, and they beguile themselves. Then seeing that the righteousness of the law is shut away from us, and we be utterly barred from it: it behooves us to go to another righteousness, which is, that God take us into his favor of his own free goodness, and instead of receiving anything of our bringing, give us that thing for our payment which is none of ours, that is to wit, the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, by delivering us from the condemnation wherein we were plunged, that is to wit by putting away all our offenses and sins. As much is said of it in another place, where Saint Paul treats excellently well of the doctrine which we have here. For he does also set down the righteousness of the law. And it is a wonder that the Papists have been and yet still are so dulled, that they consider not the warning that S. Paul gives here, being so fair and clear as it is. For it is always at their tongues' end to say, what? that were a mocking out of all that God has promised, concerning the recompense that he will yield to good works. And seeing he has so often said that we shall be recompensed: must he not needs discharge his promise? For else men might accuse him of untruth. But Saint Paul tells them always thus: my friends, if we think to stand in God's favor for our own deserts: let us consider the promise that is given us. For when there is any controversy among men, either for buying or selling or for any other like thing: they will say here is the Indenture, let it be looked upon, I refer me to that which is contained in it. As soon as the deed is read, the case appears plain: and the seller will say, the ownership [of this thing] is thine, but yet upon condition that thou have paid for it. If thou have not paid, thou hast nothing to do with it. You see then that when we fall

to scanning for the inheritance of salvation, we must resort to the chief and original deed or Indenture, that God made between himself and us. Now, that deed or Indenture is the Law. Therefore if men will needs be paid their wages according to their service, they shall find themselves rather to be banished from the everlasting life, than to come anything near it. God may say to them that if they perform all that is commanded them, the heritage of salvation is ready for them. But now remains to be seen whether any man can perform all or no. I have showed you already that no man is able to do it: and so are we every one of us shut quite out of the doors. The Papists consider not that: but when they hear it said that he who does those things shall live in them: they bear themselves in hand, that that there is no more doubt of the doing thereof: it is enough that God says the word. In deed God speaks the word, but he requires the performance of it at our hands. After the same manner also do they take this text of Saint Paul where he says, not the hearers of the law, but the doers of it shall be justified. The Papists allege that saying, however but to pick out their own eyes withal. For S. Paul proves thereby that we cannot be justified but by performing all that is commanded us. The Jews boasted that the Law was given unto them, saying: Tush, we have the Law whereby it is told us that we be God's people. Yea, but it is with condition. And where is [the performance of] that condition? Will it be found in you? No. But S. Paul says that we become not righteous by hearing of the Law.

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And in good faith, when we have well considered the circumstance of the text that Saint Paul alleges from the Prophet Habakkuk: we shall see plainly that that is the thing whereunto the Holy Ghost leads us. For the Prophet had spoken of the chastisements and corrections which God would send upon the people: so as (to look unto) all should seem to be confounded. Now thereupon he says, that the wicked shall but swell more and more in their pride, however that they shall have no sure footing, but shall stumble with all their sway, and because they will needs exalt themselves, they shall the more cast themselves down, with so much the sorer and fouler fall. That then is the thing which the prophet utters against the wicked. And he adds on the contrary part, but the righteous shall live by faith. Now whereas he says that the righteous shall live it is all one as if he had said, that God's children shall not find their life near at hand in themselves, but that even when they shall have traveled over all the world, up and down, it shall seem to them that there is nowhere anything else than the very dungeons of death, and yet notwithstanding that missing of a present life, they shall find a life to come, when they shall have nourished it in their hearts and minds by faith.

We see then that the Prophet's intent is to draw God's chosen both from the world and from themselves, to the end they may cleave wholly unto him, and not seek any other means to be saved than by

his only grace. But Saint Paul has spoken more briefly here, because he was fully resolved of all that I have declared heretofore, and which he himself has discoursed, that is to wit, That faith teaches us to seek all our welfare in God. But the Law teaches us the contrary. I say it teaches us it, to the end to show us that to seek it thoroughly, we must acknowledge that there is not so much as one drop of life in us. The Law then says unto us, go to, take you pains, and do you so much as you may win heaven by it. And why does the Law say so? Not to feed men in their vain self-trust, of weening still that they can deserve well at God's hand, it is not for that: but to prepare them to receive the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with lowliness. For (as I have said already) when we keep ourselves aloof from God, and every man bears himself in hand that he is well worthy to be accepted of him: our Lord will surely be avenged of such presumptuousness, and says, Go to, let me see what you have done: come on, and let us fall to reckoning: and let him that owes aught to other pay it. You shall not be disappointed by me: I have your wages in my hand, it is ready for you, and if you shall have done all that I have commanded you, fear not but you shall be well paid for your labor.

Therefore, hie you apace, and let me see how you will serve me. But (as I said) our Lord in saying so, prepares and disposes us to know in what plight we be. For when we once perceive our own need, then will we seek our wants at his hand. Thus you see how the Law leads us to faith: but it is a strange kind of leading. However the case stands, there is always this contrariety which Saint Paul sets down here, namely that we cannot be justified by faith, except we have first known and acknowledged unfeignedly, that we be damned in ourselves, and that the ground of our welfare is to know that there is nothing but damnation in us. Now at the first sight it might be said that Saint Paul has stretched this saying of Habakkuk too far, seeing he spoke there but of the afflictions of this transitory life. "The

righteous shall live," that is to say, he shall hold out, and although God afflict him and scourge him, yet shall he not quail if he ground himself upon God's promises. And here the case concerns not God's comforting and delivering of us from the miseries whereunto we be subject in this world: but it concerns our everlasting salvation, which far surpasses all the state of this transitory life. It seems therefore that Saint Paul applies not this Text of the Prophet aright. However, let us mark, that if the Prophet had looked no further than to this world, that saying of his had been very vain, seeing that afflictions are common both to good and bad. Again, how is it that we live by faith? Seeing we be continually subject to fall into the same danger wherefrom God has delivered me once, twice, or thrice before, and that if God have pitied me in some affliction today, so as I have felt his favor, he afflicts me tomorrow with some other affliction: what were my life if I rested upon the world?

So then, the Prophet meant to declare that although the faithful are miserable and do but pine away in this world, yet notwithstanding they are blessed of God even in this world, and all the misery which they endure here shall turn to their welfare: for why they rest themselves upon their God. Wherefore we must understand that there is a better heritage than this, and that we seek the true and everlasting happiness, so as we may have a steadfast continuance of our state.

But the word Righteousness ought also to be well marked. For if Habakkuk had said, the wretched sinners shall live by faith: it would have seemed that he had spoken but to a few folk. For it will well enough be granted that wretched sinners should flee for refuge unto God: but as for those that excel in virtue, ought they not to be exempted from the common array, and to be exalted to a higher degree at God's hand, and finally to be justified by prerogative?

Accordingly, as we see nowadays that although there be nothing but all manner of filth in the Popish Ceremonies and Clergy as they term it, so as they ought to be abhorred both of God and man: yet notwithstanding, under color of their Cowls, and all other their trumpery, they cease not to challenge God to be greatly in their debt. And besides this, when these dotards have made much babbling, and trotted and scudded up and down from altar to altar, and from Chapel to Chapel, and gadded on pilgrimage: to their seeming, God ought not to forget any of these doings, but all of it ought to pass for good payment in their account, besides an hundred thousand other Items which they have to set down before him. And that is the cause why our Lord Jesus Christ says, that the wretched low livers, yea even the very whoremongers shall much sooner come to the kingdom of heaven, than any of all these foul toads that are so puffed up with the vain trust of their own deserts, that although their whole life be wicked, and they themselves are full of all loathsomeness, yet they will needs bind God unto them, under the shadow of their hypocrisy.

Now to the intent to cut off all occasion of such imaginations, the Prophet says purposely, that the righteous shall live by faith. At the first sight, there should seem to be some contrariety in these two sayings. How so? Must we to the intent to be righteous live by faith? Yes: for if we live not by faith, we are not righteous. For what is the righteousness of the Gospel? It is God's free giving us a convenient remedy whereby to come unto him, and to be in his favor through our Lord Jesus Christ, because we cannot obtain righteousness by the law. Therefore, whosoever lives by faith is out of doubt not righteous of himself. But the Prophet says, that those notwithstanding are righteous, which are saved by God's only and free mercy. Therefore, it is as much as if he had said, that although God gives us the grace to employ ourselves to his service, and have by his holy spirit imprinted in our hearts the true fear and honor

which we owe unto him, so as we fight against the lusts of our flesh to the utmost of our power, and strive against the sin that is in us, and in our nature: yet must we shut our eyes at all the things which we would fain find in ourselves to please God with, and rest wholly upon our Lord Jesus Christ.

If the righteous must be fain to be justified by faith: who shall be justified by his own deservings? None will take upon them, but Devils, wicked wights, and enemies of God. You [Papists] say you seek to be righteous: and how? Even by yourselves, and by your own works and deservings.

Well, let us consider what the Prophet says: he says not that the righteous shall live by their works, but that they shall be saved by the only grace of God. Now if the righteous give over all self-trust of their own merits, as of force they must needs do: it is certain that such as think to make God indebted unto them, by bringing any virtue of their own unto him, do wipe and raze themselves quite and clean out of the register of righteousness. Thus you see that the Papists, so long as they dwell in their error, are rejected of God, according to the sentence which he gives upon them here by his Prophet.

And undoubtedly when Saint Paul alleges this saying of David, "Happy is he to whom God imputes not his sins," he shows well thereby, that those men are most righteous which do most condemn themselves, and are most stricken down, yea and are utterly out of all hope of themselves, till God has succored them by his goodness. Now, when David cried out, "happy is the man to whom God imputes not his sins," he was not a naughtypack, nor an unthrifty, nor a despiser of God, that had never tasted what it was to enter into his own conscience, and to ransack his sins to the quick: but contrariwise God had chosen him, and anointed him by Samuel, he

was an excellent Prophet, his reign was a figure of our Lord Jesus Christ, and finally God wrought so in him, that he was as an Angel dwelling among men. And yet for all this, he confesses and acknowledges his sins, and in confessing of them does sorrow and mourn, and is in such unquietness as if he were tormented upon a rack or torture, till God was so gracious to him as to make him taste of his goodness, and he knew no ease till God had received him to mercy.

Then if God vouchsafe to forbear the examining of our works, that is all our happiness: the only way for us to become happy, is to have our sins covered, and to be in God's favor, howbeit not in respect of aught that is in ourselves, but by his turning away of his countenance from us damned wretches, so as he considers us not as of ourselves, but accepts us for his only son's sake, accordingly as we see how David speaks of it in another text, saying: "Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant, for I know that no man living shall be found righteous in thy sight."

Therefore let us mark well, that according as each man shall have profited in the fear of God, so also will he be the more abashed at his sins, not for three or four months, but so as he shall abhor them all his life long, forasmuch as he sees that hell is always ready to swallow him up at one chop, if God supplied not his wants, and drew him not as it were out of the gulf of death. And therefore it is said that the righteous shall live by faith, to the end that the same should serve as a lesson, not for a three or four months only, nor for those only which are not of so perfect life as other men: but as a lesson that God speaks, even to such as are the most excellent. And surely, that also is the thing whereunto we must refer the word Live, so as we may live not for a little while, nor for a day, nor for two or three months, but

continually in God's free goodness, and seek the same from day to day, even to the end.

And although our life be hidden in this world (as Saint Paul says) and we see nothing but death before us: yet let us not cease to repose ourselves upon this promise, that our life is sure for as much as God has taken it into his custody, and will keep it safely, and thereto has left us so good a pledge of it, that is to wit, our Lord Jesus Christ, who died and is risen again for us, and therefore we shall not need to say any more, who shall go up into heaven, or who shall go down into the deep, or who shall pass over the sea? For the word is in our mouth and in our heart, inasmuch as we know that our Lord Jesus Christ went down to hell, that is to say (as we shall see in the next sermon by God's leave) that he became accursed for us, which is the thing that must content us: and afterward went up into heaven, whereof the gate is opened unto us, ever since he entered in thither in our behalf.

Therefore let us take all our hold there, and suffer ourselves to be as poor dead men in this world, waiting for the discovery of the life that is promised us: for no doubt but God will in due time discover it and manifestly show it unto us, in such wise as we shall fully enjoy it as it is preached to us by his Gospel.

And now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us feel them more and more, and that we may be so touched with them, as it may beat us flat down before him, and make us sigh and groan under the burden of our infirmities and vices wherewith we be hemmed in, till he have cleansed us thoroughly of them: and praying him also to bear with us during this mortal life, till he have fully delivered us from the bondage of sin, and from the bonds of Satan wherein we be

held as now, till he have set us utterly free from them. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people, etc.

The Nineteenth Sermon,

which is the fifth upon the third Chapter.

> 13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law in that he was made accursed for us: (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone that hangs on tree")
>
> 14 To the end that the blessedness of Abraham should come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith.

We have seen already that if we hope not to be saved by some other means than by discharging our duty, we should all of us be accursed, because we all are guilty before God [in that we are found] to have transgressed and done amiss many ways. For there was never yet any of the holiest men so perfect but that there was always some blemish, yea and store of infirmities in him. Therefore, it is to be concluded that if God should call us to account, we should all be damned and forlorn. Lo, in what plight men are, though they set never so much store by themselves.

But now it stands us on hand to have some means to escape this cursedness. Else what shall it avail us to have our ears beaten daily

with God's word? For His will shall serve but to plunge us still deeper in eternal death. To the end, therefore, that God's word may be profitable to us and available to our salvation, it lies upon us to get us out of the said sentence of damnation, which is given and proclaimed upon all mankind. And Saint Paul shows us here the means, namely that Christ has redeemed us, even by becoming accursed for us. He shows us that our Lord Jesus Christ was not hanged upon a tree in vain: for He was fain to bear the cursedness of all such as were to be called to salvation. You see we are all accursed, as I have declared already; and therefore was our Lord fain to receive in His person the thing that was due unto us.

Now it was written in the Law of Moses, "Cursed shall he be that hangs on tree." When our Lord commands the body to be taken down, He adds that it is a cursed sight to behold a man so disfigured, [and therefore] let it be taken down, says He. And at such time as God pronounced the said sentence, that he who should be hanged on a tree should be as it were accursed and banned, He knew well enough what He had determined of His own only Son. For our Lord Jesus Christ suffered not that kind of death by chance, nor at man's pleasure or appointment. It is true that the unbelievers crucified Him: but that was because God had so ordained it by His own purpose, according as it is said, that God so loved the world, that He spared not His only begotten Son, but delivered Him to death for us.

And in good sooth, if only Judas's betraying of our Lord Jesus Christ had been the cause of His death, and that He had been haled to that kind of death by only violence, it could not be the foundation of our welfare. It behooves us to note that God had appointed the matter after that sort beforehand; according also as Saint Peter treats thereof more fully in the fourth chapter of the Acts, where he says that our Lord Jesus was so crucified by the wicked, as they attempted

not anything but that which had been determined beforehand in God's purpose.

Now then, whereas it is said that our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, we must come to this point, that all was done for our salvation, because it was God's will to reconcile us to Himself by that means: and that when He pronounced this sentence, "Cursed is he that hangs on tree," so as it was His pleasure to have it registered in the law of Moses, He was not ignorant what should happen afterward: for He had already determined and ordained it. Then must we match these two things together: that is to wit, that God with His own mouth said determinately that whoever hung upon tree should be accursed; and yet for all that, that it was His will therewithal that His own Son should be hanged on tree. And why so? To the end He should bear our burden, according as He is our pledge, and ordained to be the principal debtor in our behalf.

To the end then that we might be set free from the curse of the Law, Jesus Christ became accursed. Now at the first sight it might seem hard and strange that the Lord of glory, He that has all sovereign dominion, and before whose majesty the very angels of heaven do tremble and are abashed, should be subject to cursing. But we must go back to that which Saint Paul has treated of in the first to the Corinthians, namely that the doctrine of the Gospel is foolishness to mankind, yea even to the wisest of them: and that it was God's will to humble us after that manner because of our unthankfulness.

For we should have a good instruction to lead us unto God, yea even in wisdom, if we could profit ourselves by the things that are showed us in the whole order of heaven and earth. But forasmuch as men are blind and shut their eyes against this wisdom that God sets before them: therefore He is fain to take a new way to the wood, and to

draw them to Him as it were by folly. So then let us not judge after our own mother wit of the thing that is declared here, which is, that the Son of God was put under the curse; but rather let us be ravished at such a secret, and give the glory unto our God, seeing He has so loved our souls as to pay so inestimable a price for the ransoming of them. And so little ought this thing to imbace the majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ, or to deface that which is given Him in the holy Scripture: as we rather have cause to glorify Him the more for it.

And for proof thereof, our Lord Jesus Christ (as Saint Paul says) committed no robbery when he showed himself in his infinite glory. And yet notwithstanding, he abased himself willingly, and not only clothed himself with our nature and became a passible man, but also submitted himself to a death that was both shameful before men, yea and accursed before God. Then it must needs be that we were very dear unto him, seeing he yielded himself to such extremity for our redemption. If we could taste the meaning hereof, surely we would give ourselves wholly to the magnifying of that grace, which cannot be sufficiently expressed by words, and surpasses all wisdom of man.

Seeing, therefore, that we comprehend it not, nor can utter the hundredth part of it, let us yet be as it were astonished at it in considering so much of it as we are able to comprehend. But here we see still the lewdness and frowardness of men, in that whereas Saint Paul says that our Lord Jesus Christ became accursed for us, it passes and slips away from us. Yea, and there are some so lewd that they take occasion of stumbling and of flinging out of the way, and of estranging themselves quite and clean from the Church, when they hear this manner of our redeeming set before us. What (say they) was it of necessity that the Son of God, who is the fountain of all goodness and ought to make us all holy, should be cursed? It seems to them that God in so doing meant to pervert all order and reason.

But (as I have declared already) it is certain that God condemns men's unkindness by bringing them to such a kind of foolishness, because they came not to him by wisdom when he showed them that way. Nevertheless, however the case stands, needs must our wits shrink and our reason be utterly confounded, so as we may honor God's secrets and wonder at them, though they be hidden from us. And again, whenever it is said unto us that the Son of God became accursed for us, it would become us to enter into the examination of our sins. In so doing, we shall perceive how loathly we be before God, till our sins and offenses be washed away by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Had all the angels of heaven undertaken for us, it had been no sufficient bail. Then was there none other satisfaction than the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. And he came not into the world to discharge us of the bond of everlasting death wherein we were bound, by his divine and heavenly power. How then? By weakness. And not only so, but also he was fain to be counted accursed, or else we should have lain still overwhelmed with the burden, and have perished all of us in that gulf.

Therefore, when we see that the Son of God, who not only is the unspotted Lamb and the mirror of all righteousness, holiness, and perfection, but also the very wellspring thereof, was held accursed for us: ought we not at the sight thereof to conceive such a terror for our sins, that we should be as good as swallowed up with despair, till we be plucked back again by the infinite grace and goodness of our God? So then let us mark well that when it is told us that we were ransomed from the curse of the Law, God intends thereby to bring us to true humility. But that cannot be unless men be utterly confounded in themselves, so as they be ashamed to look upon themselves, and therewithal also afraid and dismayed, knowing that

God's wrath waits ready for them, till our Lord Jesus Christ do remedy the matter.

Thus you see that all our whole life is loathsome before God, and there is no way for us to come to atonement with him till our Lord Jesus Christ takes upon him the cursedness that is in us and bears it in his own person. And therefore, as often as we read this text, let every one of us awake and set himself before God's judgment seat, that we may feel there as it were a gulf to swallow us up quite and clean, and thereat be abashed for very shame of ourselves. And on the other side, so much the more magnify the grace that is purchased for us in the person of the Son of God, and keep ourselves warily from diminishing his dignity, in that he is said to be accursed: and rather thereby be the more provoked to yield him his due and deserved praise, for that he has shown himself to esteem our welfare so highly.

Furthermore, let us make our profit of that pledge of our salvation and of the love that God bears us, so as we doubt not but that God likes well of us when we come to him, seeing he has bought us so dear, that (as Saint Peter tells us in his first canonical Epistle) it was neither gold nor silver nor any corruptible thing, but it was our Lord Jesus Christ himself that was paid for our ransom.

Therefore, let us not doubt but that mercy is ready for us, as often as we seek it in his name. For if we should come with any opinion of our own deservings, what were that worth? But when we know how dearly the Son is beloved of the Father, and how precious his death was, that is the thing wherein we have full certainty that God will always hear us, and that we shall find him merciful and favorable towards us, namely if we rest wholly upon that which is told us here:

which is, that our Lord Jesus Christ forbore not even to become accursed for our sakes.

Here withal let us mark how Saint Paul says that by that means the promise of the Spirit came unto the Gentiles, as it had been given unto Abraham. Now, by naming Abraham here, he shows that the promise belonged first and foremost to those that came of his race. For the Jews had as it were a peculiar interest in the heritage of salvation, till such time as God opened the gate to the whole world and published his Gospel to the end that all men should be made partakers of the redemption that was purchased by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now then, although the said promise belonged to the Jews and was after a sort peculiar to them, yet was it afterward made common to the whole world. And why? For it consists in spirit, and not in ceremonies. By this word "Spirit," Saint Paul meant to deface all the false opinion of those deceivers who mingled the Law and the Gospel together. He shows that all these things, namely the sacrifices, circumcision, and such other things, are now superfluous. Not that there is no profit for us to gather by the ceremonies in reading the Law, but because the use of them is abolished.

You see then that the cause why the promise is at this day called spiritual is that we have no more need of the old shadows and figures, but are simply called and guided to our God, so as we may call upon him with full trust, and being so adopted by him, rest wholly upon our Lord Jesus Christ, as the only foundation of the Gospel, and seek all our wants in him. That in effect is the thing that Saint Paul meant to say in this text.

And hereupon he uses another reason to show that we have our salvation perfectly revealed in the Gospel, and need not any other

doctrine than that, and also that we are justified by the free mercy of our God. For the Law (says he) was given four hundred and thirty years after the promise of salvation. Now when any covenant is made, though it be but between men, yet ought it to be kept, if it be once thoroughly agreed upon. Therefore, it follows that the Law was not given to disannul the covenant that God had made with Abraham, chiefly in the behalf of his lineage, and finally in the behalf of the whole world.

True it is that at the first blush this argument of Saint Paul's may seem very weak: for we know that second covenants do always repeal former covenants; in so much that although men have made any bargain, yet they may advise themselves better, and thereupon change their minds, and so the first bargain shall be as good as buried. As much is to be said of laws and statutes. For a former law may well be repealed and disannulled by a second law.

But Saint Paul presupposes the thing that is to be considered in this matter: which is, that when a man has once promised, yea and solemnly bound himself, he will not go back again but be as good as his word. However, if both the parties agree to change the thing that they had consented on, and be both of one mind, then may it be so. But it were no fit similitude to take men that are fickle-minded and changeable through lightness, or by better advice: but Saint Paul presupposes a covenant to be made by a man that will stand to it, and not fall to scanning afterward how to shift it off by any means at all. For if any of the parties should do against the former covenant, it were a falsehood that were not to be borne with among men, because the things that are in registered so solemnly ought to be stood to and performed without any gainsaying.

Now then, shall there be less steadfastness in God than in men, which are nothing but vanity? The Gospel therefore must continue unimpeached, notwithstanding that the Law came in after the making of the free promise. This would be still dark if it should not be declared in order.

I have showed heretofore what comparison Saint Paul makes between the Law and the Gospel. For whereas God promises salvation in his Law, it is upon condition that men serve him and do their duty towards him. But that is not done: and therefore are we shut out from all hope of salvation as in respect of the Law, not that God is not faithful on his side, but because we keep not touch with him in performing that which he requires.

It is all one as if a man should say, I am ready to sell you this thing, so you bring me money. Now if a man bring neither money nor money's worth, he cannot be put in possession of the thing [that he would have]: for the condition is that he must first pay for it. So then, God promises us the heritage of salvation when we shall have served him, but we are never the better for it because it is but upon condition that we perform that which he requires of us. And we are fraughted with all iniquity, and have not anything in us but uncleanness and filth, in so much that we are justly odious unto him. And so are we all condemned in the law; however, God receives us of his free goodness in our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom he offers us the forgiveness of our sins. And he will have us to embrace his offered goodness so that we should hold ourselves wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ and utterly renounce ourselves.

But now, says Saint Paul, let us see whether went before other in antiquity: the free promise of salvation, or the law. We know the diversity that is between them. Then if the law were the ancienter, it

might seem that that ought to be sticked to because God never unsays his words nor is variable. But if the free promise were the elder, and were made before the law was published, it is to be concluded that God repented him not, nor called back his promise at that time, nor meant to disannul the said covenant.

For it were too great a diminishing of his bounty and mercy if we should say that he had first bound himself of his own free goodness and promised men salvation without their desert, and afterward intended to restrain it, as though he meant to enrich himself with our good works. It were an awkward thing to talk after that fashion. For Saint Paul shows that the free promise was given before the law, and therefore it follows that the law came not in to diminish or alter any whit of it, but that it continues still in his own fullness, nature, and force.

True it is that our Lord Jesus Christ had not yet showed himself to the world when the free promise was made to our father Abraham. Nevertheless, it suffices that he was ordained to be our mediator, that by his means men might be reconciled to God. Now if any man allege that it should seem then that the law was more than needed, or else that there was some change and variableness in God's purpose, seeing the law came in, Saint Paul discusses the same in place convenient, and we must not huddle up things together, for all cannot be uttered at once, neither in an hour nor in a day.

Therefore it is enough for us at this time to have this point made plain and clear, that the promise whereby God has chosen us into the number of his children was before the law, and also that the same promise had not any respect to our deservings, nor to any worthiness that was in our persons, but to God's mere goodness and mercy, which moved him thereunto without looking for anything in us,

because he saw well enough there was nothing in us but utter misery. And finally, that the said promise was grounded in our Lord Jesus Christ, who had already done the office of a mediator to make us way unto God his father.

This being granted, we must needs conclude that the promise hath abided and shall abide forever, even to the world's end. And that is said expressly because the Jews gloried of their ancestry. But Saint Paul tells them that their father Abraham had not the law but was contented though he used sacrifices and such other like things. And although he was circumcised in the end, yet when he received the promise, there was not as yet then any law written, nor any circumcision at all. For Abraham was uncircumcised when he received the promise, and yet nevertheless was justified before he was circumcised, and all that was by faith.

Saint Paul therefore shows that the Jews were greatly overseen to sole out themselves after that manner from the rest of the whole world, and to rest continually upon the figures of the law, seeing that Abraham their father and the chief patriarch of the Church was justified the same way that we must be at this day, that is to say, by God's mere mercy, because he knew himself to be a wretched sinner, and therefore accursed and damned in Adam, and that there was no blessedness to be hoped for other than that which was promised him for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake.

Thus you see what we have to bear in mind. And for the same cause Saint Paul exhorts us here to weigh well these words when it was said unto Abraham, that all nations of the earth should be blessed in his seed.

Now there are here two principal points. The one is that blessedness

is promised not only to Abraham's fleshly offspring (as I have told you already) but also to all the world in general. We, therefore, are made partakers thereof, we, I say, that are issued of the Gentiles, that is to say, of such as were heathen folk and banished from the kingdom of heaven.

Although then we were not of that holy lineage which God had chosen at the beginning, yet notwithstanding it behooved salvation to be extended unto us. And why so? For it had been promised before that all Nations should be blessed. Seeing it is so, shall we say that God has cut off the greatest part of his bounteousness and will have no more but the said lineage of Abraham, considering that he has already told us that he would be the savior of the whole world and show himself a father in time convenient?

You see then how the first point is that the making of the said promise unto Abraham was not for his lineage alone but for all men, albeit that it was not fulfilled at the first dash. For the time of fullness was not yet come as we shall see in the Chapter following.

The second point is that the blessedness which was promised to Abraham was for his seed's sake. For Saint Paul says that God spoke not of seeds in the plural number as of more than one, but of one only seed, which must be concluded to be Jesus Christ.

Here it might be supposed that Saint Paul busied his head about a needless matter. For the word "Seed" imports a lineage or offspring, that is to wit, not some one man or ten or forty, but a whole people. Therefore, the Seed of Abraham is the people that came of him, which were so many in number that it was justly said of them that they should be as it were twelve Nations.

When mention is made of a people, it will be thought enough to have a hundred thousand of them together, and there were many more in the only tribe of Judah. So then it should seem that Saint Paul did not sufficiently consider what God meant by the word "seed" when he said that it is but one only man. But we must weigh well the things that Saint Paul presupposes here as fully certain and resolute, and then shall we perceive his arguments to be utterly infallible.

Abraham had not one son alone, but after Ishmael, he had Isaac also. And what became of his eldest son? He was cut off from his house, as we shall see shortly, that is to say in the Chapter following. Behold then, Ishmael, who had the birthright in Abraham's house, is nevertheless put out and made an utter stranger, yea, and as a rotten member, insomuch that it is said of him, "Cast out the son of the handmaiden, for he shall not inherit in my house."

Afterward, Abraham had other children, but every one of them had their portions given unto them and were sent away. Thus was only Isaac left at home unto him. Anon after, Isaac had a couple of children, and they were twins of one womb. Esau, the firstborn, who ought to have had the preferment, was likewise cast off, so as he was not counted for the lineage of Abraham, nor yet was made partaker of the promised blessing. There was no more left but Jacob.

Yea, and although the father blessed his son Jacob through ignorance and mistaking, yet he declares that it was not in him to revoke or change the thing that he had uttered with his mouth because he was the instrument of the Holy Ghost.

Now then if we take the seed of Abraham for all those that came of his race: the Ishmaelites or Agarenes (as they be called) and such others like, and moreover the Edomites also should be of his household. But the heritage is taken quite and clean from them.

Therefore, the seed of Abraham must be considered after a peculiar fashion. Let us go forward with the whole process.

We see that without faith there should be no bond to knit any Church together, nor any assurance whereby to know which is the seed of Abraham, or to discern it from the rest of the world, but by resorting to the head, that is to wit to our Lord Jesus Christ.

You see then that the union of the body dependeth upon the head, that is to wit upon the Redeemer. Seeing it doth so, not without cause doth Saint Paul say that it was not spoken of many seeds, but that we must come to one man if we will have the spiritual people, that is to say if we will have the Church of God, our Lord Jesus Christ must be the mark that we must begin to look at, and we must be gathered unto him. And those that are of his body and cleave unto him by faith are the folk that are reckoned for God's children and household, and are verily the seed of Abraham, as he discourses more at large in the Epistle to the Romans, where he says that all they which come of the seed of Israel after the flesh are not therefore Israelites. And why? For there was but one promised child, which was Isaac.

So then we must come to our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom all God's promises are Yea and Amen, and in whom they have their substance. For without him, there is nothing else but scattering. And therefore, it is said in the first Chapter, to the Colossians, that our Lord Jesus Christ's office is to gather together all things that were scattered, as well in heaven as in earth, and that without him, all should go to wreck.

But now we see more clearly what Saint Paul's meaning is, that before the law was published to the world (whereupon was put and added this condition, that it behooved us to fulfill all that is contained therein), God had yielded a record of his will beforehand:

which was, that because he saw mankind damned and forlorn, he intended to draw out a chosen sort to himself and to be merciful to them. And that was not for one lineage alone, but for all nations as the scripture expresses. And there of the foundation was laid in our Lord Jesus Christ.

For as much then as our Lord Jesus Christ was already in the time of Abraham, ordained to be a mediator to make atonement between God and us, so that if we go in his name to seek favor, it is ready for us, and we cannot be disappointed of our hope; seeing it is so established, there is no change, but we must assure ourselves that God accepts us at this day, so we rest wholly upon our Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that it was no uncertain covenant which was so ratified in his name, but that it shall endure forever and be always of force.

You see then that we may come freely before God and call upon him as our father, because he has adopted us for his children, which thing he has not done in respect of any worthiness that was in us, but of his own mere mercy, and because we are made one with our Lord Jesus Christ by faith.

And by the way, just as we must reject all opinion and imagination of obtaining favor at God's hand by our own deservings, and of assuring our own salvation, so must we look well to that which is told us here, namely that we cannot be partakers of such a benefit but by faith.

Now (as I have said before), faith imports an embracing of God's mercy, which thing cannot be done except we are touched earnestly with our own wretchedness; for it is not for naught that our Lord Jesus Christ sets our cursedness before us as it were in a glass, by taking upon him to be accursed for us.

Faith, therefore, cannot be without repentance, for it is impossible that we should seek our welfare in God or desire mercy at his hand until misery touches us to the quick and makes us to dislike of it. And so, these scoffers who mock God, weltering still in their vices, and being as it were sodden in them, must not look that ever Jesus Christ should reckon them in the number of his, for they cannot by any means come at him, neither does he call any other, than such as are so overloaded and wearied as they can no longer hold out, and lie groaning under the burden of their sins.

Thus you see how it behooves us to resort to our Lord Jesus Christ, and that although we cannot bring any desert unto him, and that all the Ceremonies of the law, and all the offers that we can make unto him, do nothing at all further our salvation, yet we must be prepared to such lowliness, as we may perceive our state to be right miserable, till God have taken us to his mercy; and we must be so beaten down in ourselves, as we may feel the curse that should light upon us if we were not ransomed with so high and excellent a price, as I have declared heretofore.

You see then that by faith we receive the promise of the spirit, and thereby are linked to our Lord Jesus Christ and to the spiritual seed of Abraham. For although we are not born of his lineage, yet it is enough that we be made at one with him by faith. For then are we begotten again of that incorruptible seed whereof Saint Peter speaks, that is to wit of God's word such as it is contained in the Gospel. And being so begotten again, we know that God avows us to be of the body of his only son.

And although we come of the Gentiles, yet fail we not for all that to be joined to the Church, whereunto there needeth no more but only faith; and as for all merits and virtues of men, they must utterly cease

in that behalf, and men must acknowledge that they cannot bring anything but confusion, so as they must be fain to seek all at God's hand, and that by the means which he himself has appointed.

Now since it is so, let us learn to leave our wandering here and there as we see lightheaded men do, who are never contented with that which God tells them, but are ever adding somewhat of their own device. Let us beware of such mingling as shall be treated of more at large after dinner by God's will.

And let Jesus Christ alone suffice us, seeing that our welfare depends wholly upon him alone, and we shall want nothing if we be partakers of him, as we see how Saint Paul brings us back to that point.

Furthermore, let us learn also to hold us to God's truth, assuring ourselves that he cannot abide to have any adding unto it, because that were a marring, reversing, and falsifying of his covenant wherein our welfare consists.

But when we have once embraced our Lord Jesus Christ, let us abide fast in him, and let him suffice us for all; and then may we call upon God with full mouth, knowing well that although we be of the race of cursed Adam, yet notwithstanding forasmuch as we be blessed again in Jesus Christ, he acknowledges us always for his children, because we be grounded upon the free adoption, which not without cause he willed to be published throughout the whole world, to the intent we might have the gate opened and the way made easy for us to come unto him.

But now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us perceive them more and more, that we may in such wise dislike of them as we may labor and endeavor ourselves to honor and serve him in true

obedience all our life long; and whereas we cannot do it to the full (for that is impossible considering our frailty), that he will hold us up till he have rid us of all the corruptions of our flesh and clothed us again with his own righteousness, the which he begins in us already as now and gives us certain first fruits of it, to assure us that he will perform the thing that he has begun. And so let us all say, Almighty God heavenly father, &c.

The Twentieth Sermon,

which is the sixth upon the third Chapter.

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men. Although it be but a man's Testament, [yet] if it be proved, no man breaks it, or puts [aught] to it.

16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and his seed. He says not, and to the seeds as speaking of many, but as of one, and in thy seed, which is Christ.

17 This is what I say, as touching the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ: the law which came four hundred and thirty years after, cannot impeach or abolish the promise.

18 For if the inheritance come by the law, then comes it not of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

It were great shame for us if God should bear no more sway with us than mortal creatures. For what comparison is there between his majesty and the state of men which are but a fading shadow? And yet notwithstanding it is an ordinary matter with men to prefer themselves before God: which is so ugly a thing, that if the Sun were matched with the darkness of hell, it were not so great a confusion, as to exalt men above him to whom all honor belongs. But however the case stands, it is a vice (as I said) which has evermore reigned and still reigns at this day too much in the world. For look what man speaks, it shall straightways be believed: and if folk be loath to do it of their own good will, yet must they be fain to hold them to it in all matters that are allowed by law.

Behold, God speaks, yes, and that right substantially, so as he overslips not anything that may give credit and assuredness to his word: and yet notwithstanding we be always in a mammering, or else we fall to flat reasoning against him. Must it not needs be then that we be out of our wits, when we diminish God's authority after that fashion, and yield more credit to creatures than to him that made both heaven and earth with his only word, and maintains all things by the same? That is the cause why Saint Paul in this text uses this preface: "I speak" (says he) "after the manner of men." For if he had said no more but this: "Covenants shall be kept here below without breaking or repealing, and therefore needs must God's promise be everlasting:" that had been true, but yet had he spoken too coldly of God's majesty, in ranking him so in array among earthly creatures. But whereas he says that he speaks after the manner of men: it is all one as if he had said that he uses not such manner of style and speech as might beseem to treat of the majesty of God. For both the Sun and Moon, ought to forgo their brightness when God's glory comes in presence. All of it must needs be darkened: what shall then become of those that are but as flies & frogs crawling upon the earth?

For make men never so much of their painted sheath, yet they are less than naught worth before God.

Now when we hear this, we should be the more restrained, that we use no replying, but with all reverence take in good worth the thing that is told us here: that is to wit, that if God have vouchsafed to give them full assuredness of their salvation, which receive the promise that is preached unto them: we must not take upon us to reason against him. For when a deed is passed among men, if it be entered of record, it shall be received and go for good evidence: and what then shall be done when God shall have opened his holy mouth to bear us record of his good will? Is there any solemnity among men that comes near to the glory of God, who will have us to stick to that which he has spoken and uttered? True it is (as I have touched already) that we ought to fight against the lewdness which is rooted in us, to yield credit unto God: for we are so bent to mistrustfulness that not one word of the things which God has uttered shall ever have settling in our hearts, except we have fought against the vice wherein we are so sore entangled.

So then, every of us when he comes to be taught in God's word, must examine what is in himself: and when he sees himself subject still to many distrusts and doubts, he must dislike of it, and pray God to touch all his senses in such wise to the quick, that he may rest wholly upon the thing which he hears [at his hand] according also as it is the office of the holy Ghost, to seal in our hearts the truth which is certain enough of itself, howbeit that it be not certain unto us, till it be assured to us from above. For if we were of our own moving inclined to believe God: the Holy Ghost should not need to work in that behalf.

But it is said that he is the very seal wherewith God marks us, and whereby he imprints and engraves in our hearts the things which else should never be received. Yea, and we must also mark well that Saint Paul sets down here two words, namely that no man diminishes or disannuls the thing that is authorized among men by lawful and orderly means, nor also adds anything to it. For although we are not always utter rebels, yet our wits still tickle us to make some additions and glosses to God's word, and we cannot abide to hold us to the simplicity that is contained there.

Then if we consider well what we be without self-soothing, every of us shall find two vices in us. The one is that when God has spoken unto us, we cannot thoroughly consent to say Amen unfailingly, or to accept his promises, or to be moved at his threatenings. Men will always use shifts, and we need not to seek far for example thereof: for (as I said) we have experience of it in ourselves. The other is that although we yield God his due honor in believing his word to be true and infallible, yet we will always be adding unto it, and that do we see too much in the Papacy. Whereof comes that confusion or mazework which we see to be in the serving of God, the great number and diversity of fashions, and the great store of abuses and falsehoods, but of that men have not yielded to the things which God shows them but have made additions and confused medleys of things that came of their own brain?

In what manner do the Papists endeavor themselves to serve God? Every man has his several devotion by himself, and therewithal an infinite number of gewgaws. Their saying is that the Church has commanded all: but whatever it be, it is all of man's inventing. And what a thing is that? Did not God sufficiently foresee what he would like of? He tells us that in the Law we have all perfection, and that he will not have us to hold any other rule. Again, he adds that he had

rather have obedience than all the sacrifices in the world. His mind is to hold men in awe, that they should not presume to mingle anything of their own brain and imagination.

But what if God have said so? Yet will men bear him down that this and that were good, and they will needs add a hundred times more than he had ordained. Yea, and (which worse is) they hold scorn of that which he requires and exacts most straightly, and in the meantime magnify fond toys and pelting trash, which not only are of no value before him but also loathsome to him, because he disallows all things that men thrust upon him after that fashion to spite him with.

Now then, we see hereby how eager and presumptuous also men have always been in thrusting themselves forward to serve God after their own liking: however, that was but a perverting of all the holy scripture. For behold, whereas God tells us that the chief sacrifice which he demands of us is that we should resort unto him and offer up our requests after the manner which he has appointed to be the means for us to come familiarly and boldly unto him, that is to wit, by making our Lord Jesus Christ our advocate: Men will need to have us pray unto Saints deceased, and to make them our patrons and advocates to be a mean between God and us when we go about to seek his favor. As much is to be said of all the rest of their doctrine. God has commanded us to pray one for another: and they say we must pray for the wretched souls that are in Purgatory. And who has commanded all this? Men have surmised that so it should be, and according to their surmising, so it must be. Lo, what their rashness is.

God has ordained his sacraments for us to assure us of his promises by their means, and he will have them to be as seals of overmeasure,

that our infirmity may be the better succored. We have Baptism, whereby God does us to wit that we be washed and cleansed from all our spots by the bloodshed of his only son, and that therewithal he accepts us as his members of his body, and brings us into his Church. Now, the Papists are not contented with this simplicity but will need to have spittle, and taper light, and other gewgaws that are irksome to think of. And whence come such additions, but of this devilish boldness, that when God had established all that was meet and convenient for the turn, and in such wise as nothing was to be misliked, men could not find in their hearts to take it in good worth, but (as I said before) were inflamed with such an over eagerness and outrage, as they must needs be adding, mingling, changing, interlacing, and turmoiling without end or measure.

So much the more, therefore, does it stand us upon to hold fast that which God shows us by Saint Paul: namely that for as much as God has authorized his word, it is not lawful for men to add anything to it, but that all our wisdom is to join with him and to receive without scanning whatever comes out of his mouth. And if this be verified of the promise that was made unto Abraham: much more reason is it that we nowadays should keep the same modesty, seeing we have much fuller instruction in the Gospel.

Truly the substance of the thing that is preached unto us nowadays differs not from that which Abraham heard of God's own mouth. But whatever it be, we have now a much more familiar manner of teaching, because our Lord Jesus Christ who is the day sun of righteousness, is manifested unto us. Seeing then that there is no hardness at all unto us, if we list to give ear: is it not an intolerable traitorousness if our lusts be still itching to add one thing or another? However we fare, let us learn to hold us to that which God has taught us. For we may not deal otherwise than with such

modesty in that behalf, because if we swerve never so little aside from that rule, by and by we are in Satan's snares, ready to be carried one way or other to all confusion.

But let us be well advised: and seeing that Saint Paul says here, that the law could not any whit impeach the promise which was made before: what shall become of us in these days if we will needs have the inventions of men's foolish heads to impeach the pureness of the Gospel, so as it may not be perceived whether God or his creatures be more master? Thus you see what ought to hold us in awe, that we pass not our bounds, but that our faith be always wholly ruled and directed by the single word of God, and that we reject whatever is added by man.

And that is in effect the thing which we have to gather here. Now as touching that Saint Paul says, that the covenant was established of God toward Jesus Christ four hundred years before the Law. Herein we see the same thing which I touched this morning: namely that when God uttered himself to be a father, whether it were towards Abraham, or towards Noah, or towards any other, it was not but by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ. For there is as it were a deadly feud between God and man, in respect that they be corrupted by original sin, in so much that if God let us alone in our natural plight, surely all our thoughts are cursed, all our affections are crooked, froward, and full of stubbornness, and all our wits are bestained with vices, so that we have not one sound and uninfected place in us, from the crown of our head to the sole of our foot.

For as much as we are so contrary to God and to his will, it must indeed be that we are his enemies, for he cannot be unlike himself. Then if God is our enemy, we cannot come to him to hope for any favor or grace at his hand, except Jesus Christ be as a means to

reconcile us again. Thus, you see that the fathers of all ages preached not unto God, but by the guiding of the mediator. And that is the cause why Saint Paul in this text says that the covenant was made to Jesus Christ.

Truly, Jesus Christ had no need of any of the promises that were made to the fathers of old time, and are continued still by God even unto this day towards us, but yet did he receive them as head of the Church. So we see that God had not an eye simply unto Abraham, nor to the worthiness that was in him, but that Abraham was a member of the Church, whereof Jesus Christ was always the head.

Also, when God chose David to be King and told him that his seat should endure as long as the sun and the moon in the sky, it was not for any worthiness that was in David's own person, but it was all done in respect of our Lord Jesus Christ. And likewise at this day, when God tells us that he will be favorable to us if we seek him, yea, and that he will have us come boldly unto him, it is not in any other respect than for that our Lord Jesus Christ has gathered us together to be of his body.

And this serves us to two purposes. The one is to bring us to humility. For if every one of us marks well what he is, we are God's enemies. By reason whereof the gate is shut against us, so we cannot hope for any favor at his hand, but rather feel and conceive him to be our judge, always ready to thunder down upon our heads and to overwhelm us.

Therefore, whereas it is said that the promises are made to us by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ, we must shrink down our heads and acknowledge that God's only begotten son is his only darling, and that the favor which we have is only in him, and for his sake. Let that serve for the one point.

The other is that the promises have so much the more certainty in that respect. For if such troubles as these do come in our minds so as we think with ourselves, what are you? Do you think that God vouchsafes to stoop down unto you? You are but a worm of the earth, dust, cinder, and rottenness. Moreover, you have a sea of vices in you, and therefore what a presumptuousness were it for you to think yourself to be one of God's children, till he comes to seek you?

If we are tempted after this manner to distrust, let us bethink us of that which is spoken to us in this text: that is to wit, that the promise was made on behalf of Jesus Christ. Although then that there be nothing in us but all wretchedness, yet it ought to suffice us that there is worthiness, power, and righteousness enough in the Son of God, and that he also is the person in whom we receive the promises.

Now remains for us to know by what means we come unto God: namely by the promised seed, which is but only one, as Saint Paul adds. For if men turn never so little from our Lord Jesus Christ, by and by they are cut off from the kingdom of heaven.

And if this was spoken to beat down the pride and false presumption that was among the fleshly children of Abraham, what is to be said to us, which are but afterbirths, born out of time in comparison of them, as Saint Paul terms us in the tenth to the Romans?

Wherefore, let us understand that all such as content not themselves with our Lord Jesus Christ do utterly renounce all hope of their salvation. For there are not two or three, but only one Mediator, says Saint Paul, like as it is not said that there is any more than one seed.

I have told you already that many come of Abraham's lineage, which yet notwithstanding were not heirs of the promise. Then if we come not to Jesus Christ to be gathered unto him, surely God disclaims us

and tells us that we are none of his, and that he will have no acquaintance at all with us.

Therefore, although the world go astray to be tossed to and fro, according as we see how on the one side the Papists have infinite means to come unto God, and likewise on the other side the Turks and the Jews, all which have quite forsaken our Lord Jesus Christ, yet let us lean wholly unto him and assure ourselves that if we be once ingrafted into his body by faith and made one with him, the promises belong unto us.

Why so? For they were given unto him, not for his own commodity, as I have said already (for he had no need of them), but for our behoof that we might be made partakers of them.

Thus you see in effect how we ought to make our profit of this text. But we have to mark also concerning the antiquity which Saint Paul treats of here, that the doctrine of the Gospel is no new devised thing, nor a thing that had been unknown of before, but that God has continually ever since Abraham's time unto this day called us to be his adopted children and proved himself to be our father.

Truly, it was even before Abraham was born; nevertheless, it must suffice us that as then there was made so full discovery of it, as we know that God did then begin to publish the things that are contained in the Gospel at this day, and that the fathers had none other way whereby to come to salvation than the same that is showed us at this day.

And this is very needful for us. For many busybodies do now unskillfully imagine that the Gospel was never heard of before; yea, and there are of these scorners of God and heathenish fellows who, to embrace the authority of God and of his Gospel, say it came up

within these sixteen hundred years and that it was never heard of in the world before.

What (say they)? Had God forsaken the world quite and clean? As who should say, we saw not with our eyes and might not feel with our fingers that God never varied, but that even at such time as it pleased him to adopt Abraham, then were we also included in him, and the gate of salvation was opened unto us, albeit that the accomplishment thereof came not till the full time was expired, as I have declared this morning, and shall declare more at length in time convenient.

Here you see why Saint Paul says that the preaching of the Gospel was a secret that had been kept hidden from the beginning of the world. But yet God had determined it beforehand and made sufficient promise of it, as we have seen. Here you see also why we are called Abraham's offspring.

For we belong not at all to him in respect of the flesh. But faith is a sufficient bond to knit us unto him. Furthermore, we see that our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the pledge of men's welfare, is now revealed unto us, to the end that we should have better assurance that we are his, and that he will hold us as the members of his body. And that is the cause why Christ said that Abraham saw his day and was glad of it. The Jews alleged the worthiness of the Patriarch: yea (says Christ) as though your father Abraham had not rested upon the things that were spoken to him concerning me. Therefore he saw my day, and it was the thing wherein he took all his comfort, in so much that he had no other hope of salvation than by the belief which he had in the doctrine preached to you at this day by the Gospel. That also is the very same thing that is spoken of John the Baptist by the Prophet Malachi, namely that he was sent to knit the hearts and minds of the fathers to the children. And this is not spoken only of

the person of John the Baptist, but it belongs also to the doctrine of the Gospel.

You see then that the thing to which our Lord calls us is that although Abraham rotted in the earth so long ago, yet we may assure ourselves that there is no other promise for us to trust in, so we are knit unto him by faith, and do so agree together as we can call upon God with the same mind wherewith he was governed, according as in truth he had his mind fixed upon our Lord Jesus Christ. Now then for so much as we are united unto Abraham, let us tend to our Lord Jesus Christ, and let him be our aiming mark, and our sure anchor, till we are all assembled together and gathered up into the heavenly kingdom.

See what we have to consider when mention is made of the promise that was made before the law. Yes, and we ought to be greatly provoked to constancy when we perceive that our father Abraham always waited for our Lord Jesus Christ, although it was so long before he should be discovered to the world, and it was told him that his seed should be held prisoners in a strange land. After that God had told him that all the world should be blessed in his seed, he adds, and yet for all that, think not that this shall be performed within these two or three days, or a hundred years hence: for thou thyself must first die, thou thyself must first be conveyed hence into a strange country, where thy offspring shall be oppressed with all tyranny and cruelty. Assure yourself I will be revenged of it, but yet must thy seed smart in the meantime.

Abraham heard all this: Again after the law was given, there passed another two thousand years more ere our Lord Jesus Christ came. Now could Abraham never have trusted to that which was spoken to him if he had not been armed with heavenly power, for he himself

could not enjoy the benefit that was offered him, neither should his children enjoy it that were to come. You see then that two thousand and four hundred years were then to pass, and yet notwithstanding Abraham repented not that he had forsaken his father's house, as the Apostle declares in the eleventh to the Hebrews, but held on his race still, albeit that God intended to try his patience to the utmost.

Of much more reason ought we nowadays to go on steadfastly whithersoever God calls us, and to hold up our heads till we come to the crown of glory, notwithstanding that as of now it is hidden from us, and that we must be fain to believe and hope for things that surmount all our capacity and which we cannot perceive. Thus you see how we ought to put this text in use. Now upon this Saint Paul concludes that if the inheritance comes by the law, it shall not come by faith. But God gave Abraham all things in respect of faith: and therefore it is to be concluded that the Law must needs cease when men go about to gain favor at God's hand, and the praise of our salvation must be yielded all wholly unto him.

Saint Paul in speaking here of inheritance means two things. The one is that whatever God has at any time promised us is of his own mere free goodness: for an inheritance is not wages or hire. True it is that a father in giving his children their heritage may well say, See how I take pains for you. Mark what shall come of it. You shall have my goods among you. But yet however the father deals with them, he has no other respect than to his own kinship. He labors and takes great pains to provide for such as are so allied unto him. Seeing then that heritages are things of free gift among men: we must not take eternal life as a deserved wages or hire at God's hand. For why, it is an heritage. Mark it for a sure ground, that here all worthiness of men is excluded.

For when a man makes his children his heirs, he passes not whether they have done any great work or not, or whether they be fair or foul, or whether they be one thing or another: but it is enough for him that they be his children, and that his mind is to provide for them. Another point is that Saint Paul in so saying, gives us an inkling that we are all of us utterly rejected of God, so as we cannot (no not even in this transitory life) enjoy anything at all, but by the only mere grace of God. True it is that the Sun shines as well upon the faithless as upon the faithful, and all men are nourished alike with the things that God gives and grants unto them: but yet however they fare, the unbelievers possess not anything by just title. They are but thieves, and must yield account of the benefits and goods which they have received of God, even to the last drop of water, because they were not sanctified, but defiled them as much as in them lay, because they had no faith, which (as says Saint Paul) is the thing whereby the benefits that God gives unto us are made clean.

That is the way for us to use them lawfully: but let faith be away, and there shall be nothing else but uncleanness. For why, if my hands be foul, and I handle the precious things in the world with them, they shall be defiled with the filthiness of my hands. Even so is it when we abuse God's benefits. The unbelief that is in us defiles all: and in the end, all creatures must cry out for vengeance upon us, because we abused them if we possessed them not with faith.

You see then that we cannot enjoy anything at all unless we are God's children. And for the same cause also, Saint Paul in the fourth to the Romans, thinks it not enough to set down the heavenly life and everlasting salvation: but also names the heritage of the world, and says that Abraham was made heir of the world, and that the same was not for that man alone, but for all men in general. Therefore, whereas God adopts us and tells us that he will be gracious unto us, it

is to the end that while we live here beneath, we should be fed by his hand, and he in giving us food make us to taste beforehand of the love which he bears us, and of the care that he has over us. To be short, we may and ought also to behold God's fatherly goodness in all his creatures. Do we open our eyes and look upon the light of the Sun? Even there does God show himself a father towards us. When we eat and receive our sustenance, God reaches out his hand to show that we are already fed by him as his own children. To be short, in all things and by all means he makes us taste his fatherly love beforehand, to the intent we should be confirmed in the things that he shows us in the Gospel: that is to wit, that he has reserved a better heritage for us, as for his children whom he has adopted. Then must all creatures direct us heavenward. But surely we do the clean contrary: for we apply God's creatures to our own lusts, so as we behold down still by them here. To be short, look how many helps God has given us to draw us to him: so many lets have we to hold us back in the world. For we never pass to know how we should be reckoned for God's children, so we may live at our ease in this world: that is enough for us. But yet for all that, it stands us greatly on hand to perceive that God does already in this world show himself a father towards us, and intends to do us to wit what a care he has of us, to the end we should learn to refer ourselves wholly unto him, and there to rest.

You see then, that by this word Heritage or Inheritance, God shows, first, that whatever he offers us is of his own mere free bounteousness: and secondly, that we be so cursed, that we have no right to anything, no not even to a drop of water: except God make us his heirs, and that must be done all only for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. And therefore we must once again call to remembrance how we have heretofore seen, that the promise was made to Jesus Christ. Then is not Abraham the stay and shoot anchor thereof. And for that

cause also is our Lord Jesus named the heir of all things: and look what he has peculiar to himself, that does he communicate to us, as to the members of his body.

In that respect also does Saint Paul say, that the saying which is written in the seventh verse of the eighth Psalm, (which is, that he is made Lord of all things) ought to be applied first of all to his person. True it is that the said text is spoken of all men, according as we see how God has put all beasts of the earth in subjection to man, so as they be fain to die to give us sustenance, and to clothe us and keep us warm. Again, we see how the earth yields us fruits. Therefore the lordship of the world is given unto us, howbeit, that is but by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ. For (as I have touched already) if we be separated from him, we be forthwith so cut off from God's house, that the inheritance of them belongs no more unto us, than to the furthest strangers in the world. But now let us come to the chief point that is contained here. Saint Paul says, that this heritage comes not of the Law, but of Faith. Whereas he uses these two speeches, and couples them together: they be things flat contrary as I have told you heretofore. Not that the law is contrary to faith: but because to be justified before God, and to obtain favor and mercy at his hand, cannot come to pass by the Law. The Law was not given to that end, (as we shall see in the next Sermon) but to the clean contrary. So then, seeing that the heritage comes by faith: we must conclude that our works can do nothing, and that we must be fain to come to God utterly empty, as poor beggars to crave to be filled by him, because we have not one drop of goodness in ourselves. You see then whereat Saint Paul aims, when he says that the inheritance comes of faith and not of the law, according also as God gave it unto Abraham in respect of faith. And let us mark, that if we be not able to deserve any nourishment in this world: what shall we be able to do towards the possessing of the kingdom of heaven? When there is any talking of

corruptible sustenance, it is nothing in comparison of the heavenly glory. For it is said that we shall be made partakers of the glory of our God, and that then we shall be all in all things. But as now we cannot deserve so much as one bit of bread: for the inheritance comes of faith: that is to say, all that ever God has promised men, is of his own mere free goodness.

And how can we then purchase the Realm of Paradise? What a pride it is for men to presume to come to it by their own strength? Must it not needs be that they are carried away with a terrible rage? Moreover, in saying that God gave all things to our father Abraham in respect of his faith, Saint Paul does yet better express and show that which I have told you already: namely that man is able to deserve nothing of himself, and that he must be fain to have all of free gift. He had said before, (as we have seen already) that the promises were made and uttered: but here he uses the word Giving. As if he should say, here is not a bargain between party & party, to say I will do this, and you shall do that: I will sell, and you shall buy: but God does freely give, and man does but only receive. Seeing then that we must come unto God to receive that which he offers us, and that we have not any other title to the things that we look for at his hand, than only by free gift: let us forget all the worthiness which we imagine to be in ourselves, and acknowledge that we be nothing.

And surely Saint Paul uses another manner of speech, which serves to express better the thing that is meant here: which is, that if the heritage came by the Law, the promise were disannulled, and so consequently faith. Therefore to be sure of the promise, the heritage must needs come by faith. And my alleging hereof, is because the thing that is spoken in this text, might seem darksome by reason of the shortness of it: namely that the heritage of salvation, yea and all the benefits that God bestows upon us in this world, must proceed of

our faith: that is to say, without bringing anything at all of our own, but only by receiving all things of God's free gift. For why? Put the case that we should hope to receive according to our works, according to our own worthiness, and according to our deserts towards God: how might we be sure of the promises? Truly we should hang always in a mammering: for it would behoove us still to consider thus, very well, how have you discharged yourself? What have you done? And so should faith be utterly dashed. But faith ought to assure us fully of God's good will towards us: which thing it should not do, but we should hang still in doubt, and it should be but a bare opinion, and that opinion should be but an illusion of Satan. For all they which think to have anything by their own power, must needs be bewitched by the Devil. You see then how it is too gross a mockery, when we think to deserve aught at God's hand. But however we go to work, though our eyes be sealed up with hypocrisy, and we take ourselves to be wonderful fellows: yet can we not have any certainty in us without faith. For he that once done away, by and by the promises fall to the ground: we can have no assurance of them. Therefore we must conclude that the heritage comes by faith, to the end we may have no more pride in us: that is to wit, to the end we hope not any more that we can be able to do aught of ourselves, or that we have any free will to take or refuse the grace that is offered us. We must forget all the things which men are wont to challenge to themselves: all must be laid underfoot: we must come void of all power, empty, and hungry, and seek at God's hand the things that we want, and not doubt but that he has enough in himself to succor us with, and that he has also put into our Lord Jesus Christ all things that we can wish, and all that he knows to be for our behoof and profit. Thus you see how we may enjoy the heritage that has been promised us in all ages, and which God offers yet still at this day by the doctrine of the Gospel.

And now let us cast ourselves down before the Majesty of our good God with acknowledgement of our sins, praying him to make us perceive them more and more, that it may cause us to walk in such wise in his fear, as we may seek nothing but to dedicate ourselves wholly unto him, and that according as he sees us wrapped in feebleness and corruption, it may please him to cleanse us thereof by his holy spirit, and to bear with us to the end. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people and nations of the earth &c.

The Twenty-First Sermon,

which is the seventh upon the third Chapter.

> 19 Whereunto then serves the Law? It was added because of transgression, till the seed came to whom the promise was made: and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator.
>
> 20 Now a Mediator is not of one, but God is one.

We have seen heretofore that before the giving of the Law, God had already shown his goodness, yes, even his free goodness in the lineage of Abraham, to the end that the Jews should not have any other leaning stock for their salvation than the said promise that God would have pity upon them and show them mercy, in sending them a Redeemer, by whom they should obtain forgiveness of their sins. Hereupon St. Paul infers that the law which came after the promise must not annul that which God had already ordained and concluded:

however, in the meantime, it might seem that the law was added to help the promise, as though the promise had been weak of itself.

For after the same manner does the Apostle reason in the Epistle to the Hebrews; and because it is said by the Prophet Jeremiah that God will give a new law, that is to wit the Gospel, the Apostle infers that then it must needs follow that the law which was given by Moses was weak and had no such perfection in it as a man might trust unto. It may well seem at the first blush that a man might say as much on the contrary part: namely that forasmuch as the law was given after the promise, it was done for some accomplishment because the promise was not sufficient of itself, unless it borrowed perfection elsewhere, for otherwise, the law might seem to be needless. But it were against all reason that God should have given a needless doctrine. Therefore it standeth us on hand to know to what purpose the law serves, and to what end it was given, or else we shall always be of opinion that the promise was insufficient, and could not save us but in part.

Hereupon St. Paul declares that God in giving of his law had a far other meaning and intent than they imagine who seek their righteousness in it, and make it the means of their salvation. For it was given (says he) because of transgression: not for that there needed a bridle because the world was wicked and froward: for we know there were laws and statutes made among men, according to the vices that needed to be redressed.

If all men were Angels, so as there were nothing out of square, but every man behaved himself well of his own accord, so as there needed no amendment: then were Laws to no purpose at all. What is the cause then that we have need of so many laws and statutes? The naughtiness of men, because they cease not to rush out into all evil,

and therefore remedy is fain to be provided for it: like as if there were no diseases, there should need no physic: but men's unruliness causes diseases, and therefore remedies must needs be provided.

So then, seeing that men have need to be bridled and as it were restrained, it is a sure record that they are bent to all evil, and utterly froward of their own nature. But St. Paul meant not after that sort in his aforementioned saying: He intended to pass further: namely that God purposed to bewray men's wickedness by means of the Law. And this reason is peremptory to show that we are not able to purchase righteousness: for heat and cold come not both out of one spring. If a fountain be sweet, there is no seeking of bitterness in it: but, quite contrarily, if a fountain be bitter or brackish, sweet water must be sought for in another spring.

Even so it is with the Law. And wherefore was it given? To prove men double guilty before God, that their hypocrisy might not stand them in any more stead, nor they have occasion to flatter themselves any more, or to shroud themselves under their vain excuses as they have been wont to do. And that is the cause why St. Paul in the fourth to the Romans reasons that a man cannot be justified by the Law. For (says he) the Law brings nothing but wrath. And by the word wrath he means God's vengeance.

Life and death cannot come both of the Law, but in sundry respects. Now the Law is deathful unto all of us, so that it condemns us and shows us that we are all cursed and abominable before God: and therefore what a fondness is it to seek righteousness by it, as who should say that God ought to take us into his favor for the keeping of it? But he declares this matter more familiarly in the seventh to the Romans when he says that by the Law sin becomes out of measure sinful.

For there is enough to condemn us though there were no law at all, according as it is said, that they who sin without law shall perish without law, that is to wit, although the heathen folk had no instruction whereby to be rebuked: yet had they a record ingraven in their consciences, which did find them guilty. You see then that men are sufficiently worthy to be condemned though God does not go up into his judgment seat, nor cite them, nor examine them, albeit that such as sin and offend against God, charge not themselves with their faults. For we are so given to self-soothing that every one of us wallows and sleeps in his own filth, insomuch that until the law touches us to the quick, our consciences are as if benumbed, and to be short, every man dispenses with himself, and takes leave to do evil. But when the Law steps forth, then is sin known, and every man, despite his teeth, must be fain to stoop before God, or else gnash his teeth at him as a rebel. Nevertheless, God gathers us to him by the law, by bringing us to the knowledge of our cursedness.

To be short, it is all one as if a man had his face all begrimed: every man might mock at him, but he himself should not see it. But if one brings him a glass, he is ashamed of himself, and hides his face, and goes his way to wash his face when he sees it so disfigured with filthiness. Or if a man be so ill-favored that he makes folks afraid with his look: he thinks not that that fault comes of his own person, till he have a looking glass set before him. Even so it is with us. For though all of us be steeped in wickedness and sin, insomuch that heaven and earth are ashamed of us, and God prepares horrible condemnation for us: yet we cease not to keep on our race and to be reckless still. And why so? For our sinfulness is unknown to us, and hypocrisy so blinds our eyes that we perceive not our own cursedness. But the Law shows us what we are, and therewithal sets God's judgment before us.

For on the one side it says, "You shall do all these things under pain of cursing." And what manner of things are they? It is not enough for us to abstain only in respect of our feet, hands, eyes, and ears: but we must be pure and clear from all lusting: there must be such an incorruptness in us, that all our senses, thoughts, and affections must aim at God, so as no enticements of this world may hold us back. And where is this to be found? Besides this, behold, God being set as a Judge in his seat, has already given sentence of cursedness upon us as soon as we be found to be transgressors as we be. You see then that mankind is in miserable taking.

And that is what Saint Paul meant in this text when he said that the Law was added for transgression. It is true that the Law serves to other purposes also: namely, first of all, to show us the way to serve God. But we know that he will be honored with obedience, and not have every one of us to behave himself after his own liking. The Law, therefore, gives us the difference between good and evil. For what is the reasonable service which we owe unto God? It is to submit ourselves to his will, says Saint Paul. Seeing it is so, you perceive that the Law serves to excellent good purpose: namely that whereas we labor in vain to serve God after our own imagination, it shows us the way in such wise as we cannot miss, and gives us the rule which we ought to keep by.

Furthermore, when Saint Paul said that the Law was given because of transgression, it came not in his mind to rehearse all the fruit and profit which the Law brings with it: for (as I have said already) it serves also for our instruction, that we might learn to discern between good and evil: and again it quickens us up, as though God should give us strokes with the spur, to make us apply ourselves the more diligently unto him. But he spoke according to this present matter, and according to the ground of the text that he treats of. Now

then he shows that the Law is not superfluous, and yet that it serves not to bring us to righteousness, but instead thereof carries us to such confusion, that we must needs be found to be double sinners, and are more condemned, and less excusable than before, so as there is nothing before us but a bottomless gulf.

Lo to what end the Law was given us. But he says that it was added to the promise, whereby we are done to understand that the adding of it was not because the promise was weak of itself, and unable to bring men to salvation, so as there should need some other income: it was nothing so, says Saint Paul: but it was added to make men know that God had rightfully condemned them all, and that they could not have any relief, but should be continually tormented with such uneasiness that they should be always in despair, till they rested themselves upon the said promise. Now if it be alleged that the promise might have served that turn before: the answer and solution is very easy. For although God, in offering himself to be our Savior, does thereby show that we are all damned in ourselves until he has pity upon us: yet can we not be helped as were requisite, until such time as he scares us. By his promise he calls us gently, and after a fatherly manner: and no doubt but the same ought to make us perceive our miseries, and to be sorry for them: but we are so fast asleep in our sins that we never think on them, except we be compelled. Although then that upon God's making of the promise, men had cause to lament their sins, to the end they might rest themselves wholly upon the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: yet did they not do it, till God had stricken them as it had been with many blows of a beetle upon the head, which thing he did by the Law.

Moreover, Saint Paul shows that we abuse the gentleness of our God through our unthankfulness, because the more courteous he shows himself towards us, the more occasion do we take thereby to flatter

ourselves. Therefore, he must be forced to rouse us up, and to make us feel what we are, thereby to scare us and drive us to seek his favor in good earnest. Thus, you see what the word "added" imports. It is all one if Saint Paul should blame us for that we make not our profit of God's goodness, seeing he allures us so gently unto him, and shows himself as mild as may be: but grieve him, and after a sort, enforce him to use rigor against us, to beat us down by that means, and so to prepare us to the seeking of his grace, which we shall find in our Lord Jesus Christ whenever we list. And herewithal Saint Paul adds that the Law served but till the seed came to whom the promise was made.

This concerns properly the ceremonies, or else we must take it to be spoken of the Law with all its appurtenances, circumstances, and appendants as men term them. If we take the Law for no more but the Ten Commandments, the thing that Saint Paul speaks will not stand. For the law must even at this day have such force with us as to be our rule of good life, and to show us God's will, that we may not live like vagabonds and gad abroad at adventure, but have our way plain before us. The law then is not transitory in respect of showing us what is good, for it must continue to the world's end. But we must mark Saint Paul's discourse: for he takes the law as containing the promises and threatenings, and also the ceremonies. Then, on the one side, there is this promise, "He that does these things shall live in them," as we have seen heretofore. And on the other side, there is this threat, "Cursed is he that fulfills not all that is contained here." Now the law (as we see) promises salvation to none but such as live purely and incorruptly: but all of us come short of that, and therefore the promise of the law is to no purpose. Mark that for one point. If it be alleged, what Sirrah? Meant God to mock men? I say, no: but they have always beguiled themselves with vainglory and presumption, bearing themselves in hand that they could purchase their own

salvation: and therefore God is forced to say unto them, "Go to, if you be so able men as you think, show it: as for me, I give you my Law, and because you shall not think yourselves ill-dealt with for your serving of me, your wages are ready for you if you perform it. Behold, I assure you of everlasting life out of hand: now let me see a little what you can do, buckle yourselves to your work." But when men have tried the uttermost that is in them, surely they shall perceive their own weakness which was hidden before. Thus you see that the promise of the Law can have no effect towards us, and yet it is not guileful, for it serves us to another end.

As touching the threats of it, it is infallible, for we are all damned by this threatening, "Cursed is he that performs not all." But we come so far short of performing all, that there is not one point but we fail of it. If we think to serve God by halves, it is nothing: for he has not separated one piece from another, but wills that he who walks in chastity shall also abstain from theft, robbery, craft, extortion, and all other sins. Seeing it is so, let us mark that the threat holds all shut up under it, and that is the thing that Saint Paul had an eye unto.

As touching the ceremonies, they were a confirmation that all of us are accursed, according as I have told you, how Saint Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians likens them to obligations and authentic evidence that serve to hold a man most strictly bound. If a man have borrowed a piece of money, he is a debtor, and gives a bill of his hand for it. But if he bind his goods or body for it by recognizance or Statute, so as his deed is enrolled of common Record: then is he bound more strictly than he was before. Even so is it with the Ceremonies. The law of itself was enough to condemn men because they are all offenders: however, forasmuch as God saw the pride that is rooted in our nature, he added the Ceremonies for an overplus, to the end they should be as a solemn bond against us. But now Saint

Paul says that all this gear served but till the promised seed were come: that is to wit, that the law served not to hold those in slavery and bondage who put their trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, but to bring them to him, that there they might find the thing which they wanted in the law. So then we see that God's using of rigor in condemning of us procures our welfare, and his thundering upon us after that fashion is a witness of his singular goodness towards us. And why so? I have told you already, and experience shows it too much, that we cease not to abuse his gentleness, and to draw it clean contrary to his meaning. Therefore, he is forced to rouse us up, and to show himself to be our judge, and to make us hear this dreadful sentence, able to cast us into despair, that there is nothing for us to look for but everlasting death: and finally to confirm and ratify the same sentence still.

Yea, but all this is but to make us stoop, that being at our wit's end, we should flee to our Lord Jesus Christ with a true and unfeigned zeal, and learn to rest upon him when we are troubled with uneasiness and torment of conscience. Thus you see why Saint Paul has said expressly that the law was given to continue no longer than until the promised seed was come. Now if a man demands, how then did the fathers obtain salvation? I answer, that the law reigned and had its full scope as in respect of outward order before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: but yet for all that the fathers missed not to resort to the grace that was promised them, although they saw it not, as we shall see more plainly hereafter.

Then is it a thing utterly out of all doubt that the Law did nothing prejudice the promise, nor was added for any help of it, as though the promise had not been sufficient of itself to salvation: but that it served to correct men's pride and presumptuousness, to the end they might with all lowliness seek the mercy that is proffered them in

Jesus Christ, and by his means be able to receive it and enjoy it. And hereupon Saint Paul adds that the Law was ordained or delivered by the hand of angels, and in the hand of a Mediator. Here he authorizes the Law, to show that it ought to be received with all reverence, but yet not be applied to any other end than God has appointed. For proof hereof he speaks of the angels, as if he had said that God had witnesses enough to give authority to his Law, and therewithal showed how it ought to be taken and heard. But the chief matter is in his setting down of the Mediator: that is to wit, our Lord Jesus Christ.

True it is that many men have taken this saying to be meant of Moses, as though he had been called the Mediator between God and men, as in respect of doctrine: but that can by no means stand. For Paul does first set down the Angels, and afterward adds the Mediator as chief, and he is here in higher degree than they, which cannot be verified of the person of Moses. Moreover, we see what Saint Paul discourses. He shows that there was no diversity between the Law and the Gospel in the free promise of salvation. For the confirming thereof, he brings in our Lord Jesus Christ and says that when the Law was given, it was done by his hand and direction. Truly this word "hand" in the holy Scripture does oftentimes import force, power, or strength: but here we see how Saint Paul makes comparison between Jesus Christ and the angels. He sets down the Angels that were assembled there to make his Law to be heard among men, and to be received of them without gainsaying. Therefore, they were as witnesses of God's Majesty: but he sets down the Mediator as the greater. The hand, therefore, imports direction, as if he had said, that he had the highest place, and was chief Commissioner in setting out the Law. And we must not think this strange: for when the Angel appeared unto Moses, he said, "I am the Everlasting." There he is named an Angel. Therefore he is God's

messenger as the word betokens: and yet notwithstanding he says, "I am the Everlasting, that have my being of myself": which saying could not be verified of any creature: and as for the Angels, they were made of nothing as well as we. Then had it been high treason for an Angel to have taken upon him the title that agrees to none but God alone.

Therefore, we must conclude that that Angel was Jesus Christ, who executed the office of Mediator beforehand, accordingly as Saint Paul treats thereof in the first to the Corinthians, where he speaks of the Jews' rebelliousness, and of their provoking of God to displeasure by their murmuring and wicked lusts. He says that they tempted Jesus Christ who led them and guided them through the wilderness. No doubt therefore but that our Lord Jesus Christ was even then the Mediator, yes, even to reconcile men to God his father after diverse manners.

And here you see why the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews says that the same Jesus Christ which is today, was yesterday, and shall be still tomorrow even to the world's end, to the intent that men should hold themselves to him, and not wander any more in strange doctrines. But now he adds, Jesus Christ then has been a mean between God and men, to the intent that poor sinners might find some relief, and that although they had some heartbitings by being troubled with God's judgments, yet nevertheless they might also be comforted, seeing that God offered them a Mediator by whom they might obtain grace to come unto him.

However, Jesus Christ is our Mediator after another fashion also, which is that by him God has always communicated himself to men. For there is such a distance between God and us, so long as we be estranged from him by sin: that we cannot come at him. And he will

not come down to us for his part, except it be by the Mediator, according also as it is showed in Jacob's vision in Genesis. For there it is said, that Jacob saw a Ladder, upon the top whereof sat God in his Majesty, and the Angels went up and down upon that ladder.

And no doubt but that in that figure or image, our Lord Jesus Christ was represented unto Jacob, to show that men are banished from God's kingdom until there be a means that reaches up from beneath, as our Lord Jesus Christ does, who being on the one side God manifested, surpasses all the heavens, and on the other side, being joined unto us in that he is clothed with our nature, and has become a man (yea even a frail and mortal man, sin excepted), has taken upon him and borne our infirmities, though he himself were without spot.

So then, you see how the law was given long ago by the hand of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whereupon it follows that there is no contrariety between the Law and the Gospel. For Jesus Christ is always one without any variableness. Now let us see what Saint Paul adds, namely that the Mediator is not of one, but that God is one.

In saying that the Mediator is not of one, he means that our Lord Jesus Christ came to gather together again all things that were scattered both in heaven and earth, accordingly also as he speaks of it in the first to the Colossians. Truly some have taken the meaning of this text to be that Jesus Christ was of more natures than one, or that although he were the Mediator between God & men, yet did it not follow that there was diversity between the Law and the Gospel. But doubtless, Saint Paul's meaning here is to gather again the Jews and the Gentiles: as if he had said, Jesus Christ was the Mediator in giving of the Law, as the party by whose means God meant to humble men, that they might be partakers of his grace.

However, let us mark that our Lord Jesus Christ, who was the continual Mediator in giving the Law to the Jews, had therewithal a Commission that stretched yet further: that is to wit, to gather and knit together again the Gentiles, which were estranged from God. For although God did for a time prefer the lineage of Abraham before all the rest of the world: yet notwithstanding in the end our Lord made us partakers of the salvation whereunto we were strangers, and it behooved us that were far off to be gathered together again, as those that had been near neighbors before. And therefore Saint Paul in another text calling Jesus Christ our peace, says that he has joined and knit us unto God, even us that had been near him before, as well the Jews who had the Law, as those that had been utterly divided from them. They that erst had no acquaintance with God, were in the end gathered together again into the body of the Church at the coming of the anointed, and so were they also which had heretofore been separated a great way off, not only from God, but also one from another.

Now we see Saint Paul's meaning. However, that we may profit the better by this text, let us mark that as God has given us his Law by the Angels: so shall they bear witness against us if the Law bears no sway with us, and that we make no account of it, but do as it were tread it under our feet. Then shall the Angels be armed too as to ask vengeance at God's hand against our wickedness and rebellion. For it was no child's play when God willed his Angels to be present and assisting at the publishing of his Law. Therefore, it was to the end it should be received with all reverence.

Now it is true that we cannot perform all that the Law commands, and if we should stand upon that point, we should be plunged into everlasting death, and utterly overwhelmed in despair. But first of all, seeing that God is so gracious to us as to teach us his will, to the

end we should discern between good and evil: let us bow down our necks, and receive the yoke that God lays upon us, to make us subject unto him. Let that serve for one point.

And for as much as the Law quickens us, and cheers us up when we are heart-frozen, and when there is such sloth and slowness in us that we cannot come unto God: Let every one of us look well to himself, and early and late call to mind God's commandments, to reprove ourselves withal. Then let us bethink ourselves better, seeing that the Angels keep watch and ward about us, and will not (now after that God has given them in charge to authorize his Law) suffer us to despise it, and misuse it as if it were a thing of nothing.

Furthermore, as touching that the Law curses us: let us assure ourselves that although men commend us, and clap their hands at us for joy, yet shall we be put to shame before the Angels of heaven. Then if the whole world favor us, it is nothing.

For what end was it God's will that all his Angels should appear together at the publishing of his law, but to teach us to be ashamed of our sins, and thereby to humble us in earnest, that we might seek all our welfare in our Lord Jesus Christ? And moreover, whereas it is said that our Lord Jesus Christ was the mediator of the Law: let us assure ourselves that if we resort wholly to his grace, we shall not need to fear that the law shall have any more power to condemn us, yea or to reign over our sin. For we must bear in mind how Saint Paul in the first to the Corinthians says, that the law is the strength of sin, and does so sharpen sin as it wounds us deadly. Seeing it is so then: surely if we had not the thing that is showed us here for our comfort, we should be stricken with such fear, as we could not be sure of our salvation, though the promises were offered us in our

Lord Jesus Christ. For we would always match the contrary things against them, and lay the Law in balance with them, saying: What? was not the Law given of God? But God condemns us by it. Therefore although our Lord Jesus Christ step in to help the matter, yet does it not seem that we be escaped. So shall we always be in trouble.

But if we consider how our Lord Jesus was the mediator in the publishing of the law: it shows unto us that if he be our advocate at this day, it will be a good and sufficient discharge for us: in so much that although God has pronounced his sentence of cursing against us, yet we must not be dismayed at it, nor so oppressed with heart grief and anguish of mind, as though the mischief were incurable: but assure ourselves that our Lord Jesus Christ will very well agree to do both twain, that is to wit, both make us ashamed that we may learn humility, and therewithal also make us sure of our salvation.

And therefore let us learn, that whenever we be beaten down, there is none other means to raise us up again, but to know that the selfsame person which was ordained to be the mediator for the publishing of the law, is now manifested unto us at this day with the same commission, and will make us to perceive it by experience. Further let us mark that he is not a mediator for one nation alone, but for all the whole world, inasmuch as all of us are the creatures of God. True it is that we were after a sort cut off from him by the sin of Adam. But our Lord Jesus Christ is come to make up the breach again that was both in heaven and in earth, as I have alleged already out of the first chapter to the Colossians.

Seeing it is so then, let us not doubt but that God accepts us as heirs of his promise, inasmuch as he acknowledges us for the spiritual children of Abraham. And although there be great diversity [between our days and] the time of the ceremonies which served to separate

the one from the other: yet let not that hinder us from coming unto God. For why? God is one. Although then that there be both Jews and Gentiles, although there be many diverse Nations among men, although their languages be diverse, their manners and trades of living contrary, and every of us has so much variety and inconstancy in himself, that we have no hold of ourselves: yet let us rest upon God, for he is [always] one. He has given us his law, he has given us his Gospel: and let not us think that there is any contrariety in that case, but that all agrees very well. Only let us suffer ourselves to be ruled by him, that we may come to our Lord Jesus Christ. And how may that be done? By being clean rid from all pride, by being abashed and ashamed, by disliking of ourselves, and by perceiving that there is nothing in us but death.

Then shall we come to our Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that God the father accepts us, if we hold that way. Why so? For he is always one: and his giving of the law was not to disannul or impeach the promise that he had made afore. Likewise his revealing of his grace more fully unto us in his Gospel, was not for that he wist not how to make his law of force towards us, and to put it to the right use and purpose of it, that we might have a rule whereby to live well: but that whereas we were accursed by it, we might know how there is none other remedy for us, but by being blessed again in the seed that was promised from time to time, in whose hand our welfare was established, that is to wit by coming to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the fountain and wellspring of all blessedness.

Now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us perceive them more and more, so as we may dislike of them, and not only confess them with our mouth, but also lay open our hearts before him, and submit ourselves wholly to his holy word, and that in such wise as we

may be comforted by his free goodness, as it is showed us in our Lord Jesus Christ, and he reform us also by his holy spirit, to the end that whereas we of ourselves be full of rebelliousness, we may by his governing become teachable and ready to follow his holy will, and to give ourselves over all wholly unto him. And let us pray unto him for all these things, saying: Almighty God heavenly father. &c.

The Twenty-Second Sermon,

which is the eighth upon the third Chapter.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if the law were given to justify, truly righteousness should come by the Law.

22 But the Scripture has shut up all under sin, to the intent that the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ should be given to those that believe.

23 Now before that faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up to come to the faith that was to be revealed.

24 By means whereof the Law was our schoolmaster to lead us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But now that faith is come, we are no more under the Schoolmaster.

We have already this morning dispatched this point, that the Law was not given in vain, though it could not bring us to righteousness to make us acceptable to God. Secondly, it was showed you that God's giving of His Law was not to the intent we should seek our righteousness and salvation there, as though His grace had been weak and insufficient, but for a far other respect, that is to wit, to give men such knowledge of their sins as they might be ashamed of them in themselves: for otherwise, they could not be touched to the quick, to flee to our Lord Jesus Christ for refuge, as we see too much.

And now, St. Paul moves another question: namely, whether the law is against the promises. For surely when it is said that the law promises us salvation, upon condition that we deserve it, and the promise of the Gospel tells us that we shall be taken into God's favor without any deserving, a man would think there were some contrariety in the matter. As if a man should offer me a house, so I would pay well for it, and set me a price of it, and another man should say unto me, no, you shall have it for nothing. There is great contrariety in these sayings. And it seems that in speaking after that fashion, God unsays that which He had spoken in His law, where He says, "Serve me, and keep my commandments, and you shall not miss of your wages." For in the Gospel, He speaks another language, saying, "I require nothing of you, for you are so wretched that you can give me nothing; but I receive you into my kingdom frankly and of mine own free goodness without any desert of yours; your heritage is assigned to you, even because it is my good pleasure to do it." Hereupon, St. Paul declares that although God speaks in another manner and fashion in the law than in the Gospel, yet notwithstanding, when we have well considered the mark that He

shoots at, there is no contrariety in the matter. For (as I have told you this morning), God's promising of reward to our works is not to beguile us, but to stop our mouths that we might not repine against Him, as we see that the world does, which is always ready to carp at Him with devilish malapertness when He handles them not after their own will and liking. God then cuts off all occasion of grudging when He tells us that we shall not be disappointed of our wages for our well-serving of Him.

Furthermore, let every one of us examine himself well, and he shall find that that is not the match whereby we must obtain salvation: for there is none of us all but he may condemn himself by his own life, if he judges without flattering. But after that God has spoken after that fashion, He offers us remedy in the Gospel, and tells us that for as much as we are damned and cannot hope to attain any salvation by our works, He Himself offered it to us of His own free goodness because it pleased Him so to do. And for that cause, St. Paul answers, If the law had been given to justify, I could well enough grant that righteousness should be given us by it. But let us see whether God meant that or not. It is certain He meant it not. Then sends He us to God's purpose: as if He should say, that the hypocrites which are so puffed up with pride and overweening, that they think they be able to justify themselves and to win heaven, are ill expounders of God's law, yea, and falsifiers thereof. For men must always have an eye to the intent of the speaker. Now, God meant not to set men agog with any trust in their own wit and deservings, for we are too much given to that of our own nature. We see it has been a common error throughout the whole world in all ages. Therefore, we need no schooling to persuade us that we are able folk, and that we can bind God to us by our virtuous doings.

But contrariwise, God has given us His law, to the intent we should be wounded with it as with a sword, and the stripe be so deadly as we might be constrained to flee to Him for succor. Seeing then that God's will is to slay us by the Law, it is not given us to make us righteous. And therefore they that seek their life and welfare there, beguile themselves: and there is no reason why they should allege for themselves, "Yea? How so? God has promised me it." No, but they must consider to what end He says so. Now we see how St. Paul has discussed this question, that there is no contrariety between the Law and the Gospel, though God alters the manner of His speech at the first blush. Now he adds afterward, That the Scripture has shut up all under sin, that we might obtain the promise by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he says that the scripture has shut up all under sin, he shows that men are too blockish to think that God meant to assign them a due wages or hire when He did set them down this condition. He that does these things shall live in them. Let them read the whole law, let them search the contents and substance of it, let them look well upon the whole Holy Scripture, and they shall find that it accuses and condemns all men from the most to the least, without any exception.

Now if we all be condemned, even by the law, what would we more? Must it not needs be that we be too much blinded with hypocrisy when we will needs bind God to us after this sort, notwithstanding that we be far wide from all righteousness, and He has told us that we cannot compass it in His sight, but that we must be utterly overwhelmed? St. Paul alleges not here any text to show that the Scripture has shut up all under sin, but takes it as utterly certain and which ought not to be doubted of any more among the faithful.

And for proof thereof, we see that even from the creation of the world, we all of us corrupted in Adam. His sin condemned not

himself only, but also all his whole offspring, and all of us are fallen in that fall of his. And thereupon it is said that all our thoughts are rebellings against God, and there is nothing but naughtiness in us. What then is man's wit? A warehouse of all wickedness. And seeing that God has avouched it to be so at a word, what shall we gain by challenging this or that to ourselves?

For all our starting holes shall but increase our misery, because in so doing we spite God and kindle His wrath so much the more. For what served all the sacrifices, but to show us to our faces, that all men are utterly accursed so long as they continue in them? And although there were no sacrifices at all, yet very experience shows it. Let every one of us enter into himself, let him consider what manner of one he is, and let him view himself in the perfection which the Holy Scripture requires at our hands, and he shall well find that there is no way for him but to embrace the promise of God's mercy which He makes unto us, when He says that our iniquities shall be wiped out, and that there is no way for us to come to Him but only by His love.

And does He not hereby still betray our sin? Especially seeing He sets down Jesus Christ for our righteousness? But if any man lists to have a larger and certainer discourse hereof, let him add that which St. Paul sets down in the third to the Romans, where he sets forth the thing largely which is touched here briefly: and then shall he see yet better how the Scripture has shut up all under sin.

For there St. Paul alleges the texts that serve to betray man's nature till God has drawn him back, changed him, and fashioned him anew. Like as when he says that God looked down here below, to see if He could find any soundness, and all were corrupted, yea, and festered in their naughtiness, and there was not so much as one that sought

after God. Now it is certain that there, there is no speaking of two or three, but generally of all men in whom God has not wrought to govern them by His Holy Spirit.

Therefore it is all one as if David did show us in a painted table what manner of ones we be by birth and heritage. Afterwards he adds that which is written in the fiftieth Psalm, and in all the residue, and finally alleges Isaiah also, to show that God was fain to serve His turn with His own arm, when He purposed to redeem men. What is it (says he) that men have done in that behalf? For they do but run forward, and cast themselves headlong into all cursedness and transgression. They do but wander: they love shifting, subtlety, falsehood, and lying: to be short, when God had looked that men should have helped to bring themselves to salvation, they were rather a hundred thousand times more in danger of perishing.

St. Paul therefore alleges all those things. Now let us flatter ourselves as much as we list: yet cannot the things be called back which God has pronounced upon us. And as often as we read the said texts, and hear St. Paul's expounding of them in the forealleged chapter: it is for us to cast down our heads, and to receive the shame which we deserve: namely to be bereft of all glory, and to seek at God's hand the things that we want.

And thus you see how the Scripture has shut up all under sin. In the eleventh chapter to the Romans he says that God has shut up all under sin, to the intent to have mercy on all. But there he sets yet one step higher. For he speaks not of the things that are told us in the law and the prophets, but of God's secret judgment, in that it was His will that all of us should be as good as drowned in destruction, to the intent that there should be no salvation but only by His goodness. Then if it be demanded why God has suffered men to fall into so

miserable plight: it is because He will have us beholden to His only mercy for all things.

Truly this will seem strange to many fantastical persons, which would fain restrain God to their measure, and are so rash that when God's determinations pass beyond their fleshly reason, by and by they condemn Him for spiteful and cruel. Yet for all that, St. Paul will have us to rest upon this saying, that God has shut up all under sin, that is to say, that He could well have created us much stedfaster and perfecter than He has done. He could have preserved us as He does His Angels. He could have given us such constancy in the person of Adam, that we should have entered into the heritage of heaven without dying. Yea, and He could have made that no more should have fallen in the person of Adam, but Adam alone. But He listed not so to do. If it be demanded why the mischief spread out further: is it not because God would have it so? Therefore we must in this case, as it were bridle and imprison ourselves, and receive the doctrine in such wise as St. Paul has uttered it: namely that God has put us all under sin, to the intent we should resort to Him for mercy.

But it is not enough that God has so determined it in His secret purpose: it was requisite also that the determination should be published and known. For until such time as men perceive themselves to be condemned: they will still be weltering in some vain self-trust, and boast of themselves, as we see too much.

The Scripture therefore must be fain to bring us to this understanding, that every one of us may condemn himself for a sinner, as it were with his own mouth, yea and that we do it unfeignedly. And why? Because it is by believing that we obtain the promise, that is to say the righteousness that is freely promised us. In the said text of the eleventh to the Romans which I alleged even now,

Saint Paul says, to the intent to show mercy upon all: but here he shows that it is not for all men to be partakers of it in general. For we know that the greatest number perisheth in their sins, because they refuse the remedy that is offered them in the Gospel.

And why then does Saint Paul speak of all? It is as much as if he should say, there is none other help for us but only God's looking upon us with pity, of His own mere goodness, that pardoning our offenses and receiving us into His favor, He take us for His children, to bring us to the heritage of the kingdom of heaven. We see then that Saint Paul did not without cause say that God will have mercy upon all: not that every man is comprehended under that word all, but to exclude and put away all self-righteousness of man.

Moreover, we see how the means is expressed here: namely that we must obtain the promise by faith, according as Saint John says that God so loved the world, that He spared not His only Son, to the end that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Will we then enter into the treasure that is showed to us here? Faith must be as a key to open us the door. For God calls us to it, but it is not enough for us to be called only: it behooves us to answer according to this saying, "you are my people," yea Lord, and thou art our God.

When he says, "you are my children," let us answer, Lord we come to thee as to our father. But surely we cannot answer so of our own proper motion: it must be given us of the Holy Ghost. However, the question is not here whether faith comes of men's selves or no. Saint Paul does no more but declare that to be quit before God, and to be drawn out of the dungeon of cursedness wherein we are all of us plunged, we must not bring anything of our own, as though we would go about to bind God, and that it were meet for us to imagine any

desert of our own: but come to crave his favor which is offered us freely without any duty toward usward, and settle our trust there, so as we hope not for any welfare otherwise than because God shows Himself merciful towards us.

I have declared already wherefore this serves. Surely men would always fain cloak themselves with some presumptuousness, as we see that Adam did: who though his own sin upbraided him, so as he was afraid of God's majesty, did nevertheless seek fig leaves to cover himself with all. At the same point are we. However, it is but a beguiling of ourselves to come before God, like whitelimed walls, and to think to be accepted at His hand: for He has an eye to the soundness of the heart, which is not to be found in any man. For so long as He lets us alone in our own kind, we be naught worth, how fair a show soever we make to the worldward.

Again, when He has reformed us, and given us a good desire to walk in His fear, which thing all the faithful must needs have: it does not follow therefore, that our affection is full and perfect: no, it comes far short of it. And yet, that which we have, we hold of His mere grace. So have we not anything to glory of or to rest upon however the world go: we cannot ground ourselves upon our own deservings.

True it is that the faithful must seek to give themselves wholly unto God: for we cannot be members of our Lord Jesus Christ, except we be sanctified by His Holy Spirit, as we shall see in time and place hereafter. And our Lord Jesus Christ cannot be divided nor cut in pieces as infinite as He is. Although our sins be forgiven us by His death and passion, and washed away and cleansed by His blood, and that the same washing be given us to fashion again the image of God His Father in us, so that we must be made new creatures in Him: yet notwithstanding howsoever we fare, it is not for us to press boldly

before God, as though we were worthy to be received, or as though we brought Him anything wherewith to bind Him.

For if we presume to allege one thing or another to Him, first and foremost all that we have comes of Him. Again, on the other side we are convicted of a hundred thousand faults, and when we go about any good work, we shall no sooner have done it, but it shall be infected with some spot or other, so that if it be tried rigorously, it shall always be subject to condemnation. Then must we needs keep our mouths shut: so that if we will have God favorable and merciful to us, we must bring nothing with us but only faith, no, but only faith. Nevertheless it is not meant that every man should take the bridle in his neck to do evil (as I have declared already heretofore:) it is not meant that we should be void of God's spirit, nor that we should welter in all wickedness: no, but here the case concerns only our trust whereupon we may ground ourselves to call GOD our father, that we may be sure of the eternal heritage.

If we go to our own works (as has been declared afore) there will be no certainty at all. For why, it is not a work or twain, or three that is required, but a perfect obedience, which was never yet found in any mortal creature. Truly if the Angels should come to account before God, they could not answer to that perfection of righteousness: and much less were it possible that we which are but worms, and which suck up sin as a fish does water, (as Job says) should be so sound that God should receive us for our worthiness. To be short, we must quit and clean give over the trust of our own works, and acknowledge that there is nothing but condemnation in us, if we mind to have the promise performed towards us. Thus you see in effect what Saint Paul meant to declare in this text.

And now he adds immediately, that before faith came, we were kept under the law, and as it were shut up till the faith was revealed. Here the words Law and Faith would be somewhat darksome, if they were not opened more at large. For sometimes when the scripture speaks of faith, it means all religion, and comprehends all the instructions that are given us in God's book. Sometimes it means the certainty of belief which we ought to have when we come to pray unto God, because we may not step to him at all adventure, but accept the grace that he offers us.

Then inasmuch as God's promises depend not upon our deserts, but is altogether freely and frankly given unto us, and we are made partakers by our Lord Jesus Christ: if we embrace the same, our so doing is called faith, and so has Saint Paul taken it hitherto, and likewise in his Epistle to the Romans, and in all other places where he discusses or treats how we may be justified before God, or how we may come in his favor, for they are both one thing, as I have said afore.

But in this text the word Faith has yet a more peculiar significance, which is, the revelation [or discovery] which we have by the Gospel. For it is very certain that the forefathers had the spirit of faith or belief, according as I have showed you already that Abraham was justified because he believed God, and that we also must be fashioned like to his example in that behalf, as whereby we be made his children to come to the kingdom of heaven. Then had faith its full strength at all times, and there never was any other means to set God and men at one: but yet was not the faith revealed in Abraham's time, because our Lord Jesus Christ who is the very pledge and substance thereof, was not yet come into the world.

Thus you see how we be justified freely at this day, and without any desert of our own. And why is that? For he that believes that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and is risen again for our justification: has all the whole. And as it is said in another place, our believing with our heart makes us righteous, and our confessing with our mouth makes us safe.

But now had Abraham had our Lord Jesus Christ discovered unto him as we have him at this day, (inasmuch that he is as good as crucified among us as Saint Paul has said heretofore:) his faith had been all one with ours. But it was yet after a sort covered, that is to say, although Abraham trusted in Jesus Christ, hoping for salvation at his hand, and although he utterly distrusted himself, knowing that there was virtue in him that might go for payment before God: yet was he held still under shadows, and was fain to look at Jesus Christ afar off. For he was not yet named the day sun of righteousness, as he is called in Malachi.

Now then we see what Saint Paul meant by saying that faith was not yet come: namely that the convenient time of the revealing of it to the world as it is nowadays by the Gospel, was not yet come, so that the fathers were shut up under the law. So therefore, here is some piece of difference, and some piece of likeness: inasmuch that if it be demanded what the state of the fathers were that lived under the law: it is to be answered, that partly it differed from ours, and partly was all one.

How were they both one? In this, that God had showed himself merciful to our father, howbeit for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake: and that Abraham, perceiving how it stood him on hand to put his whole trust in the mere grace of God, gave over himself, and so his believing was reckoned to him for righteousness, as we have seen

afore. In like case was it with all the Patriarchs and Prophets. So then their taking was all one with ours, in that they grounded themselves upon our Lord Jesus Christ, and boasted not of anything save only God's mercy, and had the promises of the inheritance of the heavenly life, as we have.

Yet there was also a diversity, because they were fain to have sacrifices, washings, and such other like things, till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And when the law was given, so as there was a Priest that entered into the Sanctuary to be an intercessor, and the people stood aloof a great way off, and a veil or Curtain was drawn in the midst of the Tabernacle to make a darkening of things: you see they were things wherein the state of the fathers differed from ours. For during the absence of our Lord Jesus Christ, they had ceremonies & figures, whereas we have the very body & substance of them, as Saint Paul says to the Colossians. For God bids not us to offer any more Calves, Sheep, or Oxen to wipe out the spots of our sins. But he tells us that we must be sprinkled with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Ghost, and that in our Lord Jesus Christ we shall find all that is requisite for our salvation. You see then that as now faith reigns in full power: that is to say, whereas the fathers had but a little taste of it according to their measure: it is fully & openly revealed unto us.

And for this cause Saint Paul says, that the fathers were after a sort restrained or shut up: so that he likens the law to a bondage, and in very deed so was it, and he will hereafter show what manner of bondage it is. It is not meant that the fathers obtained not the everlasting life which we hope for, or that we shall not be crowned all together at the last day: but that God was fain for a time to wield them like little babes. And for that cause also does he use the

similitude of a schoolmaster, and will again set down a third similitude of Tutors & governors. However, forasmuch as this shall be handled in its due place, let it suffice us as now to understand, that whereas Saint Paul likens the law unto a bondage, it is to show far greater favor to us, than he did to the fathers that died before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, because he uses us now after a freer fashion. And the second similitude does yet better express that the Jews were as children, & we now are as men grown. For this word Schoolmaster betokens a master of children, he says then that the law executed the office of a Schoolmaster, to train up the childhood of the people in old time.

And hereupon it may be concluded, that the faithful who believed in Jesus Christ before he was manifested to the world, were God's children as well as we. And if they were children, then were they also heirs. Herein we see that we must not make them like brute beasts, as some fantastical heads do, which think that the Jews contented themselves with the possession of the plentiful land that was promised them, & cared for no more but to be well-nourished & fed there: for that is too cursed a blasphemy. But Jesus Christ serves not to fill men's bellies & to feed their paunches: he serves to bring us to the heavenly life.

It is said that Abraham saw his day: that then was the thing whereon he rested his conscience. And we see how David did always look up higher than the world: & Jacob at his death even though he was giving up the last gasp, and looked not to live any longer in the world, said he would trust in the salvation of God. The ancient fathers then were not little children after such a sort, that they were not marked with God's holy spirit, nor called by him to the inheritance of the endless life: but only in the measure of faith, which was the difference between them & us. And how was that? Even

because the law which they had was yet wrapped in figures & shadows: whereas now Jesus Christ leads us right forth to heaven. And whereas I said that they were inferior to us in the measure of faith: I mean not that Abraham, David, & other like had a weaker faith than we: for seek we never so narrowly through the whole world, it is not to be presumed that any one creature is to be found at this day, which has the hundredth part of the faith of Abraham or David.

And the excellence of their faith appears in this, that although they had not the promises so apparent as we have, but very darkly, yet notwithstanding they overcame all such temptations as would have overthrown us a hundred thousand times. If any of us were put to the enduring of the encounters of Abraham or David, what would become of us? For Abraham was a wayfarer all his life long in a strange country, where men grudged him water to drink, though he himself dug the wells. He was put to as many plunges as could be. Finally, God exercised him in so many encounters, that he seemed to be minded to throw him into the bottom of hell: and yet nevertheless his faith abides still unvanquished. As touching David, he was driven a long time from place to place. Being hunted out of the whole realm & having no succor to retire unto, but among the infidels and enemies of God, or else into dens and among wild beasts: he was moreover put to such reproach, that every man cursed him as the veriest villain and caitiff in the world: and yet for all that, he held out still, he called still upon God, and he never fell to any murmuring or blaspheming, but rather glorified God in those his extremities and distresses.

So then we see that their faith ought to make us all ashamed. And when every of us shall have looked well into his own conscience, we shall find that we scarcely have any little piece of the faith that they

had. But the greatness of their faith must not be measured here by the constancy and ableness that every of them had to trust in God. Whereby then? By the outward object of their faith. As for example: Although Isaiah was an excellent teacher, so that his like is not to be found in the world: yet the least preacher that sets forth the Gospel purely, shall be preferred before Isaiah, as is avouched by the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ himself. And why is that? Because that although Isaiah was as an Angel, and spoke with such authority yea, and majesty, as were able to touch the hearts to the quick which are most fallen asleep in this world, inasmuch that even God himself seems to have opened his own holy mouth in him, and his words were not as the words of a mortal man: yet did he hold but the manner of teaching that was convenient for that time: that is to say he did set forth the land of Canaan as a pledge to those whom he taught, & keep them to the sacrifices, washings, figures, shadows, & all other like things, wherein he showed what the happiness of God's children is.

As for example, we see how he likens the church to a palace built of gold & silver and precious stones. You see then that his manner of dealing was fashioned unto the darkness of the law. But now our Lord Jesus Christ is set forth unto us, although a simple man preach the Gospel, which hath neither great eloquence nor authority: yet shall he as it were point at Jesus Christ with his finger, he shall show us how we be in the time of fullness, and therewithal he shall assure us that our sins are forgiven us in the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, inasmuch that God's wrath is pacified, and victory obtained for us over death. Thus you see that the diversity is in doctrine, and not in the quality of the faith as it is in every man's heart. For although Abraham had a wonderful faith, and such a one as we shall not find nowadays in the world: yet was it always hemmed in with the said Ceremonies and shadows. David was an

Angel and mirror of all perfection: and yet for all that, he was fain to be subject to the same order that the common people were, and to use all the Ceremonies that were then in use, and his looking at Jesus Christ was but a far off, because there was the said Curtain before him, which letted him that he could not behold his glory as it is showed us nowadays in the Gospel. And although we know not the hundredth part of the things that were disclosed to David and Abraham, to make them invincible against all temptations, and to make them fight so manfully that God might be glorified in them, and to make them bear out all brunts: yet had they not that which we have: that is to wit, they had not the pledge Jesus Christ delivered unto them, as we have, to the end we might call upon God his father, because we be members of his body, and he is our head, assuring ourselves that he and we are all one, with condition that his goods become ours, and that we have full enjoyment of them at this day. Thus you see that our faith is greater than Abraham's was, not in respect of our persons, nor yet in respect of any steadfastness and firmness that is in us: but in respect of the doctrine or teaching of it, which we term the object of faith, that is to say, the thing that is set before us from without.

And so you see why Saint Paul says that the fathers were held in ward as it were under a Schoolmaster, till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now we for our part have cause to magnify God's goodness, according also as our Lord Jesus Christ exhorts us, saying: blessed are the eyes which see that which you see, and the ears which hear that which you hear. For many Kings and Prophets have desired the like, and have gone without it. Behold, Abraham was called God's friend. Behold, David is reported to have been found according to God's own heart: and yet for all that, he was fain to look aloof at the promises which are now as it were cast into our laps, and whereof we have our fill. They sought Jesus Christ then absent and hidden, and

they waited for him. But now that our Lord Jesus Christ has come down into the world and been conversant here, he has given us a sure warrant that all is performed as he himself declared at his death. What a lewdness then is it, if we nowadays be not much the more inflamed and quickened up to follow the promises of the Gospel, where God communicates himself so familiarly unto us? So then on the one side we have cause to yield unto God his deserved praise, for that he has vouchsafed to exalt us, I say us miserable creatures to so high dignity, as to prefer us before all the holy kings and Patriarchs that lived under the Law. However, herewithal let us take good heed, that this benefit and prerogative turn not to our double condemnation for our unthankfulness in not making account of so great a good turn so offered unto us.

Now although Abraham were still held under after the manner of a child (as I have said already:) yet forsook he both his kinsfolk and native Country, and went as a poor wayfarer into a strange land, where he was hunted and tossed from post to pillar in continual languishing. And if he had repented him, could he not have returned into his own Country again? Yes: but the Apostle in the eleventh to the Hebrews tells us, that he had such a trustfulness and so constant a faith, that he held out even to the last push: insomuch that he showed by effect, that his mind was wholly set upon the kingdom of heaven, and not entangled with this world: and yet notwithstanding, for all that both he and the rest of the holy fathers walked after that manner before us: yet tarry they still for us at this day, and received not the promises which are manifested to us in the Gospel. For while they lived they had but a small taste of that which is revealed to us nowadays, and which is laid open before us. Woe be to us therefore if we be not warned and inflamed to receive God's offer, when he utters the infinite riches of his goodness, to win us and to draw us in such wise from this world, as we may come to yield ourselves freely unto

him. Then if such gracious dealing move us not to come unto him, now that we be men grown, notwithstanding our rawness and infirmity, and to take the yoke which he lays upon us, and to suffer him to govern us under his obedience, yea and to take courage and stoutness to defy Satan, and the whole world, and all the allurements thereof: say if we overmaster not all these conflicts: surely we shall pay right dearly for the grace that is offered us in the Gospel. And therefore let every of us bestir himself, and take opportunity while God allures us, and while the time of salvation, and day of favor is present. And seeing we be so feeble that we do but drag our legs after us, let us pray God to strengthen us, and to redress our laziness and coldness. Also let every of us strain and enforce himself: and since we be so hemmed in with the snares that Satan has laid for us, let us walk so much the more in the fear of God, that we may overcome all Satan's lettes and wiles, and go forward in the way that God has set us in, and follow the fathers that are gone before us, which tarry still for our company, that we might be gathered up all together into the heavenly life, at the blessed coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God, with acknowledgement of our faults, praying him that we may so mislike of them, as we may not only be sorry and seek forgiveness of them, but also be renewed by true repentance, and go forward and be confirmed in it more and more, till we be clean rid of all vices, and be so fashioned like to his Image, as his glory may shine forth in us, even till we enter into the full possession of the inheritance that he has promised us. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people. &c.

The Twenty-Third Sermon,

which is the ninth upon the third Chapter.

26 For all of you are God's children through the faith which is in Jesus Christ.

27 Surely as many of you as are baptized, have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: For you are all one in Jesus Christ.

29 Now if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

We have seen heretofore to what dignity we are advanced by the Gospel. For not only are we called to be of the fellowship and company of the holy fathers whom God honored so highly: but also our state is yet more worthy and noble, because we are delivered from the bondage of the Law, wherein they were held.

And for the better confirming of this doctrine, Saint Paul adds that we are all made the children of God by believing in our Lord Jesus Christ, according also as it is said in the first Chapter of Saint John's Gospel. For there this dignity is commended to us as it deserves: namely, that we have preeminence and prerogative to be counted God's children through faith, verily for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, who is his only and natural son. For that title belongs solely to him

by right, and is communicated to us only by grace, inasmuch as God has vouchsafed to adopt us for his sake.

So then Jesus Christ is the head of the Church: however, for his sake, God acknowledges and avows us for his children. And here we see that the word belief imports more than men commonly take it to do, according also as I have declared before. For they that are not exercised in the holy Scripture, think it strange that God should honor us so highly for believing, and (to their seeming) faith is not so great a virtue that it ought to obtain so great a benefit. But I have showed you heretofore that our believing in Jesus Christ is not as the crediting of some story when we hear it or read it, but a receiving and conceiving of him inwardly with full assuredness as he is offered to us by God his father.

Therefore when we embrace our Lord Jesus Christ, as the party that has made amends for our sins to reconcile us to God, so as we repose the whole trust of our welfare in him, not doubting but that he has brought us all that is for the inheriting of heaven: I say if we be once assured of that: it is no marvel though God acknowledges us as his children for our belief's sake. However, therewithal we must call to our remembrance, what we have discussed before: namely that this [benefit of God in acknowledging us to be his children] comes not of any desert of faith, neither must we weigh it here in the balance what manner of virtue it is: for we are made God's children by free adoption. If a man demands the cause: I answer, that the very wellspring and foundation is not to be sought elsewhere than in God's only goodness, inasmuch as it pleased him to pity us. Nevertheless, it is brought to pass by the means of faith (as I have said already,) because that being rid of all fond overweening, and acknowledging ourselves to be damned in our own nature, we flee for refuge to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus you see in effect what Saint Paul meant to say. And he goes on still with the matter, to the end we should know, that only faith ought to suffice us to the attaining of salvation, without seeking any other means one way or other to help us. What should we desire more than that God should acknowledge us for his children? Will we need to have an overplus added to so inestimable a benefit? You see then that our full felicity and perfect glory, is that we have leave to call upon God as our father, not doubting but that seeing he has received us into his favor, he will also handle us as his own children.

But how shall we come by that? Saint Paul says it is only faith that makes us partakers of that dignity. Then let us conclude, that the Law can nothing advantage us, or else it must needs be that we be wonderful covetous, yea and as good as out of our wits, to desire more than to be the children of God. The Angels are greatly honored in the holy Scripture, and yet the chief title that is given them, is that they are the children of God. Now seeing that we, we (I say) poor worms of the earth, in whom there is nothing but filthiness, no nor aught but corruption of sin, be matched with the Angels, insomuch that God opens us the kingdom of heaven, and intends to have us fellows with them, who are virtues and are near about him, seeing (I say) that we be made partakers of that glory: shall we be so presumptuous to seek I wot not what moreover? Truly it is not only faith that makes us to obtain that benefit.

Therefore, let us learn to renounce all other means that may be set before us: for when men offer us any other helps as though the faith that we have in him were not sufficient, it is but a turning of us away from our Lord Jesus Christ. That then is Saint Paul's meaning. But we shall never conceive the fruit that is contained in this text, except we always bear in mind, that by this word "faith" Saint Paul means to exclude all the desert and worthiness that men suppose or imagine

themselves able to bring with them unto God. When they will needs go through with the matter by their own power and virtues: It is all one as if they would cut off a piece of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he cannot be rent in pieces or divided. Therefore all the working of our salvation must come of him alone, and we must not skulk here and there, nor seek byways, but come right forth unto him by the straight way of faith.

Hereupon Saint Paul adds, that being baptized in Jesus Christ, we have put him on. And this is to take away a doubt that might be cast here, namely how it is possible that we should become the children of God, seeing that that dignity is peculiar to our Lord Jesus Christ. For whereas he is called the Son of God, the Apostle shows that that title cannot be verified of the very Angels of heaven. True it is, (as I have said heretofore) that they are named the children of God: however, that is not without an addition. So is it out of doubt, that there is not any creature to whom that dignity belongs. But now seeing that Jesus Christ is the only son of God, how does the same extend unto us? Saint Paul declares that it is by reason of the union that is between him and us, according as it is said in the 17th Chapter of Saint John.

Then if we were not one with our Lord Jesus Christ, surely we should have no acquaintance at all with God: for we are quite cut off from all hope of life by sin. Yea and we must needs be as deadly enemies unto him, and he unto us, till he has altered and renewed us. However the world goes, being separated from Jesus Christ, and considered in our own nature, we are unworthy to be called men, and therefore much less can we boast that God is our father. But here (as I said) Saint Paul intended to assoil that question, saying that by Baptism we are clothed with our Lord Jesus Christ.

And this similitude of clothing is very rife in the holy Scripture, and it betokens in effect, that Jesus Christ is our apparel or raiment, whereby all is covered and buried that might make us to be rejected at God's hand, and grace is purchased unto us, so as he does not any more sift us and search us in ourselves, but accepts us as if we came in the very person of his own Son. To be short, Saint Paul meant to show here the union that is between our Lord Jesus Christ and all the faithful, which are the members of his body.

And like as all the substance of a tree comes from the root, and all the powers and abilities of a natural body come from the head: even so is it between the son of God and us. For (as I have said already) we have not so much as one drop of the heavenly life, but of his inspiring or breathing into us. Therefore if we will come unto God, and be partakers of the holy Ghost, and of the gifts that belong to the endless life: let us be in Jesus Christ, and not think ourselves to be anything or aught worth of ourselves.

And for the same cause, our Lord Jesus Christ in the said text which I alleged out of the 17th of Saint John, setting out the true and perfect happiness of his, says: Father I pray thee that they may be made one with us. You see then that the way for us to get out of the dungeon of death wherein we were drowned, is to be united to our Lord Jesus Christ by the bond of faith. Now Saint Paul says, that that is done in Baptism.

Not that all they which are baptized are true members of Jesus Christ indeed: for we see the clean contrary, insomuch that there are some which unhallow and defile all the holiness of Baptism, and are guilty of high treason to God, because that whereas they profess to hold of Jesus Christ, they despise and spite him, and are as dung and filthiness to mar all things. Baptism then makes us not all Christians,

and again we know, that to be made the child of God, is too great a benefit to be fathered upon a corruptible Element. What is the water? To say that the water begets or regenerates us again, and that thereby we be delivered from death, and obtain the glory wherein God lifts us up to himself: as (say I) a perverting of all order.

But first of all let us mark here, that when Saint Paul speaks of Baptism, he presupposes that we receive the thing that is offered unto us in it. Many that are baptized do wipe away the grace of God: and notwithstanding that it be offered them, yet they make themselves unworthy of it through their unbelief, lewdness, and rebellion. Thus you see that the power of baptism is defeated in many men. But when there happens a mutual agreement and melody between God and us: then has baptism the effect whereof Saint Paul treats and discourses in this text.

And so the thing that makes us God's children and clothed us with Jesus Christ, is that God draws us out of the corruption wherein we were by nature, and will have Jesus Christ to be our head, and us ingrafted into him to be partakers of his goods. Therefore look when we receive that, then is all accomplished that is figured by baptism. If hypocrites brag of their baptism, Saint Paul shows them that it is but vanity and illusion, saying that the circumcision of the letter is nothing: that is to say, if we look no further but to the outward and visible Sacrament, it is all of no value. Even so is it with baptism: it shall stand them in no stead which with their mouths vaunt themselves to be Christians and great pillars of the Church, forasmuch as they defile the thing which God had dedicated to so excellent a use, as I have told you before. Then let us mark well that Saint Paul speaks this sentence, not to all without exception, which bear the sign and mark [of baptism] outwardly: but to such as fare the better by their baptism.

Again, Saint Paul means not that baptism, that is to say the water, has the power to change us in such a way that we should be clothed with our Lord Jesus Christ: for by that means God should be robbed of the praise that is due to himself alone. But he shows here the means whereby we are certified that we are the members of our Lord Jesus Christ's body. I have told you already, that we must not seek any other cause of it than God's mere goodness: for if we fetch windlasses one way or other, it is like as if a man were athirst, and would turn his back to the fountain [to seek water.] Therefore let us learn, that it is only God which knits us to our Lord Jesus Christ, of his own mere goodness, and that he does it by the secret power of his holy spirit, and yet notwithstanding ceases not to work by baptism as by an inferior instrument, according as we see how all light comes of him, in so much that there was light in the world, even before there was either Sun or Moon. And yet nevertheless God has established the Sun whereby we have light here below even unto this day. But yet does not the Sun serve to diminish the power that is in God alone.

Again, it is said that man lives not by bread only, but by every word that proceeds out of God's mouth. And in good sooth the bread itself is a dead thing. Who gives it us? It is God that inspires life into us: for we live in him as Saint Paul says in the 17th of the Acts. And yet notwithstanding it is his will to do it by bread, and he applies it daily to our use, to the intent we should be fed with it. So then there is none inconvenience that we should be clothed with our Lord Jesus Christ by baptism, and yet notwithstanding that the same should proceed of God's mere grace, and that it should be done by the secret working of the holy Ghost, surmounting the whole order of nature, whereof baptism does certify us, because we are rude and earthly. God therefore is fain to draw by little and little by reason of our infirmity, to make us to conceive the things that otherwise are too

high for us. For where are our wings to fly with above the heavens? We have much ado to creep here beneath upon the earth, and therefore God is fain to come down to us, which thing he does by his Sacraments.

Thus are we clothed with our Lord Jesus Christ by baptism, according also as Saint Paul shows by another similitude in the sixth to the Romans. For he says that we are grafted into the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the end also to be made partakers of his resurrection and life. This similitude of grafting is as fit as the other of clothing. For take me the scion of a tree, and cut me of the head, or some bough of another tree, and graft me that little scion into it, that was taken from another, and you see they grow both into one, so as they become both one substance, and the root yields his sap to the little sprig that was taken from another tree. Even after the same manner are we grafted into our Lord Jesus Christ (says Saint Paul) and that is to the end that our old man should be crucified in him, and we be raised up again in newness of life.

But here we have first to mark, how gracious and bountiful God has and still does show himself towards us, in that it pleases him to unite us to his own son: for that surpasses all the benefits which we can conceive in our imagination. And therefore also does Saint Paul prove, that all things which God has, do belong unto us, and that we have the enjoying of them, when we once possess his Son. Seeing (says he) that God has not spared his own Son, how should he not give us all things with him. To be short, God could not have uttered the infinite treasures better, than by joining us after that manner to his only Son. It is more than if he had given us heaven and earth: For surely if we compare Jesus Christ with all the goods of the world, yea

and all the goods that are above the earthly world: he far surpasses them all. Mark that for one point.

Furthermore let us understand that God has so united us to our Lord Jesus Christ, as we must be fain to have all our life in him. And it serves to humble us the better, and to make us perceive how horrible a thing it is to be wrapped in the cursedness of Adam. For if the holy Scripture told us not that we must be united to our Lord Jesus Christ, before we can be in God's favour: we should not feel sufficiently the wretchedness wherein we be held by nature, neither should we hate our sins so much as we ought to do.

But now that it is told us how it is impossible, (yea though all the Angels should come to our aid, & that all the world should help forward the matter): and to be short, that although nothing wanted yet it were impossible for us to come near unto God, or that he should look upon us with a fatherly countenance, yea or that he should acknowledge us for his creatures, till we be clothed with our Lord Jesus Christ: This were enough to make us abhor ourselves. And needs must it be that we be worse than loathsome, seeing there is none other means to appease God's wrath towards us, and to set us again in his favor, than by his covering of our sins, & by his cleansing of us from all our filthiness & infection, by blotting out all our wickedness: & that the same must be done by clothing ourselves with Jesus Christ, according to the figure thereof which we see in Jacob, when God blessed him by the hand & means of his father.

True it is that Jacob was chosen as Jacob: but yet was he fain to be appareled as Esau. So was he himself as in respect of God's calling of him to the heritage or birthright: and he was another man in respect of his borrowing of his brother's clothing. Even so come we also as chosen of God and as having his promise, whereby he assures us that

he is ready to receive us to mercy: but yet must we first and foremost be clothed with our Lord Jesus Christ. For if we appear in our own likeness, God must needs hate and abhor us as we are worthy. That is the thing whereof we be warned. But in the meanwhile let us fare the better by the warrant that is given us in baptism, that we may be able to fight against all the temptations and distrusts which Satan sets before our eyes to shake our faith withal. If we be blockish so as we perceive not our own vices, but be as it were rotten in them, woe be to us. But if we be wakened, to bethink ourselves what it is to make account before God, so as it comes evening and morning to our remembrance, that he is the judge of the world and cannot give up his office: if we enter into ourselves to make examination of our sins: surely we must needs be afraid & as it were besides ourselves: & if we had no help to relieve us, we should needs be drowned in despair.

But let us have our recourse to our baptism, & assure ourselves that it is not for naught that God has called us to be partakers of the pureness of his only Son, & made us all one with him: & then shall his bloodshed have such effect to cleanse us from all our spots, as we may come before God with our heads upright: not with such loftiness as hypocrites have, which presume upon themselves: but upon trust of his inestimable goodness, inasmuch as he has told us that all things which belong to our Lord Jesus Christ are common to us. Again if we perceive ourselves to have committed so many offences that God's wrath is kindled against us: behold, Jesus Christ has offered a sacrifice, whereby we know that the atonement is made between God and us. Seeing then that God has so testified his love towards us: let us not mistrust but that he will prevent us whenever we seek him in true faith, that is to say, with such steadfastness as we doubt not that he meant to disappoint us when he pretended to be so liberal towards us. Thus you see that the way to make our baptism available to us, is to use it as a shield to beat back all the distrusts

that come upon us to stop us from praying unto God, and from having our whole recourse unto him, if we went not unto him, [saying thus in ourselves]: Surely it is true that I have such store of sins in me, as the number of them were able to make God to loathe me: but therefore I will not go to him in mine own person: I renounce myself and my own nature, as wherein there is nothing but shame and confusion: and I go to him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, yea and he goes before me, he gives me as it were his garment, he speaks for me, and in his name do I present myself as though I were very he, because it has pleased him to be so gracious to me as to make me all one with him. Thus you see that we must leave ourselves behind us when we come before God, and we must take upon us the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, yea we leave ourselves behind us. Not that we should not perceive our own misdoings and be rightly humbled and sorry for them: but yet notwithstanding take it for a full and resolute certainty, that God accepts us when we come unto him as in the person of his only Son.

But there are very few that think upon this. And in good sooth, although that all of us profess the Gospel, yet we shall find a number that know not the true use of baptism, nor whereunto it avails, nor to what end it was ordained. But such folk shall pay dearly for taking such a pledge at God's hand. He will show that it is too costly a thing to be abused, for as much as it is said to be the means whereby we be united to our Lord Jesus Christ, and ingrafted into his death and resurrection. Then whereas many have received baptism in their childhood, and have lived a forty or fifty years in the world without knowing to what end they were baptized: it were better for them that they had been born dead, and to have been sunken a hundred times into the earth, than to have unhallowed so holy a thing. And therefore let us bethink ourselves the better, and learn that although there be but a little water cast upon our heads, yet notwithstanding it

is not a vain figure: for God speaks in it as it were from heaven, and Jesus Christ is there present as a witness of the usage and operation of the sacrament, and especially his death and resurrection are warranted to us by it. Let us think well upon these things, and consider to what end we be baptized and what benefit it brings us: let it be well rooted in our hearts, and whenever any young children are baptized, let us bethink ourselves the better: For to what end is baptism solemnized in the company [or congregation] of the faithful? Truly to the end that the babe should be commended unto God. Again it is a certain enfranchising of him into the heavenly City, and therefore it must not be done in huddler-muddler: but it is so excellent a deed, as ought to be done after a more orderly and solemn fashion, than anything belonging to worldly policy. For therein we have a mirror of the benefit that was bestowed upon us before, to the intent we should joy in it to the end.

But we see that the unbelievers do, through their own unthankfulness, deprive themselves of this adoption of God's, and quite banish themselves from it. To the end then that we may be confirmed more and more, we must consider well, that when baptism is celebrated, it touches us very nearly, and God calls us to him, to show us in another body's person, that we ourselves are forlorn and damned by nature. However, forasmuch as he has knit us into the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are no more considered in our own kind, neither does God look what we are of ourselves, nor what we have deserved: but accepts us as if Jesus Christ were in us, as indeed we must not be separated from him. This in effect is what we have to consider upon this text.

Now, hereupon St. Paul concludes, that there is neither Greek nor Jew, bond nor free, male nor female, but that Jesus Christ is one in us all, and all we are one in him. And by this sentence St. Paul meant

to express yet better, that only faith ought to suffice us, and that we must exclude all other means: for else it were a derogation as well to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as to the working of his holy spirit. If any man alleges that circumcision was always a record to the fathers, of the same thing that we have at this day in baptism: the doubt is assoiled in the second to the Colossians, where St. Paul says that in being baptized we be circumcised: [howbeit] not with man's hand, nor with visible circumcision: but that it ought to suffice us that God acknowledges us to be partakers of the spiritual circumcision, namely for so much as baptism is ordained to the same end nowadays. And let us mark, that circumcision served to put a difference between the Jews and the Gentiles. It was (as the Scripture terms it) a wall between them, to fence in the Jews as the people whom God had chosen.

But now the blessing is published everywhere, so as there is no more diversity. Now then baptism being in these days succeeded in the place of circumcision, supplieth the want of that old sign, which was a figure and shadow of things to come. And that should not need to have been, if our Lord Jesus Christ had not been away. But now that he is manifested unto us, we have baptism ordained in stead of it. Notwithstanding let us mark (as I have said already) that we can bring nothing of our own wherewith to purchase favor before God: all that we can do is but simply to confess our sin, which were enough to drown us in despair. Furthermore, we have faith, whereby we recover that which is requisite for our salvation. I say we recover it, by seeking it in our Lord Jesus Christ. Now then if we say, yea but we be weak and rude, we cannot mount so high as to the secrets of heaven: let us look upon the baptism that is given us, as though God reached out his hand to us. There he shows us to eyesight, after what manner he plucks us out of the curse wherein we were plunged, and covers us with our Lord Jesus Christ, to the end that all our misdeeds

should be buried by the perfection of his righteousness. For we know he yielded such obedience to God his father, that if we come grounded thereupon, we cannot but find favor at his hand. Thus you see how that on the one side God will have us to rest upon him and on our Lord Jesus Christ his son, to the end we should draw out of the fullness of that fountain, and yield the whole praise of our salvation to the working of his holy spirit: and on the other side gives us baptism as a help of our rudeness and infirmity. Seeing we have all this, what seek we any more? Is it not a willful robbing of God, if we will needs have other helps, and put to other opinions and fancies as they come in our heads? Whereunto serves all this? But such minglings are devilish corruptions.

Therefore St. Paul tells us, that we must be so united to our Lord Jesus Christ, as none of us must advance himself as though he were better worth than his fellows, but acknowledge ourselves beholden to God's mere grace for all things, and both great and small must endeavor the same together, and with one common consent confess, that in our Lord Jesus Christ they have all that is to be wished for, and therefore give over all the inventions and devices that can come in their own brains. Yet notwithstanding, St. Paul meant not to say that there is no diversity of degrees as in respect of worldly policy. For we know there are masters and servants, Magistrates and subjects: in a household there is the good man which is the head, and the good wife which ought to be subject. We know then that this order is inviolable, and our Lord Jesus Christ is not come into the world to make such confusion as to abolish that which was established by God his father. But when St. Paul says that there is neither master nor servant, man nor woman: he means that to be sure of their salvation, men must not set up their tails like peacocks, and stand gazing upon their own feathers: but look what worthiness so ever we wean to be in ourselves, we must wipe it away and cast it

under foot, and acknowledge all to be but hindrances that turn us aside from coming to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, when both great and small do acknowledge that they cannot bring aught of themselves, but must receive all things of God's only free goodness: Then is our Lord Jesus Christ himself alone is all in all in us: that is to say, we will not go about to add aught to the grace that he has purchased for us, and which he offers us daily by his Gospel to the end we should be partakers of it and enjoy it to our salvation. Thus you see in effect, that on the one side we must keep the civil orders of this world. Let such as are great men, and men of authority above others, know that God intends to be served by them in that state. As for example, let the Magistrates consider that they are so much the more bound to do their duty, seeing that God has done them the honor to advance them after that fashion above others. Again, they that are private persons and ought to obey the Magistrates, must look that they submit themselves, unless they purpose to strive with God and to make war against him. You see then that St. Paul holds us in sobriety and modesty, and under a bridle which was not devised by men, but dedicated of God to our use, because mankind could not continue without it. And truly we ought to honor and reverence the state of governance, as a thing ordained of the Lord. And yet for all that, when we come to the heavenly life, let us assure ourselves that all worldly things pass and vanish away, as the world and the fashion thereof passeth, says Saint Paul: but the kingdom of God endures forever.

Then as touching our being children unto God, and as touching our being his heirs, we come not to it by riches, nobleness, or dignity, or by any power or virtue of our own. How then? By God's mere grace and goodness. For the great ones must be fain to stoop and to humble themselves, and the little ones must need wonder at the sight

of God's so inestimable goodness, who has vouchsafed to lift them up after that sort above the heavens, whereas they are fearsomely counted worthy to dwell upon earth. Furthermore, let us have the skill to profit ourselves hereby. Truly the chief point is that we go forward and travel still to the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom, and that our studies, thoughts, and desires be chiefly applied thereunto. But yet therewithal we must also in passing through this world, have regard of the degrees which our Lord has set to be kept. And when any are to be chosen to the state of government, to wield God's sword, and to sit in the seat of Justice: let every man bethink himself well, and pray to God for such as are to be chosen, that they may be found to be good and faithful Magistrates, and employ themselves to do their duty. And let us on our side walk peaceably in their obedience and subjection: let us feel there as it were the first fruits of the kingdom of heaven: and let us consider that our Lord Jesus Christ does by that sign show us beforehand that he has a care of us, and overlooks us, and watches over us, until we may feel it to the full when he shall have gathered us up to himself. And to the intent we may the more cheerfully and with the better courage bear the yoke which he has appointed: let us understand that it is acceptable to him, and a sacrifice which he likes well of, when we walk according to the order which he has established, and when we proceed to live, not only without doing any man wrong, or without offering any violence or deceit: but also do walk in all godliness and honesty, (as St. Paul says) that is to say, when we first fear and reverence God above all things, and labor to dedicate ourselves wholly unto him: and secondly live after such a sober manner, as we do well show that we are not given to the world, though we dwell in it: but that we take it as a strange country, through which we travel continually towards the heavenly rest, till we see the thing in very deed which is taught us here, that is to wit that we have not been knit unto our Lord Jesus Christ in vain.

And now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our sins, praying him to make us so to perceive them, as we may continually seek him, even with as earnest zeal as may possibly be, and give ourselves wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ, to the end that being joined to him, we may give over all the cares of this world, and still more and more go forward to the felicity of the heavenly kingdom, till we be fully come thither. And so let us all say, Almighty God heavenly father. &c.

The Twenty-Fourth Sermon,

which is the first upon the fourth Chapter.

1 I say that while the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a servant, although he be the Lord of all things:

2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by the father.

3 We also likewise when we were children, were kept in bondage under the ordinances of the world.

4 But when the accomplishment of time was come, God sent his Son, made of woman, and made under the Law.

It is out of all doubt that there was never yet any more means than one whereby men might attain to salvation. And whereas many men bear themselves in hand that they shall by their own merits obtain the thing that they hope for: it is but a mockery and a beguiling of themselves. For (as has been showed heretofore) we are all of us rejected of God, cursed, and the children of wrath. On our own part, we are not able to recover that which we have lost in Adam, but God must of his infinite goodness be fain to work in that behalf: for all other helps are vain and unavailable. But now God has established one only means whereby men may get out of the dungeon of cursedness wherein we are all held. Therefore it must needs be that the fathers of old time were saved by God's mere grace, even as we are, who hope for the like at this day. For it is to be seen in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, that all the promises which God has given in all ages, were grounded upon our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he is the pledge of them, which makes them available and gives them effect and force towards us. Then, to be short, it must needs be that there is but one salvation common to all the faithful, both which are at this day, and which have lived at any time since the beginning of the world: and it must needs be also, that God has gathered us together in one accord, to the intent we should be reconciled to him by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by that means be counted righteous and enjoy the inheritance of heaven.

Yet notwithstanding, we see great difference between the Church that is nowadays, and the Church that was under the law. For the fathers were subject to many ceremonies. They were circumcised from their childhood. Besides this, they had their sacrifices, washings, and such other like things. At this day all those things are abolished, and none of them is in use. How then shall we say that the substance of faith is all one among us and the fathers, and yet that the government was diverse and that God has utterly changed it? If it

be alleged that this diversity proceeds of God: it would seem that he is variable. And if it be said that it comes of men: then must we conclude that we hold two sundry ways, and that there was great odds between them and us.

I have answered already to the first objection that may be made: namely that there is no variableness in God, though he have altered the order of government in his Church. For when he sends fair weather or foul, heat or cold, and disposes the seasons of the year diversely, shall we say therefore that he changes his mind, and that he is mutable in himself? No, but contrariwise we must say that he has ordained the things that were convenient for mankind, and yet notwithstanding does by those changes and turnings warn us that we must not seek our rest here beneath, but pass away as wayfarers, and as they that undertake a long journey to come to the kingdom of heaven. As touching the second objection, Saint Paul shows that if there be any difference betwixt us and the fathers that lived under the Law, it is not in that our religion is not all one, it is not in that we have not all one God, it is not for that the promises which we receive belong not to us nowadays, or for that our Lord Jesus Christ has not at all times had the power to make atonement among all men, even from Abel to those who shall be found in the last end of the world: but he says that the diversity is in the outward government. And the better to express that, he alleges a similitude which we ought to be well acquainted with. For if a father leaves his children fatherless and under years of discretion, he will appoint tutors and governors of them until they come to full age. When the father is deceased, his children shall be under tutors and governors, without enjoying of the goods that their father has left them, and yet do the goods belong to them: nevertheless, they have not the rule of themselves, but in stead of following their wanton appetite, men give them school-butter with a rod. Thus you see that although the children be heirs, yet have they

not liberty at the first day, because they are too weak, and have neither wisdom nor discretion. Now according to this similitude Saint Paul says, that the fathers, (that is to say the Jews who lived under the law) were God's children and heirs as well as we: but that the Church was then as it were under age as a young child, and needed a bridle, and therefore they were in bondage and subjection of the law.

S. Paul then compares God's law whereby the Jews were held in strict awe under the yoke of ceremonies, I say he compares it to a Tutorship. But now is that time past and gone, says he: for God has sent his only son, insomuch that in our Lord we become men grown and have come to such perfection of age, that the government which was under the law is now superfluous and unprofitable, yea, and it should be altogether contrary to God's will, and to the order which he has established. And so we see whereat S. Paul aimed. For it is a thing of great importance to know that our Lord Jesus Christ is no newcomer, as though God had suddenly bethought him to remedy the destruction of mankind. For Christ had that power from the beginning, and it behooved all men to seek their salvation in him, for the faith has always been one selfsame, as the Apostle alleges in the Epistle to the Hebrews. And truly Abel's sacrifices were not accepted for any worthiness that was in his own person, nor for any value that was in him: but only by the means of faith: faith was fain to be his foundation and buttress. In respect whereof also the Apostle says, that our Lord Jesus Christ who was yesterday, is also today, and shall be still to the end. Therefore we must be well resolved of this point as a thing undoubted and out of all question: namely that we in these days have not any new hope of attaining to salvation, but the very same that has been at all times heretofore, and that the Gospel is not a newfound doctrine forged within these few years, but the very same

doctrine wherein all the righteous men that ever were, have been instructed.

And truly it has been said heretofore, that we are made the children of adoption when we once have our Lord Jesus Christ. For S. Paul intended to rebuke the folly and presumptuousness that was in the Jews, for that they boasted always of their earthly lineage. He shows that in this behalf we must have respect of nothing but of the incorruptible seed of God's word, whereby we are begotten anew. Now when God adopts us and receives us to be his children, then does he avow us to be the spiritual offspring of Abraham. How then can we be Abraham's children, except we agree with him in faith? You see then that Paul's handling of this point here is to good purpose: namely to do us to understand, that from all time out of mind, there has not been any other means to renew men to salvation, and to bring them into God's favor and love, than by trusting in Jesus Christ, and by fleeing altogether unto him for refuge.

Thus you see why it is said that young children are masters of the house, and that the inheritance belongs to them, though they do not yet enjoy it by reason of their age. And here we have also to mark further, that it were great wrong to the fathers of old time, to shut them out of the fellowship and onement of the faith that is showed here by Saint Paul. For their life was of all men's most miserable, because God kept them occupied with many afflictions: and the lives of the fathers (especially of those whom God marked out to make them excellent) were all mirrors of invincible patience. For what things endured Abraham? How hard and great encounters did he hear out? What manner of temptations did Isaac and likewise Jacob abide? Again, what virtues see we in David? Now if they had set their mind upon this world, they had been in worse plight than the brute beasts. Therefore (as I have said before) it must needs be that they

looked higher: and that did they witness sufficiently, not only by word of mouth, but also by deed.

Then let us mark well the point that is set down here: which is, that the fathers hoped for the selfsame heritage that we look for, even by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ. And for as much as we agree with Abraham, David and the other holy kings and Prophets in faith: we shall be gathered into the heavenly life with them, and obtain the same crown of salvation with them, which is the reward of faith as Saint Peter terms it in his first Epistle. Furthermore whereas Saint Paul says that the child differs nothing from a servant: he does it, always to magnify God's grace towards us, and the privilege which we obtain by means of the Gospel. It is much for us to be called the children of Abraham: but it is much more when it is said of us, that God has advanced us to a higher degree by the Gospel, than ever Abraham came unto. For inasmuch as our Lord Jesus Christ was not yet come: he was under the yoke of the law. But we at this day are free from it: and so you see that God has exalted us above all the Patriarchs and Prophets. And well ought we to acknowledge this grace, and to esteem it as it deserves, to the end we may give ourselves to the serving of God with the earnest affection and zeal.

But (as I have touched already) we must mark that S. Paul speaks not here of any several person. For there is none of us all but he ought to confess himself to be much rawer and weaker in faith than were the Prophets and Patriarchs: and that do their lives show full well. Then if we be not come to such perfection as they were, how is it said that they were as little children, and that we be nowadays as it were at the state of men? I told you before, how S. Paul speaks not of one man or another, but of the common government of the Church. For he speaks not of the men themselves, but of the fashion that God used in guiding those that are his. This will be showed the better by things

contrary. S. Paul upbraids the Corinthians, that he was driven to give them milk as to little babes because they were not yet able to brook strong meat, and he makes them ashamed of their dullness, and of their weltering in their untoward affections, for that they had not profited in the faith as the time required. Therefore it was a kind of childishness for them to be always new to begin. Yea and we see how the Prophet Isaiah condemns the Jews yet more roughly when he says that they were little children, to whom men say A, A, B, B, so as they be still new to begin again, and look what they learn today, they forget tomorrow, so that they never go forward but with great hardness. This is a vice that is too common in the world.

Moreover, S. Paul in the fourth to the Ephesians, does generally exhort all the faithful and all such as are well strengthened and able to be teachers of other men, which be as it were antesigne bearers to show the way of salvation: I say, he exhorts them to grow still till they be come to the full age of manhood. It should seem at the first blush that there is some contrariety. For he says here, that all those whom God has received into his Church and made them of the household of faith, are already come to full age, yea even the veriest idiots that scarcely understand three words of faith, so they have the principles and as you would say the gross fume of the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. S. Paul says that they be already as good as men grown, and that God will not hold them any longer as children under a master, or as under tutors and governors. And in another place he says, that not only such as are weak and ignorant, but even the excellent sort, which ought to carry the torch before others to give them light, must grow still. And how long? Not for a year or two, but all their lifetime: so that as long as they live in this world, they must daily acknowledge themselves to be weak still, and that they have need to enforce and strain themselves to go forwarder and forwarder.

But all this agrees very well together. For if every man examines himself what he is, surely even the forwardest of all, shall find themselves to be still as little children. For although we endeavor to come unto God, yet we drag our legs after us: and however we be disposed of ourselves, a number of hindrances step before us, and every little straw stops us: or else if a fly do but cross our eyes, by and by we are ready to turn away. And although we had never so great courage in us, yet have we many vices to fight against, and our knowledge is not such but we have need to pray God daily to increase our faith, and correct the remnant of unbelief that is in us. Thus you see what every man shall find on his own behalf.

But if we look upon the fashion that God keeps in guiding and governing his Church: it is certain that we be fully men grown. And why? For we be no more held in so straight subjection of the law as the fathers were: but for as much as we have our Lord Jesus Christ, we resort unto him when we have sinned. We see well enough how we be arrayed with spots and blots before God: but yet is our washing ready at hand, inasmuch that by being dipped in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith through the working of the Holy Ghost, we become pure and clean, and God accepts us into favor. Again we be bound to everlasting death by reason of the faults that we commit daily against him: but yet the amends for them is to be found in our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is ordained the ransom to discharge us. You see then that we be no more under the bridle whereto the fathers were subject, namely in respect of God and of his governing of us. Therefore although we feel our own infirmities, yet does that not bar us from being men grown: that is to say, it is not let but that God gives us greater liberty and privilege than he did to such as lived under the law. Thus in effect that question is assoiled. And it serves to bring us back to that which I have touched already, namely

that we must magnify God's grace towards us, for advancing of us to such dignity.

But therewithal we see also, that it is not lawful for men to devise a new government at their own pleasure under pretense that folk are raw, or that many are not yet fit to be led and guided after a higher and wiser fashion. And it behooves us to mark that well. For when the superstitions that reign nowadays in popery did first enter into the world: they began not with such devilish blasphemy as they be now maintained with. For look how many Ceremonies there are in the papacy, termed by the name of God's service: so many be their Idolatries and the Illusions of Satan: and to be short, all is abominable before God. Why so? For they imagine them to be things necessary to salvation, that by the means of them they be able to ransom themselves, and to get forgiveness of their sins. Moreover they deface our Lord Jesus Christ and the grace that is brought us by him, because they hope to ransom themselves by their own satisfactions, and by that means usurp and pluck to themselves the thing that belongs to the Son of God. Thus you see that they be cursed villains. Nevertheless when all their gewgaws were first brought into the Church, they were not yet full of so gross dotages: but they crept in under a somewhat more favorable pretense: that is to wit, that men were rude and dull, and unable to comprehend the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, if they had not been handled and dandled after the manner of little children.

Now (as I have touched already) it is true that every man ought to humble himself when he knows his own infirmity: but yet does it not therefore follow that we should bring up new fashions after our own fancies. We must be contented with that which God has ordained. A young child must not choose his tutor of his own head: no, he should not be suffered to do so: But his father will appoint him one. True it

is that there are other means established by laws: but here S. Paul has taken a similitude agreeable to the matter that he deals with. Then if an earthly father have authority to appoint Tutors to his children: why should not God have the same power? A child shall not be licensed nor suffered to choose a Tutor to his own liking. Since it is so: by what right or title will we devise this or that, to say, we be young children, and therefore we must have a fashion meet and agreeable to our slenderness? Yea, and God has provided one for us: now shall we be wiser than he?

However the case standeth, the very cause why men's wits have been so ticklish to devise store of Ceremonies in the Christian Church, was that they saw so much rudeness among the common people. Yea marry (say they) it is good reason that there should be this and that. Baptism were too simple a thing if there were nothing else to be seen in it but water, and that water would not be sufficient. For there are a great number of lay folk, which are so dull that they understand not what that mystery meaneth, that is to wit, that we be renewed by our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore there needeth oil and cream to represent the holy Ghost, as it were in a visible figure. Besides this there needed light, and a white Chrisome, and salt, and after one thing, and after another. Very well: thus was baptism daily decked, yea in the opinion of men: but all of them are but defilings: for did not our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the incomprehensible wisdom of God his father, know well enough what should be for our profit? Shall men come creeping like little toads, and seek I wot not what, and bear themselves in hand that the things which our Lord Jesus Christ has ordained are imperfect, and that they will take in hand to make them perfect?

As much is to be said of all the rest. Especially the Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ has not only been corrupted and maimed: but also

utterly defaced by the devilish abomination of the hellish mass. For they make it to be but an ordinary matter to take a bit of bread and to drink three sips of wine. God's word willeth us to look to the promise [namely] that we be made partakers of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we receive his holy Supper with true faith and obedience, and that in him only lies the food of our souls. But contrariwise men have been fain to apparel themselves like players in an interlude, and therewithal to use so many mummery, as it was a shame to behold them: and what was the end of all? Mary sir, it was a sacrifice for the remission of sins, both of quick and dead. Wherein you see how our Lord Jesus Christ is bereft of his priestly dignity which was given him of God his father, even with solemn oath that he should never have any successor: but yet for all that the Papists make him a thousand thousand successors. And what manner of men I pray you? Surely if they were Angels of heaven, yet ought they to be taken for devils.

But their choice is of all the vermin of the world, of all the rascals, and of all naughtipacks: and shall we say that such a rabble are the successors of our Lord Jesus Christ. And yet nevertheless you see what the Papists allege for their covert: namely that men must needs have some helps because of their infirmity. And thereof came all the residue of their superstitions: as for example, when they did set up their Idols and puppets, they termed them the lay men's books. But we see that all their malapertness is confounded here, when S. Paul brings us back to the order that God has set, because we must all wholly hold us to it, and there rest. So then, will we not disclaim the heritage of heaven which our Lord Jesus Christ has purchased for us? Let us follow the government which God has set down in his Church, and assure ourselves that God will supply all wants. However rude or raw soever we be, he can well skill to draw us to him. Yea, so we keep the beaten way, for as for them that have so

mingled and turmoiled things, and piled up such a heap of Ceremonies: they have so little remedied their infirmities thereby, that they have rather estranged themselves quite and clean from our Lord Jesus Christ.

For we know that men are of their own natures too much inclined to visible things. Therefore by taking up many ceremonies, men are so intangled, so snarled, & so deeply drowned in them, that afterward they forsake God and our Lord Jesus Christ. If any man allege, why so? Had not the fathers of old time many ceremonies also too help their infirmities? Yes: but all theirs were revealed to them by God. For first it was told them that the pattern of all those things was heavenly, as it is said in the 25th of Exodus. And it was showed to Moses in the mountain, to the intent they should not muse upon these present and corruptible things. And when God saw they were too much given unto them, we see how he rebuked them sharply by his Prophets, saying: away with your sacrifices, fie on them, for think ye that I take pleasure in your cutting of the throats of beasts, in hope to pacify me thereby, as though I were an hungered or a thirst? Think ye that I have need of such helps? You see then that God did always draw his people from superstition, notwithstanding that there were many ceremonies ordained, which was done for the necessity of the time. For it was requisite that there should be figures and shadows in the absence of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to S. Paul's saying, who tells us that the fathers of old time were by that means directed to seek Christ: but now that he is come, we have no more need of any such thing.

As for example, if a man be away from me, so as I cannot come to the sight of him, and I would fain have a representation of him to find him out by, I must at leastwise have an Image that may resemble him: but if I see his body present, and may behold him face to face, I

need no more any Image or counterfeit to paint him or express him more lively unto me. Even after the same manner the fathers of old time had many figures and shadows, because our Lord Jesus Christ was not yet revealed. But now that he shines upon us, and shows himself as the daysonne of righteousness so brightly unto us: were it not a willful burying of him again, if we would needs have figures still? And for that cause also was the veil of the Temple rent asunder at his death. For nowadays we may enter in familiarly unto God, and offer him our spiritual Sacrifices, that is to wit, our prayers and petitions, and that is because we have the very body and substance as Saint Paul says in another text to the Colossians. Now then we see that all they which have forged new devices after that sort, have utterly corrupted and falsified the Gospel, and have tied towels and napkins before men's eyes, to keep them from the seeing and knowing of Jesus Christ, as they ought to have done, and as was requisite for their salvation. And therefore it is certain that all they which busy themselves about such gewgaws, do instead of seeking Christ, throw themselves headlong into damnation by following so their own brain. They be so given to it, as they cannot be plucked from it: they play the little children that are building of some house of oyster shells, who are so earnest at their work, that they forget to eat or drink, and are contented to suffer heat and cold, hunger and thirst. And why so? Because their fondness carries them away.

Again they remove their stuff to and fro, and bring in this and that, and when they once begin to set themselves to it, they can never make an end. Even so it is with men when they will needs serve God after their own liking. You see then that we had need to be sober in that behalf, and to content ourselves with the helps & means that are ordained already to bring us to our Lord Jesus Christ. We have Baptism & the Lord's Supper: let us hold ourselves contented with them, for our curiosity will always draw us unto evil, unless we yield

to God's appointment, and give over all our own speculations and fancies.

Yes, and let us understand that it is a blasphemy against God when men say [of their own heads] this or that is good for us. I tell you plainly, whenever men say, we must have this, and we must have that, or we must have our Church or religion of this fashion or that fashion: It is as much as if he should say, God was not well advised how we should be governed, he wist not what was meet for us. As for example, it seems to them to be too slender a matter that there should be no more but only water in Baptism: and they must have somewhat else to give it a greater grace and majesty. Therefore they have tapers, and salt, and cream, and all the rest of the pompes of their own making. Lo how men will always be adding of somewhat unto God's commandment: which doing is a cursed blasphemy, as I said before. And it rises of this, that they had not an eye to the principal, but gazed still upon the appurtenances. The principal is the promises: for all the Ceremonies of the world are not only vain and baggagely, but also devilish illusions, except God's word be printed in them, and that be the thing whereat they look, and the mark wherat they aim. As how? If we had no promise for baptism, nor knew to what end it was ordained: what a gewgaw were it? It were much better for us to forbear it. Again, if we knew not what the Lord's Supper meaneth, it were better that the remembrance of it were utterly buried. But when God's word goes with it, so as we have the promises to warrant us that we be washed and cleansed from all our spots by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ: then lies all our trust there. And moreover it is said that there we be renewed by the holy Ghost. Lo how baptism leads us to the promises, and the promises lead us to Christ, as to the party that is contained in them. Thus you see what we have to bear in mind, when S. Paul exalts us in degree above all the Patriarchs, and those that lived under the Law: namely,

that it is not for that there was not more perfection, constancy, and faith in them, than is now a days in us.

And therewithal (as I have erst said) we be still confirmed in this point, that there is no new mean of salvation set forth unto us, but that God gathers us to him for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, in like wise as he has in all ages called his chosen, and those whom he listed to cull out, and whom he vouchsafed to make partakers of the adoption that is imparted to us at this day. For if it might be said, that men have had the mean to be justified, and to come in favor with God, but only since Jesus Christ came into the world: what should become of those that lived afore? Our faith should be but weak, and it would cast us into such a maze, as we should not wot where to become. How now, would we say? Hath not God been the father of his creatures in all ages? Was there no salvation till Jesus Christ came into the world? Yes, but where as it is said that the salvation is manifested unto us by the Gospel, yet was it also already before: and although there was a veil in the Temple, and other shadows, yet nevertheless the fathers had always an eye unto Jesus Christ, unto whom we be led at this day. Thus you see how they might walk freely and without doubting, and how that at this day also there is not anything that can shake us, if we keep on our way to our Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that by his means we be all called to the heritage which he has purchased for us.

And therefore we ought so much the more to abhor these Devils, that bear us in hand and strain themselves to prove, that the fathers of old time were like to brute beasts, as though they had known nothing of the spiritual life. Behold a blasphemy meet to deface all the religion of the world. Of which number was that cursed creature that was punished here according to his deserts, I mean that dog which dared be so bold as to write, that Abraham never tasted nor knew of

the heavenly life, nor ever worshipped God but imaginatively, and that the reporting of him to be the father of the faithful is but a mockery, and that his faith was but a shadow of faith, and finally that he never knew of Jesus Christ, nor of his coming. Behold (I pray you) the blasphemies wherewith his books were stuffed. But let us in these days abhor such plagues of Satan. For it is certain that the said Champion of the Devil was purposely bent to bring to pass, that there should be no more faith in the world. For inasmuch as the Devil transformed himself, and showed not his horns at the first, it was very dangerous when he came after that fashion, as it were to dig down the foundation of our faith, as it were under the earth. And Saint Paul warns us expressly hereof, to the end we should stand upon our guard, and keep good watch that we be not taken tardy.

Then let us mark well, that whereas it is said here, that to be made the heirs of God, we must be made the members of our Lord Jesus Christ: thereby the holy Ghost intends to confirm us, to the end we should be so much the better disposed to go on continually unto God, and to hold out in the hope till we have overcome all the battles of this world, to be brought into the spiritual rest which we look for. Also we have therewithal to mark well, what is said concerning the fullness of time. For according to men's unmeasurable inquisitiveness, it might be demanded here, why and how so? Why hath God driven it off so long seeing we were forlorn and damned in Adam's fall? How happens it that he has not remedied it rather? Surely Saint Paul does not altogether satisfy men's appetites, but cutteth it quite off by the waste. And in good sooth if God meant to content us, he should be fain to feed us with many needless things: but he intends to try the obedience of our faith. And Saint Paul also does bar us of that thing, in saying, that the fullness of time was not yet come.

And what meaneth he by the fullness of time? He meaneth the time that God hath appointed in his own purpose, and not according as men might have judged of it: for they are no competent judges of that matter, but must submit themselves to God, and allow of that which he hath established. Thus you see what S. Paul meant by saying, that the full time was then come, when God sent his only son into the world. Therefore let us learn that our chief wisdom is this soberness of submitting ourselves unto God, to accept for good and rightful whatsoever thing he doth, knowing that on our own part, though we have never so much understanding, it is but folly for us to think ourselves aught worth, or to take upon us the skill of any thing: and that we must learn to humble ourselves to our God, and not do as many men do, who are so hasty as to say, What? I think thus, and thus is mine opinion. For there is not anything more contrary to God's doctrine; than when men presume so much upon themselves as to say, thus must the matter go, and so and so do I think or suppose. Truly it becomes us to behold as captives,* as S. Paul says in the second to the Corinthians. Let us hold ourselves in such awe, as we may not once lift up our heads to dispute against God, nor make any estimation of ourselves as though we were of some ability. Let us hold us contented with the liberty that he hath given us, and not abuse the grace that he hath granted us, in preferring us before those that were as Angels in this world, and yet notwithstanding were not advanced to the liberty which we have by the Gospel.

Furthermore S. Paul does here bring us back to the thing which we ought to consider above all others: which is that our being at the time of full age in these days, is not in respect of any virtue that is in us, but in respect of our Lord Jesus Christ. The difference between us and the fathers of old time, is (as I have said already) that they were led as under awe, and we be now set free into—why are we so? Is it because we are of more value than they—or that there is any

worthiness in us? No: but because it pleased God to honor us with the presence of his only Son. Will we then enjoy the liberty of the Gospel? Let us go right forth to our Lord Jesus Christ, who as he is glorified in himself, will also bring us into the heavenly glory, whereinto he is gone before us. This is the thing that Saint Paul meant purposely to tell us. As touching that it is added that he was made of woman, and put under the Law: it cannot be dispatched at this time, and therefore we will reserve it till another time.

And now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us so to feel them, as we may mourn and be sorry for them with true repentance, and go thither as he calls us, that is to wit, be so rightly bereft of our flesh, and of all the corruptions thereof, as we may come to the joy whereunto he daily calls us, and unto that uncorruptness wherein it behooves us to go forward all the time of our life. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people and Nations of the earth &c.

The Twenty-Fifth Sermon,

which is the second upon the fourth Chapter.

4 But when the time was fully come, God sent his Son made of woman, and made under the Law.

5 To the intent to redeem those that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of children.

6 And forasmuch as you are children, God has sent the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, that is to say, father.

7 Wherefore now you are not a servant but a son: and if you are a son: you are also an heir with Christ.

I have told you already why S. Paule speaks here of the fullness of time: namely to abate men's curiosity, who by their good wills would seek too far into God's secrets, yea and take upon them so boldly as to reply against God if he behave not himself after their fancy. To the intent therefore that the faithful may content themselves with the order that God has kept in sending of our Lord Jesus Christ: he says that the due season was not before, for that matter depends upon the only good pleasure of God, and upon his unchangeable purpose, whereunto it behooves us to submit ourselves. And now S. Paul says, that our Lord Jesus Christ was made of woman, and put under the law, to acquit those that were under the law. First he says that he was clothed with our nature, for else he could not have yielded obedience to God in our behalf, that we might be set free.

However, forasmuch as he was conceived after a wonderful manner, therefore does S. Paul say he was made or begotten of a woman. It is true that he was of the seed of David: nevertheless, I have told you already, that there was a secret working of the Holy Ghost in his conception. But however it was, our Lord Jesus Christ took our nature upon him, to the end he might yield obedience to God his father, as it were in our person. And that was the cause why he took our nature upon him. And this subjection whereof he speaks, was not of constraint, but of good will. For we know that the Son of God has all superiority and sovereignty, in so much that even the Angels and

all the principalities must bow their knees before him to do him honor. How then could he be subject to the Law, seeing that the Law is such a bondage? This does not at all deface the Majesty of God's Son, for as much as he abased himself of his own good will. Therefore (as it is said in the second to the Philippians) there is no contrariety in that he might make himself equal with God without robbery: and yet that he abased himself also. So then, for as much as this doing of his proceeded of his own mere and unconstrained goodness: he continued always in his own state, notwithstanding that before men he had the shape and fashion of a servant as S. Paul also specifies in the same place. However the case stands, let us mark well, that he who was Lord of heaven and earth, took that subjection upon him, to set us free from it. For we see how our Lord Jesus Christ was circumcised, and when he came to man's age, he kept diligently all that belonged to the law of Moses: not that he was bound to do it, but to put away the bondage, and to break the bond wherewith we were as it were pinched and fettered.

Therefore as often as the Gospel speaks to us of liberty, (whereof S. Paul does also treat in this text): let us come back to our Lord Jesus Christ, assuring ourselves that he became not bound after that fashion for nothing. Now, there is nothing in him which contains not the performance of our salvation. Then must we needs conclude that we are not any more subject to the bondage of the law, or else it would turn to the dishonor of our Lord Jesus Christ. For what a thing were it, if after his yielding of himself to subjection for our sakes, we should still hold scorn of liberty? It were more convenient that heaven and earth should change their nature, than to say that the Son of God has come down here below, and has abased himself in manner aforesaid, and yet that we should esteem it but as a play or trifling thing. For what a dealing were that? Now then let us learn, that we may now serve our God freely, and come directly unto him

without being held any more so strictly under the yoke of the law as the ancient fathers were, because Jesus Christ is come, and has set us free. I have told you already heretofore, in what wise we are delivered from the law. It is not for that it remains not still as a rule to frame our life by, so as God may govern us and have all superiority over us. For what a thing were it if we should be worse than the Heathen folk and unbelievers? But it is certain that they have the law engraved in their hearts as says S. Paul. He that never went to school, nor has had any teaching at all, nor ever has heard or read any thing, may notwithstanding discern between good and evil. Not that he has a perfect skill: but because that however the world go with him, God to take away all excuse of ignorance, would that men should have that evidence printed in their hearts, that theft, whoredom, extortion, deceit, perjury, drunkenness and such other like things, are vices to be condemned. Also it was his will to have men know, that to blaspheme his name is an irksome thing. The Heathen folk knew all this without any teaching. Now then if we should be lawless under pretense that our Lord Jesus Christ reigns over us, and has set us at liberty: what a thing were it? There would be greater confusion in the Church, than there is where Satan has made a mingle-mangle and put all things out of order, so as there is no bridle at all. But whereas it is said that we be no more under the law: it is in the same respect whereof mention has been made heretofore; namely, that the Law shall not execute any more this sharpness and rigor upon us, to say to us, cursed shall he be that fulfills not all things. For so long as the threatening remains and stands in force, we must needs be as men out of their wits, and as folk upon the rack ready to be torn in pieces. To be short, we can have no rest except the sentence of the law be abolished, which is that they which perform not all that is contained in the law shall be accursed.

But contrariwise let our consciences bear us record that God pities us and bears with our infirmities as a father does towards his children, and passes not upon the vices that are in us, but hides and buries them so as our service is acceptable to him, though there be many things amiss in it: and then are we no more subject to the law.

Not that we should be quite without rule, nor that the commandments ought not to be preached continually unto us, to the end we may know what God has ordained and be held in awe by it: but that we should not be out of heart if we fall, or halt, or make any false steps: or that if we cannot discharge ourselves of all things so perfectly as were requisite, yet we should not be utterly dismayed, knowing well that God will always hold us up by the hand, and not enter into account with us to sift our life rigorously.

Moreover, because the Ceremonies that were before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ are no more in use as they were towards the fathers of old time, who were trained by them as in their childhood. For when the brute beasts were offered in sacrifice, every man beheld there his own death, as though the bottomless gulf of hell had been opened to swallow up the whole world. At this day we know that the Son of God has by his offering up of himself in sacrifice, and by his shedding of his blood for us purchased us everlasting redemption, so that we come with our heads upright before God, not doubting but that we obtain life by the death of him that was not subject to it, but of his own good will made himself subject to it as our surety, to the end that we might be quit and discharged by his death and passion.

Thus you see that at this day the law is abolished towards us, and that we are delivered from it, even to obtain the adoption. However, in speaking so, S. Paul means not that the Patriarchs, Kings, Prophets, and other faithful folks that lived under the old Testament,

were not the children of God as well as we, or that they knew not themselves to be adopted by faith as well as we: but that the said adoption was not yet so revealed as it is now a days.

For (as we have seen) the law was a Tutor to rule little children. But we are come to the age of men, because the Son of God has showed himself, and brought us all perfectness by his coming. Then seeing it is so: we do now enjoy the adoption which the fathers did but as it were taste of afore, because the time was not yet come. Not that God wrought not in them with such measure of his spirit as he thought good: but because the case concerns the order of government that God held, and not the persons themselves, as I have said already.

For in those days there were shadows and figures, so that it was as a chain of bondage: but now that our Lord Jesus Christ calls us to him, and that the veil of the temple is rent asunder: he has prepared us a Sanctuary, not built with man's hand, but of a heavenly making, whereinto we may boldly enter, inasmuch as he is gone in thither before us.

You see then that we are received fully into this adoption, because the law has no more power over us, as it had in the time of the figures and shadows. Now to confirm this matter, S. Paul adds, that God shows that he takes us for his children, because the spirit of his son is in us, crying father: Speaking of the holy ghost, he does by a circumstance term him the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. For by what title can we be God's children, but because we are members of his only son, to whom that right honor, and dignity belongs by nature?

For in that our Lord Jesus Christ is called the only son of God, not only men, but also the very Angels of heaven are excluded from that dignity, so that it belongs to none but only to Jesus Christ. Howbeit

forasmuch as we are joined unto him, and he will not be separated from us, but shows himself to be our head, and we have such union with him as the members have with the head: therefore he says that either we must have the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, or else we can have no familiar access to our God, to call upon him as our father: and it were too great a presumption for us to take that honor upon us.

For if a beggar would make himself a rich man's son, folk would laugh him to scorn, and he should be shaken off with all the shame that might be. And how then should we silly worms of the earth, yea and full of all infection and filthiness, go match ourselves with the Angels of heaven, to say that God is our father? Truly the very Angels themselves cannot challenge such nobility, but by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ because he is their head.

Then were it great pride in us if we would take upon us to vie above the Angels, without coming in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, or without having his spirit, that we might be accepted as members of his body, and be entertained as it were in his person. And therefore also it is said that he makes intercession for us, and that we call upon God in his name.

For if he were not our spokesman, how could we hope to have our petitions received? Let us a little consider the feebleness that is in us when we intend to pray unto God. Although we sigh unfeignedly, and although we have good motions to lift us up: yet do we faint, and they that think to come unto God with a perfect zeal, beguile themselves, yea even too grossly.

But they that humbly acknowledge themselves to be as they be: do perceive themselves too halt and stumble even in the very virtue and strength that is given them. Howbeit for as much as our Lord Jesus

Christ is in the midst, and stands there in our behalf, and makes us to come near: therefore we may boldly pray.

And for the same cause did the high Priest in the time of the law bear twelve precious stones upon his breast, and other twelve behind upon his shoulders, wherein were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. For although the people were present in the porch [or outer tabernacle,] yet was there a veil betwixt him and them, so as the Sanctuary was hidden, and nothing was seen of the things that were done within for a witness of God's presence.

It was enough that the high priest went in, in the name of them all, having in his hand the blood wherewith God's wrath was to be appeased. Then had he the said tablet at his breast, wherein the names of the twelve tribes (that is to say, of God's people) were ingrained. Also he had them upon his shoulders, that it might be said how he was there in the name of the whole Church.

Thus you see how we cry, even by the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto God his father, with full assurance that he knows and avows us for members of his son, by whose means he receives us into his heavenly kingdom, and sets open the gate unto us, so as we have access unto him familiarly. And this is expressed yet better by the word Crie.

S. Paul could well have said, we say: but he goes further as need was. For (as I have touched heretofore) here he compares the old fathers with us, and shows that our state is better than theirs, because God has showed himself more bountiful towards us, than he did towards them that were under the law. That is the cause why he says that we in these days do cry out that God is our father, yea even with open mouth and full liberty, and that we come boldly to him, glorying that we be taken for his children.

True it is that the fathers under the law did also use the same manner of speech, as when they said, "Lord what shall become of us if thou receive us not to mercy? Abraham knows us not, no more does Jacob. We are born of them as touching the flesh: howbeit, all this natural kindred is nothing in comparison of the spiritual kindred, whereunto thou hast ingrafted us in the person of thy son. Therefore thou art our father?" After that manner did the whole Church pray unto God as Isaiah reports it. And there are many such texts. And without doubt it had been impossible for the fathers to have offered up good petitions and prayers unto God, without that ground: that is to wit, unless they had been fully resolved, that God took them for his children. For that is the thing wherein the faithful differed from the Heathen and unbelievers in all ages. The Heathen men did indeed pray unto God, however, that was but at all adventure, not knowing whether they should be heard or not. But our prayer must be grounded upon faith.

And Saint Paul's saying shall always be true: namely that we cannot pray unto God, except we first know and understand his good will towards us. Therefore it must needs follow that they who lived under the Law were fully assured in their consciences that God accepts them for his children. However, this was shown them as you would say but with half face, so that they prayed being wrapped in many shadows and figures, which taught them grossly. It is true that they offered not themselves without faith (for then had it booted them very little,) and that it stood them on hand to overcome all the lets that were set before their eyes: but yet were they not able to call upon God with the full certainty which is communicated to us under the Gospel. And this is yet better expressed in the eighth to the Romans, where Saint Paul says that we have not now received the spirit of fearfulness and bondage, but the spirit of boldness, so as we are able to cry Abba, father. And by the contrary member he enlightens the

matter that might be darksome in this Text by reason of the shortness of it. For he sets down the spirit of bondage, because the Law was given with great terribleness, and the old fathers were driven to feel that they were held in awe under it and had not yet the liberty that is purchased us in these days by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. They were as little children: who although their fathers travail for them, know not what is laid up for them. For although their fathers love them: yet must the rod be walking now and then, and they stand always in awe. And because they have no discretion to govern themselves, they know not how their fathers will deal with them. Even so was it in the time of the Law: There was a kind of fearfulness, in so much that they who were God's children, were yet under the strait bondage aforesaid.

But Saint Paul says that we are no more as it were at Mount Sinai, where God thundered, where the lightnings flashed, where trumpets sounded, and where the air roared in such wise, that all men were so amazed as they dared not come near God, according as it is said, let not God speak unto us, for then are we all dead and undone. We are not now in that fear says Saint Paul: but God has given us full liberty because our Lord Jesus Christ has come. And we know that he is gone into heaven, to the intent that the heavenly creatures should not thenceforth have such terrible Majesty as to make us shrink back from it: and that we might find favor & grace to talk familiarly with our God.

Thus you see in effect what this word cry imports. Now, it is true that the faithful oftentimes shall not feel so frank & free a mind in themselves, but that they shall be distressed when they open their mouths, and be heart-bitten, and cast doubts whether God will hear them or not. Heaviness will so oppress us, as we shall hardly know how to dispose our prayers, or whereat to begin. This then is a thing

that might seem contrary to that which Saint Paul speaks here, and to the text which I am about to allege. For it will follow that we be cut off from the array of the faithful, if we doubt in ourselves whether we may pray unto God or not and that our hearts be as it were locked up in those doubtings. If we be at that point, in what case are we then? where is the trust that Saint Paul speaks of here? He discharges that doubt immediately, saying that God's spirit supplies our wants & infirmities. For there are certain unutterable groanings which God hears, although they be not perceived of men: Therefore let us first mark, that if we have profited in the Gospel, we must believe assuredly that God takes us for his children, and that he calls us gently unto him, and that we may boldly come unto him. According whereto he says in the third to the Ephesians, that by our believing in Jesus Christ, we by and by conceive trust & boldness to offer ourselves unto God. Then if we have not trust and boldness, it appears that we have no faith. However, for as much as our faith is never perfect, but endures bursts whereby it is as good as beaten down to outward seeming: sometimes we are so dismayed at it through the overpressing of our miseries and afflictions, that God seems to be estranged from us, and we cannot utter one word of prayer unto God.

And therefore let us receive that which Saint Paul says: namely that the spirit helps our infirmities. And so let us hold out still and pray unto God without ceasing, and if we be speechless, or do stutter, and cannot utter any one piece of our mind to the purpose, but be entangled with many impediments: well, however we fare, let God's spirit thrust us forward still, and let us stick fast to this ground, that God is nevertheless our father, and let us flee to him for refuge, and though we do it not so frankly as were requisite, but be overweighed with the heaviness of our griefs, yet whatever come of it, let us go onward still, and not shut ourselves out of the gate through our own

default, but hold on still in praying to our God, assuring ourselves that he will have pity upon us in the end.

Thus you see what we have to consider here when mention is made of the spirit of boldness or trustfulness, whereby we may cry [unto God,] because we are sure of our adoption. Let us not think that this can be fully in us, for there are many vices which we are not yet rid of. Again there remains unbelief, which if it be not thoroughly rooted in us, has notwithstanding many strings to hold us back with, so as we must be fain to strive against them. But yet in the meanwhile, we must be fully resolved that God is our father: and afterward according to our measure and ability, let us keep onward to the mark that is set forth here. And it is one of the greatest controversies that we have with the Papists in these days. For they say we cannot be sure that God loves us, and that it is a case which ought to hang in suspense whether he love us or hate us. But by this means they utterly deface the true manner and fashion of praying. For we know how the Scripture says, that we cannot pray without faith, and Saint James says, let not such a man think that ever he shall be heard, that is to wit, such a one as comes like a wavering reed that is shaken to and fro with every wind. For we must believe that God is faithful in his promises, and that we shall not be disappointed in coming unto him, because he has bidden us come. We must be thus minded in all our prayers and petitions, or else all is nothing worth.

Again what Christianity is there in us if we have not God's spirit, as Saint Paul says in the eighth to the Romans? And for the same cause also does he say in the fifth Chapter, that we shall never be ashamed of our hope, because God's love is shed into our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For if we have no hope, surely then are we banished out of God's kingdom, and cannot be named Christians. And what manner of hope is it? It is (says Saint Paul) that God's love

is shed into our hearts: that is to say, that we be fully settled and contented because we know ourselves to be in God's favor. And how know we that? By the spirit. And he sets down purposely the word "shed," to do us to wit, that God's making of us to feel his fatherly goodness and love towards us, is not with a wet finger and away (as they say,) and then afterward to leave us hungry and needy: but that he sheds or pours it out upon us, that is to say, that he gives us a sufficient & full warrant that he acknowledges and avows us for his own, seeing he has laid forth all the treasures of his mercy in our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, this must needs come of God's spirit, according as it is said in the first to the Corinthians, that we do not now by our natural wit comprehend that God loves us: for that passes all the power of man. God then must be fain to lift us up above the world: for it lies not in our own power to certify ourselves of God's love. Therefore the spirit gives it us: that is to say, we have it not by nature, nor by inheritance, neither do we purchase it by our deserts: but God of his own mere goodness assures us of it, to the intent we might resort unto him familiarly in all our needs.

But contrariwise, the Papists after their own imagination, deem that we cannot be sure of God's love. And these wretches are so blind, that they say it is presumption if we desire to have any certainty of it: yea [and so it is,] if we would have it of ourselves. For if a man would upon his own conceit bear himself in hand that God is his father, he should be but a fantastical child, and a fool at all assays like one of these dizzards that gad up and down the streets, and play the Kings and Princes.

But if we have the said record of our God: should we then doubt of it still? Is it a presumptuousness to do God so much honor, as to believe him to be faithful, and to rest ourselves upon his word. Again on the other side; when we go to pray, is it not a good forwardness

that he gives us when he says, come to me? If we had no commandment to pray unto God, surely it were too great a rashness to press into his presence. But seeing that, he calls us, yes and tarries not till we seek him, but prevents us, and tells us that he requires nothing but that we should come to him, and gives us both the motion and mind to pray unto him: if we take him for our God, let us yield him his deserved praise, by seeking all our welfare at his hand. Seeing (say I) that he has so prevented us: should we dispute whether we ought to follow him or no? Is it not a blasphemy that tends to the defacing of all God's promises? Thus you see what we have to remember when mention is made of this word Cry. But yet for all this, however the world goes with us, though we be fain to hack it out like folks that have half forgone their speech, and be straitened with so many overthrows that we cannot fashion out one syllable or jot aright: yet whatever come of it, let us not leave going unto God, upon this ground, that he will succor us at our need, and redress the infirmities that pluck us back. To be short, when the spirit works in us to stir us up to the groanings whereof I have spoken: let us seek God, and though we be at our wits' end, and know not whereat to begin: let us always go forward to the mark that is set before us here. And Saint Paul says purposely, that we cry Abba, father, to signify that it is not the Jews only whom God will have to call upon him, and to flee to him for succor nowadays: but that he will have the whole world to do it. And forasmuch as the Gospel which is the key to open us the gate of Paradise, is published everywhere: now he will have all men to enjoy the right which heretofore had been as the special privilege of the lineage of Abraham. Thus you see after what manner we cry Abba, father. Now the first word Abba signifies a father: however Saint Paul uses the language that was held still as most common among the Jews. For the Hebrew tongue was not so pure after the captivity of Babylon as it was before, but was mingled with the Chaldean tongue. However

Saint Paul's meaning here, is to show that under the Gospel all men in common ought to call upon God with open mouth, because his adoption was offered to all Nations, and the wall was broken down which divided the Jews and Gentiles asunder, so that henceforth he will have us to be equal and in like state. You see then that we may call upon God in all languages, as it were with one mouth, and we must not doubt but that God receives us and gives us leave to press unto him, inasmuch as we have the doctrine of the Gospel to lead us, which is an infallible guide for us.

Now by this means we see that every man's praying unto God ought to be with understanding. For if a man that understands no more but his own mother tongue, should pray unto God in Greek or Hebrew, surely it were but a dalliance, and an utter perverting and marring of the rule of praying aright, and there could be nothing but hypocrisy and feigned devotion in it. I have told you already that we cannot pray unto God without faith, to be sure that he will hear us. And what a thing is it if we know not what we have to ask at his hand? Is it not a defiling of so holy a thing as prayer is? We know that to call upon God, and to flee to him alone for succor, is the Sacrifice that he requires at our hands, because that therein we confess him to be our father, and the very wellspring of all welfare. Now then it is meet that we should resort unto him which is the rewarder, according as the Apostle says in the eleventh to the Hebrews, that he disappoints not those that seek him, but that they shall always find that there is nothing better than to flee unto him. Therefore when we pray unto God, we must have understanding to know what we crave of him. Mark that for one point. Moreover whereas it is said that we cry Abba, father: thereby we be done to understand, that the diversity of languages hinders not the unity of faith. Isaiah seems to use a clean contrary manner of speaking, when he says, that all men shall speak the language of Canaan, that is to say, the Hebrew tongue. Now to be

Christians and faithful believers, it is not of necessity that we must have skill of that language: but he means that God shall be worshipped in all languages. And he speaks of the tongue of Canaan, because the Hebrew was a holy tongue wherein God's secrets were contained. Forasmuch then as that language was after a sort consecrated unto God: he says that God shall be honored of all men, and all men shall renounce their blasphemies, superstitions, and abuses, and there shall be one conformity of faith among men, and being instructed both in the Law and the Gospel, they shall all make one self-same profession, so as there shall be one tunableness and good agreement among all men. However Saint Paul meant to express here more clearly after what manner we call upon God: namely that every man prays to him as now in his own language, and he hears us all. For God needs not to go to school to learn this man's or that man's language. And we know that in praying, speech serves to no other purpose than to stir us up the more unto it. Also it serves us to witness before men with our mouths, that we repose all our trust in God. Moreover it serves to help our infirmity, and because we are lazy and cold, our tongue had need to drive forth our heart, and to help our weakness and sloth which are overgreat in us.

But God has no need of none of all this, we need not to cry out aloud when we would be heard at his hand: for he knows the secret thoughts of our hearts. Thus you see in effect what we have to mark.

And herein we see how great sway the Devil bears in Popery, so that there is neither prayer nor faith. To their seeming there is neither devotion nor holiness, except men babble in an unknown language, and mumble it up without knowing what they say.

And although the Priests, Monks, and Hypocrites say they understand Latin: men know well enough what their understanding

is. Besides this, they make even a rule of their jangling without knowing what they say, and it is enough with them to have a final intent (for so do they term it:) so they have that final intent before they babble their Domine labia, to say we go to pray and to serve God, although their mind be upon their kitchen, or upon things much worse, and much more shameful: they bear themselves in hand, that all their prayers and supplications are acceptable to God.

The poor people have their eyes bleared at it: for they are made to believe that it is not lawful for them to pray in a common language, and therefore they shun that as a bogy. We see then that the Devil has besotted these wretches, yea and utterly bewitched them, seeing they are so loath to receive the food of life, that instead of good bread and wholesome meat, they receive poison and burst with it.

But for our own part we see the rule that is given us here and which we ought to keep: which is, that when we pray unto God we must not step to it unadvisedly without bethinking of us what we should demand, or without knowing how we should behave ourselves towards him.

And when we call him our father, let us consider well that it is not for any worthiness of our own persons, nor for any desert or work of our own: but because he has united us to our Lord Jesus Christ, and gathers us altogether in him, and because we are his body, and God accepts us to favor in his person.

And for that cause also does Saint Paul add, that if we be children, we be heirs also. As if he should say, that we enjoy our inheritance even now: not that we are entered into the possession of it, to be partakers of the glory that is promised us, but as in respect of the fathers of old time, which were shut out into the body of the Temple, and had a veil or Curtain drawn before them, with other figures and shadows.

Now, we are not like them in that case: but we repair unto God in such wise as we are frank and free. And so is the adoption otherwise in our hearts nowadays, than it was in theirs in the time of the Law. For we are heirs after such a sort, that yet notwithstanding we are also as pilgrims in this world, and (as says Saint Paul in the second to the Corinthians) must be fain to be absent from God, till he have rid us of this mortal body, and have taken us out of this earthly pilgrimage and transitory life.

However the case stands, we must magnify God's grace: and seeing he has adopted us to be his children, let us understand that therein lies all our happiness and joy. Therefore let us glory in that, yes even so far forth as to rejoice in the midst of the troubles and adversities which we have to suffer.

Let us not cease to have an inward joy continually in us, in as much as God calls us, and has told us that all the adversities which we endure, shall be turned to our welfare and salvation, so we hold on to the mark that is set before us, that is to wit, so we go on still forward to our Lord Jesus Christ, and forsake all other things.

Now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our sins, praying him to make us so to feel them, as it may humble us before him, and yet we not be discouraged but that seeing he vouchsafes to accept well of us, & has also bound himself to us of his own good will to hear our requests when we come to him with assured trust in him: it may please him to grant us the grace to overcome all distresses and lets, and all debates and controversies that Satan can put in our hearts, so as we by experience feel the availability of this promise, that whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be safe. And so let us all say, Almighty God heavenly father. &c.

The Twenty-Sixth Sermon,

which is the third upon the fourth Chapter.

8 At such time as you knew not God, you served them that by nature are no Gods.

9 But now that you know God or rather are known of God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and beggarly Ceremonies, whereunto you would fain be in bondage again as before.

10 You observe days and months, and times, and years.

11 I am afraid of you lest I have laboured in vain about you.

We have seen heretofore how that after the Galatians had been faithfully taught by S. Paul, who had taken much pain among them, they shrunk back again: not that they utterly renounced Jesus Christ and the Gospel: but that they had been too easy in suffering themselves to be deceived in following diverse opinions, as we see it is come to pass through the whole world. For the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and baptism as a mark of faith do indeed continue still: but yet for all that, we see that all things are marred with superstition and idolatry. So the Galatians pretended still to be of God's Church: and yet in the meantime they were wrapped in many follies, as

especially in this, that they should partly purchase grace and soul health at God's hand by keeping the Ceremonies of the Law. But that was too great a defacing of our Lord Jesus Christ. For it is impossible for him to be our Savior, unless we lay away all self-weaning, and put our whole trust in him.

We see then that the fault of the Galatians was that they were not so well grounded in the Gospel, as to be firm and steadfast, and to shake off all errors, but rather were misled through too light belief. In this respect Saint Paul says that they are worthy of double blame, because that whereas God had set them in a good way, and in a good forwardness, they veered aside through their own inconstancy. And he makes a comparison between their present state and their former state. For they had been poor Pagans that had never tasted of true religion. God visited them, and graciously drew them to him, and gave them the knowledge of his truth. Now forasmuch as upon this they mingled the illusions and trumperies of Satan with the pure truth of the Gospel: that was a fault too far out of square, and no more to be excused than their former. And that is the cause why Saint Paul says, "At such time as you knew not yet anything, it was no marvel though you served Idols, because you were blinded in your errors, and God had never disclosed himself to you, that you might have been able to discern the living God from all the forgeries of man's own brain. But now that you have been taught the Gospel, and obtained so great a benefit, not by your own travail, as though you had compassed it by your own wisdom, but by God's goodness who marked you out before you could seek him: and seeing he has so gathered you out to himself: what excuse have you to start away, and not to continue in the doctrine which you know to be certain and infallible?"

Moreover, look (says he), how ill choice you have made. For God had given himself to you, and you have forsaken him for pelting trifles. For the Ceremonies of the Law (being set alone by themselves from our Lord Jesus Christ) are but baggage. See how you make great account of things to no purpose, and in the meanwhile pass not at all for God. Hereupon as a man moved with great grief he concludes, that he is sore afraid that he has lost his labor, in that he has so long time strained himself to bring them to the pure knowledge of the Gospel. And therewithal he alleges a spice of the things which he had termed beggarly and unprofitable Ceremonies: namely that they kept the feasts contained in the Law, as though there had been some necessity in the matter, thinking to deserve and earn grace thereby before God. This is the sum of the matter that is treated of here. Now we have a good warning to gather of this text: which is, that if we hold not out in the faith of the Gospel after that God has once brought us unto it, although the poor Infidels might be excused, yet can we not escape horrible damnation, by reason of our unthankfulness in that we have profited no better in the school of our God. It is true that although the heathen had no knowledge, yet they shall not fail to be condemned, because there is naughtiness always to be found in men, for as much as they gave themselves over to their own superstition: but if we consider what they are in respect of us, surely whereas they might have a dozen excuses, we should not have so much as a piece of one. Therefore when we have once been enlightened with the truth of the Gospel, like as the benefit of God is singular, so also shall we pay dear for it if we make not account of it. And let us mark that this is not said to any one people alone: but that it behooveth us also at this day to apply to our use the things that S. Paul tells us, to the end that we become not so wretched as to give over the truth of the Gospel after we have once known it, but that it may be so printed and rooted in our hearts, as the devil may never shake us from it.

Thus you see what we have to remember, in that S. Paul does here set the lewdness of the Galatians before them, and blames them as utterly inexcusable, for their turning away in such a fashion from the pure truth, after they had once been enlightened with it. Now also herewithal we see whereof Idolatry proceeds, and what is the fountain thereof: namely, the want of knowledge of the living God. For we must needs have some feeling in ourselves, that there is a God whom we ought to worship, and who is worthy to be honored both of great and small, because we have our life of him. It cannot be so cleanly wiped out of our mind, but that there shall always be some spark of Religion in us. But yet in the meantime, every man wanes away in his own foolish conceits, because we understand not what God is, nor can come at him.

Truly if we were not corrupted, and our understanding blinded by sin, God would still draw us unto him. But for as much as God's image is defaced in us, there is nothing but darkness, and that so horrible, that when we should mount up aloft to seek God, we thrust down our muzzles to the ground like wretched brute beasts. Therefore until such time as God shows himself to us, it is impossible for us to have any true Religion, and we shall always be led with abuses and mere follies.

Hereby we know what the vanity of men is, how every man bears himself in hand that he has skill enough to govern himself. Yea, and we see how the very Idiots do brag of their wit: and as for those that have gotten any reputation among men, they are so puffed up with pride, as they cannot abide any correction, or to be told of their faults. But if men had any one drop of good wisdom, were it not meet that the first point which they begin at should be to know what God they ought to worship? That is the point wherein they fail, in so much that they seek Satan's leasings instead of the truth, and

worship Idols instead of the living God, till God has called them to him.

We see then that to please God, and to yield him acceptable service, it is not for us to behave ourselves after our own fancy, but we must suffer ourselves to be guided and governed by his word and holy spirit. Moreover if we will follow the opinion of this man and that man, they are not a two or three that this text speaks of, but we see it is impossible to have any good rule, or to hold the right way, until God has taken the charge of us to draw us to him. So then, they that follow the steps of their forefathers, and make custom and antiquity the rule to frame themselves by, do show that they despise God. And why? For they willfully leave the fountain of living water, and go to seek puddles, as though they had no wit to discern between white and black.

Seeing then that S. Paul's meaning here, is to show us as it were in a lively image, that men cannot but go astray and deal untowardly, until God has brought them into the way of salvation: Let us renounce our own nature, and let all things which we know to come of man be thrust utterly under foot, and let us learn to hold us simply to God's pure truth. This (say I) is the thing that we have to remember upon the words of S. Paul, where he says, that those which knew not God had served such as were but Idols.

Moreover, let us not think ourselves to be wiser than the Galatians: but (as I have said already) let us understand that in this place the holy Ghost meant to beat down all pride, that men might not presume upon their own reason and skill to do what they like themselves, but rather know that there is nothing but brutishness in us, until God has enlightened us with his grace. Furthermore, whereas S. Paul says, that Idols are no Gods by nature, he means that

we are very dull-headed, when we cannot repair to the maker of all things, who shows himself both above and beneath, to the end we should know him to worship and serve him. For we cannot look upon our hands and our feet, but we must openly see God's wonderful wisdom, power, and goodness: and when we behold the skies and the stars, we have there a sufficient record that there is a sovereign Lord who maintains them.

When we consider the changes of seasons, and see the snow, rain, wind, or heat: behold therein does God show himself. When the earth brings forth her fruits, or is as good as dead and withered: in all those things we continually know God, or at leastwise are convicted that he shows himself there. And if we will not perceive him now: we shall be driven to confess it at the latter day when the books shall be opened.

Now in the meantime, if we worship those which are not Gods by nature: it is all one as if we did wilfully shut our eyes against so many records and looking glasses, which God sets before us to bring us unto him. However the world goes, all the worshiping that men can devise is but a vain fancy, until they have been brought into the good way. For of their own natural wit they cannot but give themselves to all error and deceivableness.

He adds, "Now that you have known God, or rather have been known of him." Some translate it, "now that you have been instructed in the knowledge of God": but all comes to one. Nevertheless, in the first part (as I have touched already) he shows that such as have been trained in the pure truth, are guilty of perjury to Godward. And thereof they are inexcusable: for it is no ignorance anymore: it is not with them as though they never had tasted of the true religion: but it is a manifest falsehood, like as if some subjects, knowing well enough

who is their Prince, should revolt from him, and break the allegiance which they had promised him, and confederate themselves with his deadly enemy.

Thus you see in what plight we be: namely, that all such as have known God's truth, cannot step aside after their own superstitions and errors, but they must become perjured and false forsworn traitors. For it is not causeless said that all Idols must fall down when God is to be glorified in his highness: and that all superstitions must vanish away when his majesty comes abroad.

Now if he vouchsafes to show himself to us, it is as much as if he did set up his chair of estate among us, of purpose to be so good and gracious to us, as to become our king. If we cannot find in our hearts to yield him any subjection, are we not false-hearted caitiffs towards him? If we allege for a reply, that our intent is not so: it is but hypocrisy. For we know that our Lord can abide no companion: in so much that he uses the word Jealousy, to show that he will so possess us, as we may belong unto him wholly and not in part.

Then if we will play on both sides, and row between two streams: there will be nothing but feigning and hypocrisy in us. But there ought to be a substantial soundness in us. And therefore S. Paul says not simply, if we be beguiled by Satan, and forsake the Gospel quite and clean: but, if we swerve from the simplicity of it.

As for example, the Galatians (as I have showed already) had not renounced Jesus Christ nor denied their baptism (for they professed to hold the Gospel still) but they had mingled it, and that marred all: a little Leaven sours a whole lump of dough. Even so when men will needs add I know not what of their own brain to God's truth, it mars all. For let a man put a little vinegar, or some other slabersauce into a cup of the best wine in the world, and he were better to drink sheer

water. In like case is it when men will tinker the true Religion, as all they do which take upon them to invent I know not what of their own head.

Surely it were much better that they had never known any more at all, but grossly that there is a God: than to have been trained up in the good doctrine of the Gospel, and afterwards to falsify all, and to disfigure our Lord Jesus Christ after that sort. You see then how it is a thing that cannot be borne withal: and that is it which we have to mark in the first place.

Secondly, S. Paul shows that the calling of the Galatians to the Gospel, came not of their own proper motion, nor through their own furthering of the matter: but of God, who had sought them out when they were wandering and straying wretches. And this is not spoken for them alone: for we know how the Prophet Isaiah speaks after the same manner generally of all such as should be partakers of the salvation that is purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ, saying: "I was found of them that sought me not, and I showed myself to such as inquired not after me: and unto such as made none account of me, I said, Lo here I am, here I am."

See how God magnifies his grace, to the intent that men should not be so far overseen, as to think that they attain to faith by their own wisdom. No, says he, you are all of you in the way of destruction, and there is none of you that comes to me without I draw him, for pity of the wretchedness wherein you be plunged.

Therefore it is I that have discovered myself, and all this is of mine own mere gracious goodness, for you would never have sought me, yea there is none of you all but he withdrew himself further and further off from me. For we are not only as straying beasts, but also as wild and wood beasts: we are wholly given to rebellion till God

have tamed us, and changed us that we might be sheep of his fold, that he may do the office of a shepherd towards us.

So then it is not for naught that Saint Paul corrects this speech of his when he says, "You have known God, or rather have been known of him." As if he should say, that when we come to the knowledge of the Gospel, we must not imagine ourselves to be better than other men, but that God prevented us, and that we should rather have perished a hundred times in our beastliness, than have come to any good amendment, if God had not utterly changed us.

Now then we see what free will is able to do, whereof ignorant wretches boast themselves to the defacing of God's grace. No doubt but all men will grant that they cannot be enlightened without God's working: but often afterward they restrain it again, saying that his working is but in part, and it seems to them that every man brings somewhat of his own. But all this gear is excluded here when he says that none but only God knows us, who also marks us out, to show himself unto us, and to make us come unto him.

Then let us generally understand, that it is not our own worthiness that has brought us to the obtaining of this benefit that the Gospel should be preached purely to us, and that every of us applies it to his own behoof: for if I think myself to have aught at all in me why I should be preferred before one man or other: it is a taking away of God's praise, and an usurping of it to myself: and that were an intolerable traitorousness.

And therefore we must come back to that which Saint Paul says in another text: "Who has made you to excel?" He speaks to such as commended themselves, believing that they had some virtue or excellence in them, as in very deed the Corinthians had such spiritual gifts as might be had in estimation among men. Saint Paul grants

well enough that they had great graces, and worthy of estimation: but he asks them from whence all of them came, whether they were of their own getting, or whether they were able to take them of themselves? It is very certain that they were not.

Wherefore let us learn, that it is not enough for us to have God's word preached to us, except God work in us by his holy spirit, according as experience shows in that it is not given to all men. And moreover there was never yet any man that bethought himself to seek the good food, except it were offered him of God. Therefore away with all the fond imaginations of our own head, and let us put away all pride: let us not think ourselves wiser than other men, because we have known the Gospel: but let us yield this praise unto God, namely that at such time as we turned our backs upon him, and were as good as drowned a hundred thousand times in destruction, he cast his eye upon us, and drew us back to himself, to the end that when it is told us that we be justified by faith, and thereby obtain salvation: we should assure ourselves that the same comes of his pure grace, and that our faith is freely given us because we cannot purchase it: and let us confess with poor Hagar, that we have seen him that looked upon us before.

For there we have a mirror of all mankind. The said poor woman was in great heaviness, forsaken of all men, and wist not whither to go: but God pitied her and visited her, in the wilderness. Hereupon she confesses that God had looked upon her before she had thought upon him. So then let us be held in awe and humility, seeing that the wellspring and beginning of our welfare is that God knew us and marked us out at such time as we cared not for him, but besides our ignorance, did also despise him, and were so brutish, that every of us had sought his own ruin and destruction, if he of his own infinite goodness had not held us back.

Thus you see in effect what we have to mark. But now let us put the thing in practice that is told us here: which is that for as much as God has called us to the pure knowledge of his Gospel, we must continue steadfastly therein, according to the way which he sets before us, who (as we know) is the lively fountain of all welfare, as it is said in the second of Jeremiah.

Then if we go about to dig cisterns that can hold no water: is it not an utter refusing of the benefit that was put into our hands? When a man sees good meat ready for his repast, and knows that he may take good sustenance of it, and yet will go his way from the table, and seek dung and filth to feed on, is he not worthy to be poisoned? Even so it is with all such as are not contented with the pure doctrine of God's Law and Gospel. For behold, the fountain is before them, they may drink their fill of it, as it is said in Isaiah and Saint John, and yet they had rather to starve, or else to feed themselves with wind.

Now then should not such unthankfulness be punished double as Saint Paul says here? Is it possible that you should return again to the unprofitable and weak Ceremonies that can do you no good at all? Now at the first blush Saint Paul might seem too sharp and rough in speaking after that fashion of the Ceremonies of the Law. For in very truth, although the Ceremonies had been the first entrances or trainings, like as in training up of young children men are wont to set them first to their ABCs: yet notwithstanding our Lord Jesus Christ was figured in them: and there were promises in them to bring men to salvation. For the remission of sins is the chief good thing that we can wish for at God's hand, because that by that means we be reconciled unto him. He receives us as his children, and we may call upon him with free liberty. Men therefore are then in true and perfect felicity, when their sins are forgiven them. And hereof they had as it were a pledge in their sacrifices in old time.

When they washed themselves, it was a full assurance to them that God did cleanse them, and that their spots were no more laid to their charge, but rather that they were received as clean and utterly without blemish.

How then does Saint Paul term these things unprofitable ceremonies, which carried such instruction in them? Especially seeing it is said that the pattern of all the whole Sanctuary was showed to Moses, yea even from heaven. The law then served not to hold men in some play, as though God intended to busy them about petty trifles? Neither also did Saint Paul regard whereunto the ceremonies availed or served the fathers of old time: He does but only show that when our Lord Jesus Christ was once come, all those things were abolished. For (as he says in the second to the Colossians) we have no more the figures and shadows, because that nowadays we have the body and the substance.

Seeing it is so: if a man should set forth the ceremonies of the Law, he should separate them from our Lord Jesus Christ, and what should they be then? They would be of no force. For (as I said before) if a man separates them for our Lord Jesus Christ, surely they shall be but pelting trash. Therefore when men kept the ceremonies, so as they were applied to their lawful use: they were good exercises, and the old fathers misspent not their time, because they were confirmed by them in the hope of their salvation, and they were unto them a warrant of God's fatherly love towards them, and they led them to our Lord Jesus Christ the fountain of all welfare.

But if men busy themselves in keeping the ceremonies without knowing why or wherefore: surely it is but flat mockery. For the Heathen men did make sacrifice also, and some of them had no idols, thinking that they offered to God the maker of heaven and earth: and

yet whereunto did all their sacrifices serve them, but to their condemnation? For they had overthrown God's order, because they aimed not at our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now then Saint Paul does not without cause say, that when the Ceremonies of the law tend not to the seeking of all our welfare in our Lord Jesus Christ, they are but beggarly Ceremonies, that is to say, corruptible things of this world, and consequently things of no force and unprofitable, because that Jesus Christ who is the quickener of all things, is not there. And this is yet so much the better to be marked, to the end we be not beguiled. It is said that in old time all men offered Sacrifice, and thought they worshipped God: and yet notwithstanding, that the service of all such as had not their belief settled in Jesus Christ, was rejected.

For the Apostle in the eleventh to the Hebrews saith, that the only thing that made Abel's Sacrifice acceptable, was faith. Now then forasmuch as the heathen men did in their sacrificing imagine God to be fleshly, and that they could make their atonement with him by such means, they busied themselves about outward things, and considered not that inasmuch as we be faulty, it standeth us on hand to have an excellenter ransom than we can bring any.

If we had a hundred worlds to give, they were not enough to redeem any one misdeed that we have done against God. Therefore the Sacrifice that should answer for all our sins must of necessity be heavenly. The heathen men considered not this: but stood poring upon the shadow of it, as the Turks and Jews do yet still at this day, who by their often washing of themselves both even and morn, and at noon, and by their other Ceremonies, confess themselves to be defiled, and to have need to be cleansed by some others, and yet do renounce our Lord Jesus Christ who is the very cleanness whereby

we must be made clean, according also as in very deed it is he that has wiped away all our spots.

Seeing it is so then, all they that keep any Ceremonies in hope to get any favour at God's hand by them, do not only beguile and martyr themselves in vain without any profit: but also do certainly provoke God's wrath still more and more. Now we on our side are taught that our Lord Jesus Christ has shed his blood to wash our souls withal. Then if we seek any other cleansing or purgatory besides, surely it is an intolerable treachery.

And if Saint Paul spoke so of the Ceremonies of the law: what shall we say of all the toys and gewgaws that are nowadays in popery? For behold, the Papists ween to win much by taking of holy water, by babbling this and that, by keeping of holidays, by tiring themselves in gadding on some pilgrimage, by setting up a wax candle before some puppet, by chanting mass by note, and by saying of thus many or thus many times their beads over. I say they hope well to make atonement with God by such means. But it is certain that they plunge themselves the deeper in hell, and cast themselves further into Satan's snares by it, as though they had confederated themselves with him to their own destruction.

To be short, all the Ceremonies of popery are utter renouncings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the pure truth which he has purchased for us by his death and resurrection, and of the grace that is offered us at this day in the Gospel. For they may well bring what shrouding-sheets they list, but they cannot disprove the holy Ghost, who has uttered the said sentence by the mouth of Saint Paul. Then do we see in effect what is showed us here.

Now as touching the particular which Saint Paul alleged here concerning days, moons, and years he means not the seasons of

winter and summer, nor the discerning of one day from another, nor that men should not reckon years and moons: but he speaks of the feasts that were commanded in the Law, and which those deceivers would needs have to be kept still, even as of necessity. In which case there was a kind of binding and thralldom, and it was an abolishing of the freedom that was purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lo here the cause why Saint Paul uses such vehemence, howbeit that he did it also in respect of the foresaid falsehood: for it was requisite that our Lord Jesus Christ should have been known in all those figures, and that men should have aimed at that mark. But they that had beguiled the Galatians, had bound them to the clean contrary, seeing that by holding still the feast of Passover and other feasts, they intended to bring them back again to the old forworn figures, which ought to be abolished.

In old time when men kept Easter day under the law, it was to the end that the people being put in mind of their deliverance out of the thraldom of Egypt, should look for the great redemption that was promised them. And for that cause Saint Paul says that our Easter lamb (that is to wit, Jesus Christ) is offered up already. He shows that the thing which had been figured by the paschal lamb that was offered in the law, was now fulfilled in the person of our mediator. In like case was it with the feast of Tabernacles or Tents, whereby God did put the Jews in remembrance, that they had dwelled in the wilderness where there was neither house nor building, and yet had continued there a long time traveling too and fro. And that was also a warning to them that this life is but a wayfaring, where through we must pass in haste.

As much is to be said of the firstlings when men came to offer up their first fruits unto God. Again, when the Jews made solemn

confession of their sins, it was a figure to lead them to Jesus Christ who was promised to them. But now that he is come, if we will needs keep still those things, what is it else than a toying? For we displace the principal and the substance, which is all one as if a man would feed himself with the colour of bread, wine, and meat, and not with the things themselves. And can a man receive any sustenance thereby?

So then, seeing that our Lord Jesus Christ is come, the figures of the law are not to be used anymore, and if men will needs keep them, they show themselves to have no knowledge of God, but that all is turned upside down. Therefore, it stands us so much the more on hand to mark well, that if we nowadays do swerve never so little from the pureness of the Gospel, we are straightway strayed from our Lord Jesus Christ. I grant we may well keep certain days of assembling, albeit not after the manner of the Jews. And why? We keep them not for ceremonies' sake. In the time of the law, it had been a deadly offense for a man to have lifted up but a mallet upon a piece of wood, or to have done any other business of his own. If a man had but set a pot or a kettle upon the fire on the Sabbath day, God commanded that he should be rooted out. Yet was it not meant by that rigour, that God delights in idleness: but it served for a figure, as if he had said, I have enjoined you my Sabbaths, to the end you should know that I am he who sanctifies you. We have the selfsame sanctification at this day, howbeit not with like figures as the fathers had it in old time: for that were to bury our Lord Jesus Christ. It were to hang up a veil again, to the intent to dazzle our eyes in such sort, as we should not see the light of the Gospel. Lo what we have to mark upon this observing of days whereof Saint Paul speaks here. But above all things let us mark that he intended to show us here, that inasmuch as we know the benefits which are imparted to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, we must stick to them and settle ourselves wholly thereupon:

and that if we be fleeting to and fro, it is a shrinking away from our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we have the fullness and perfection of all life, joy, welfare, and glory. Therefore, seeing that God comes to us after that fashion, yea and that even at such time as we were as wretched wandering beasts, he gathered us to himself, and showed himself to be our herdman, to the intent that we should become the sheep of his flock, and hearken to his voice, and discern it from all false doctrines, and from all the curious subtleties of men, that our Lord Jesus Christ might reign over us, hold us in awe, possess us wholly and we become his, not partly or with condition, but wholly and thoroughly: let us beware that we become not guilty of such unthankfulness when the Gospel is once preached unto us. Thus you see what we have to bear in mind to our behoof in this text, that we may not be accused at the latter day if God have called us to him, and we left and forsaken him, and falsified our promise whereas he was ready to have kept touch with us, not only for a day or twain, but also by continuing to be our father and savior forever both in life and death.

Now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us feel them more and more, and that the same may cause us the better to acknowledge the graces that we have received of him, and that seeing we perceive that they have been imparted unto us undeservedly, it may make us to be the more desirous to taste of them, that thereupon we may day by day endeavor to rid ourselves of our lewd affections, and of all the vices wherein we should be plunged if he pitied us not and made us not to feel his grace, which it may please him to continue in such sort, as we may seek nothing but to come home fully unto him: and that in the meanwhile till we come to the full light, where we shall behold him face to face and be transfigured into his glory, he continue still to show us the way of salvation, and

make us to walk therein throughout. That it may please him to grant this grace not only to us but also to all people and nations of the earth, bringing back all poor ignorant souls from the miserable bondage of errors and darkness, to the right way of salvation, for the doing whereof it may please him to raise up true and faithful ministers of his word that seek not their own profit and vainglory, but only to the advancement of his holy name. &c.

The Twenty-Seventh Sermon,

which is the fourth upon the fourth Chapter.

11 I am afraid of you, lest I have spent my labor in vain upon you.

12 Brethren, I beseech you, be ye as I am, for I am as you are. You have not hurt me at all.

13 You know how I have erst preached unto you through infirmity of the flesh,

14 And you neither despised nor held scorn of the trial of me such as it was in my flesh; but received me as an Angel of God, yea as Jesus Christ.

I have declared heretofore, that although Saint Paul at the first blush bring not any reason that seemeth to be of great weight or importance: yet notwithstanding it is not for naught that he doubteth least his labour be lost, and all the fruit of his travail among the Galatians be perished, seeing they observed the holy days and other Ceremonies of the law. For we must not look upon the day itself, or upon the kind of meat, or upon such other like things: but we must consider to what end men forbear the eating of any kind of meat, or why they keep certain days, and so of other Ceremonies. Now I have told you that by that means the light of the Gospel is after a sort damned, or rather utterly quenched. For the end why all those things were ordained in old time, was that the fathers might be fed and maintained in the hope of the redeemer, who was not yet come among them. But now that our Lord Jesus Christ is come into the world, and hath finished and performed all that was requisite for man's salvation, it were an utter derogation to the full perfectness that is in him, if men should still busy themselves with figures. It were all one as if a man should draw a curtain before him that he might not be known as he is.

Furthermore, there goes a binding with it: and when a thing is commanded under pain of deadly sin, men's consciences are made subject to such tyranny, that God forgoeth his authority and dominion over us, for he will not have us to make conscience of anything that is not commanded by him. And truly the thing wherein he will be discerned from his creatures, is that he have all sovereignty in ruling our life: that the thing which he commandeth be accepted as good and needful without gainsaying: that the things which he forbiddeth, be omitted, and that men make no reckoning nor conscience of them. But in observing the Ceremonies and in thinking to deserve at God's hand for so doing, there is yet a further matter: namely that we renounce or give over the thing that is purchased for

us by the death and passion of the son of God our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath discharged us of all debts due unto God his father. Not to give us liberty to do evil, but to the end we should flee unto him alone when we have done amiss. If we find ourselves to have transgressed God's law, and that our own conscience upbraids us: there is none other remedy for us but to put ourselves into the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may be quit before God, and washed from all our spots by the merit of his death and passion, and by the shedding of his blood.

To be short, Saint Paul shows here, that men run astray when they seek means of salvation anywhere else than in Jesus Christ, inasmuch that they become forlorn and utterly past recovery. Now then seeing that God has set us forth but only one way of salvation: they that turn aside from that, do cast themselves wilfully into destruction, and Satan reigns over them for their unthankfulness sake in despising the inestimable benefit that God offered them. What a bountifulness is it that God calls and allures us to his favour and love, notwithstanding that we be his deadly foes? Again seeing he appointeth not the Angels to be our mediators, but vouchsafeth to join himself unto us in the person of his only son: if we be so miserable that that will not suffice us, but we will needs of a devilish covetousness seek other means: is it not a shaking off of our Lord Jesus Christ? Then let us learn, that to profit well in the Gospel, we must forsake all that is contrary to the trust which we ought to have in our Lord Jesus Christ: and stick wholly to his righteousness, to seek all perfection in him. Let that serve for one point.

Also therewithal let us look well to ourselves: for sometimes we shall think we commit but some small and light fault in swerving aside: but in the end we shall wonder how God hath given us head, so as we

shall be utterly strayed from him. And that is the cause why so few hold out to the end. For men do easily bear with themselves, under the aforesaid pretense, bearing themselves in hand that it is nothing, and so every man gives himself liberty. But God punishes such recklessness, and gives us over to it, so as Satan carries us away. Wherefore let us walk in fear and wariness, and when God hath once given us the grace to taste of his Gospel, let us endeavor to be confirmed in it day by day: let us beware in any wise that we step not aside from it, and let every of us be watchful in that behalf, lest we make a deadly fall when we think we do but trip: finally, let us keep the way that our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us. It is true that though we swerve aside, yet he will pity us, as we see by experience. For he must be fain to raise us up again, not three or four times in our whole life: but a hundred times every day. For we are fickle and never leave reeling to and fro. Nevertheless let us not tempt him, nor so harden ourselves that the Devil leads us away or draws us one way or other: but let us labor to make the seed of life available in us, seeing that God will have us to yield forth fruit to his honor in all our thoughts, words, and deeds. Let us beware that we endeavor ourselves hereto. Now hereupon Saint Paul adds, that he would fain have the Galatians fashion themselves like unto him, because that he on his side labors to apply himself unto them. It should seem that this saying differs far from that which we heard even now: for it was as a stroke of some tempest or thunderclap when he said, "I am afraid lest I have lost my labor upon you: I will let you alone like folk past amendment." It grieved him to see that the doctrine which he had preached was so ill received, and now he uses a gentle and friendly manner of speech. To bring them back again unto him, he calls them brethren, and afterwards protests that he desires to join with them, and to frame himself to them as much as is possible for him, seeking nothing but that they should yield the like unto him.

And herein we see what measurableness they ought to keep which have the charge to preach God's word: that is to wit, they must not foade men's faults by flattery, but rebuke them sharply, to the intent that such as are beguiled by Satan's illusions, may be wakened and as it were scared at God's judgments. For when men are given to any evil, they lie weltering in it still, unless they be plucked out of it as it were by force. Yea and it grieves and spites them if they be wrung by the ear too hard, or if they be made to scratch where it did not itch, as the common proverb says. The more then that men bear with themselves, the less are their faults to be spared, for else it were a betraying of them. That is the cause why Saint Paul used so great vehemency, in saying that he was sore afraid, lest he had lost his labor, and there leaves the Galatians as it were in despair. But yet for all this, he intends to cheer them up again, that they may come to repentance. And so he seasons his sharpness with sweetness, and shows that the gate is still open for them, if they will submit themselves unto God.

Thus you see two things that are requisite when we will have our exhortations to be profitable. The first is, that there be a liveliness in us to prick forth such as have done amiss, that they may be thoroughly touched with the knowledge of their sins, and mourn and be sorry for them before God: for if they have not that soreness, they will never yield to follow God. True it is, that to outward sight men may well alter their lewd dispositions: but however they pretend, they shall still be full of stubbornness and malice, till they be ashamed of themselves and feel what they have deserved. So then the true preparative to repentance, is to be pricked so narrowly as we may feel the evil that is in us, and condemn ourselves for it: yea and that we be full of anguish, finding no rest till God have received us to mercy. But yet must we not lie still in such perplexity: for that would make us to shun God's presence, and to go about to estrange

ourselves from him forever, insomuch that we would fain have him plucked out of his seat, that he might no more be our judge, if we were not well persuaded that he will be pitiful to us, and that we shall not be disappointed of our expectation in seeking of him: according as it is said in the Psalm, that there must be mercy in God to draw men unto him, or else they will never be brought to stand in awe of him. For as for all the fear of the unbelievers, it is but a terror that dismays them, making them to gnash their teeth against God, and to fret and chafe and play the madmen. And such enforced fear has no reverence at all in it. But when we have once tasted the goodness of our God, and see how all his seeking is to be at one with us, and to have us come unto him without feigning, yea and that his touching of our hearts is to the intent we should conceive sure confidence, and thereupon offer ourselves to his Majesty, assuring ourselves that we ought not to be afraid of it, seeing it is the thing whereunto he calls us: I say, when we be thus assured, namely that our sins are wiped out: then may we be bold to press unto our God, and that is the order which Saint Paul keeps here, and which it behooves us to keep in all our rebukings. In that place then he did beat down the Galatians, because they exalted themselves, and did as it were set up their bristles against God, through their lustiness. And now he reaches them his hand, and lifts them up again, and tells them that after they have once felt and perceived their faults, they must not yet for all that think themselves utterly shut out from God, and from all hope of salvation.

But this cannot be done except we have a carefulness to draw sinners to salvation. For many men will be vehement enough, and they shall have just cause so to do: but yet in the meanwhile their rigorousness will be so excessive, as it shall shut up men's hearts, and make them take such stomach against the bitterness that is used towards them, that they shall cast themselves utterly out of order, yea and conceive

a hatred against God and his word. However, those who are so oversharpened will say they have just cause. Yes, but yet for all that, they who rebuke sin in the name of God, must always have a care and desire to bring those to salvation, who were in the highway to destruction. When they be so minded, no doubt but they will labor to win such as were out of the right way, and to make them perceive that they seek their welfare, and that although their rebukings be grievous, yet they fail not to be for their behoof. Nevertheless, on the other side, let such as are handled so sharply understand that they have need of such medicines: for what shall they win by rankling against God? But yet we see many who can well enough make countenance to be great Protestants, and to burn in zeal of the Gospel, which yet notwithstanding will not abide to be touched. So long as they are borne with, they will confess whatsoever will have them and all that is spoken to them, yea and more too. You would think that the Gospel was made even for their turn: but if a man find fault with them, then they begin to play the wood beasts. And what gain they by it, saving that first they betray their hypocrisy before men, and secondly set themselves in battle against God.

Now it is certain that in fighting against such an adversary, they shall not be the stronger party. Therefore let us suffer ourselves to be rebuked sharply when need shall require. And if we wist not of the evil that was in us, we ought to mistrust ourselves so much the more, and not seek starting holes to defend ourselves with, but rather enter into examination of ourselves, and every of us become his own judge, that by means thereof we may not enter into account with our God, nor he be compelled to cite us to hear the sentence of damnation.

Thus you see how we ought to receive the chastisements that are put to us, and that we must not be too much grieved at them, because they prepare and dispose us to humility, but let us in the meanwhile

wait for the coming of the sweet that follows afterward. For the thing that keeps many men from receiving the warnings that are given them, is that they be fully resolved of the matter beforehand: so that if a man speak a word to them that mislikes them, they stop their ears at it, or else their hearts are so hardened and dulled, as they cannot by any means afterward conceive what is put to them for their welfare and profit. A man may talk to them of God's mercy, and protest to them well enough: and a man may well enough (as you would say) show them with his finger that his seeking is nothing else but to bring them to salvation, but they be utterly deaf: and that is because they be fully bent of themselves to reject God's word.

Therefore let us be patient and modest, when men step to us upon the sudden, to assail us roughly by showing us our faults: let us be quiet at it, and tarry till he have spoken the last word. And so let us interlace and knit these two things together: that is to wit, the rigor which we must take hold of that we may have a true and lively feeling of our sins, to be sorry for them, and to ask God forgiveness, and to be abashed in ourselves: and then let us assure ourselves that God will always be merciful to us: and when we have so indicted ourselves, let us also hope to be acquitted at his hand, and that the more he condemns us by his word, the more he intends to bear us up, to the end he be not enforced to come against us with armed hand, and with his sword in his fist. Thus you see in effect what we have to remember in this text, where we see Saint Paul on the one side so sharp and vehement, and by and by afterward to call the Galatians his brethren, and to pray them that there may be good conformity between him and them, and one accord and tunable consent among them.

Now as touching that he says, "I beseech you be like unto me, for I also do apply myself unto you": as we have seen already, it is not to

soothe them in their vices, nor to cloak their filthiness, nor to use any flattering of them: but to try all the ways to the wood to win them unto God, according as we shall see hereafter how he will use the similitude of a woman with child, which longs to see her child born into the world, and although she endures pain, yet will not wreak herself upon her babe by strangling it, but be more char of it than of her own life. Saint Paul will use the said similitude. So then he means not here to strike sail (as they say) to please such as had need to be rebuked: but rather advanced himself as far as he could to win them, according also as he will say, that he has prattled with them as a Nurse doth with her child: and that might well be done without hardening men in their sins. Not that they should be too much borne with: for when a Nurse stoops to teach her young child to go, whom she holds by the hand, her intent is not to make him to tumble, nor to teach him to halt, nor to make him such a Cockney: that he should not be able to go when he comes to man's age: but contrariwise, when she intends to stay the child's arm, she will take him by the hand, or by some other part of him.

So then we see after what manner we must fashion ourselves to such as are weak. It is not to harden them in their naughtiness, but rather to amend them: nevertheless we must go by measure, having always an eye to our own ability. And truly it is not for naught that Saint Paul in another text exhorts the stronger sort, and the forwarder sort, to apply themselves to such as are yet raw and weak.

For if a man had never so great and excellent virtues, that he were as an Angel: yet surely if he be so rigorous that he will have every man to be as perfect as himself, all his virtues will be but smoke. Why so? For the meekness and gentleness which God commandeth us, serve to give as it were a taste and savor to all virtues. And the better that a man knows himself, the more will he bethink himself of the vices that

are in him, which have need to be borne with, and therefore that he must also bear with others. Again he will consider to what end God has advanced him, namely to show other men the way, and finally he will bear with himself least of all men. And hereby may a man have a good inkling to discern whether the admonitions proceed of pure love, or whether they proceed of too much sternness. For if in rebuking other men, a man takes not heed to himself, and flatters not himself, nor casts forth his choler to find fault with this man or that man's vice, but in the meanwhile is utterly stained himself, and would fain be plunged in it over head and ears: it is certain that all is but hypocrisy. But when a man reins himself short, and desires not to be more borne with than his neighbors: if therewithal he be rigorous, it is to be acknowledged that he has the zeal of God, and of his holy spirit in him, and that he procures the welfare of all men.

Thus you see in effect why Saint Paul says here, that he intended to fashion himself to the Galatians. Now he adds further, that they had not hurt or offended him in any thing, meaning thereby that he undertook not any private quarrel against them. For the very things that mar all when doctrine and Admonitions come to be put forth, are that either we be of opinion that the party which speaks is not worthy to be heard, or that we bear some hatred or grudge towards him in our hearts. For it is impossible that we should take anything in good part at his hand, when we shall have conceived any such opinion or fancy of him. I see a man that speaks as an Angel: now if I surmise that he hates me, and seeks to bite me, or that he goes about to discover my shame, surely I shall not take any profit by hearing of him. But this cannot excuse us: for it is a lewd fault: and although it were true that a man hated us, and that he rebuked us upon malice and spite: yet ought we to learn to be conformable. The very Heathen men could well enough say, that our foes did us sometimes more good than our friends. For why, they that love one another will wink

at many things, and overpass all without thinking amiss. But their enemies keep watch to take advantage of them whom they mislike, and when they spy any fault, they miss not to blaze it abroad, as says Solomon: yea and sometimes when they would fain fall out with a man, they gird at him under pretense of giving him warning. Nevertheless when our enemies do so, surely God gives us a means to bring us back again: for the Devil may now and then serve the turn of a Physician towards us, according as we have seen how Saint Paul says that he was buffeted by the same Messenger, that is to wit, of Satan, which thing was done to beat down all pride in him.

Therefore when our enemies come to sift us after that fashion, and seek nothing else but to find faults with us: God doth by that means waken us, because we were asleep before in our own flatteries: and if we were wise and well advised, surely our enemies should oftentimes do us more good than our friends, as I said before, and as the Heathen men knew well enough. And it is a great shame for us, that the blind wretches which were plunged in darkness, should see more clearly than we that have the light of salvation, and that we should not know the thing which those silly deceived souls perceived. And yet notwithstanding it is as (you would say) a piece of our nature, and men make an ordinary rule of it, that if they have once taken any lewd conceit that a man hates them, they be so eager and forepossessed with it, that they cannot abide to receive any correction at his hand. For this consideration Saint Paul protests here, that in reproving the Galatians, he deals not with any case or quarrel of his own. "We (says he) have been friends heretofore: I might perchance be despised too the worldward, my coming unto you was not with any great pomp, I was no painted fellow: but I brought you the pure doctrine of the Gospel.

And although I was a man without any great gain, so as I was not accounted of to the worldward: yet notwithstanding, you received me as an Angel of God, yea even as Jesus Christ himself: and whereof comes now this alteration? I hold on still in doing my duty: and why then are you so alienated from me? See if you can allege any other thing, than that you hate God's truth and cannot abide it. And what a shame is it that you should so hate God's truth, that you should disdain it in my person because I am the Minister of it? Now then we have to gather upon this Text, first that such as have the charge to teach and to carry abroad the doctrine of the Gospel, must above all things eschew quarrels and contentions, (at leastwise if they intend to have their preaching to prevail and be profitable) I say quarrels and contentions for their own peculiar matters. And so you see how we must abstain from all quarrels, lest the gate be shut against us, and we be disbarred of all liberty of rebuking men when need shall require, that we may protest with Saint Paul that we deal not with them for any desire of revenge, enmity, or evil will, but only for desire of their welfare, let us be sure of that, to the intent it may open us a gap, and give us a way to all manner of rebukings. Mark that for one point.

Again, let us also be well advised, that if our vices be touched, we cast not a block in the way by conceiving and surmising this false opinion in our heads, that it is done out of hatred: for that is the policy of Satan. Although men be inclined to think that other men do bite them and nip them out of hatred: yet let us not think that they do it of their own mere motion, but by the Devil's means, who snarls them after that fashion. If we be rebuked when we have done amiss, whence soever the same comes, surely it is a message sent of God, because he will not have us to perish, but would have us to return unto the right way, notwithstanding that the party which finds fault with us does it not of a good and pure affection, but seeks only to

spite us, or to wreak his teen upon us: for yet does God nevertheless reach us his hand, to the end we should not perish. But behold, Satan on the contrary part stops us from receiving of the medicine, and puts us in the head, that the rebuking of our faults comes not of good will, but that there is a pad in the straw, so as we be either too much sifted, or too sore bitten, or else that there is some other secret grudge lurking unseen. All these imaginations does Satan mingle with men's admonitions, to the intent we should be out of love with them, and refuse them, and by that means rebel against God. Wherefore let us bear well in mind what is said here, to the end that when we be warned of our faults, we may consider, that God, to the intent he would not be our judge himself, appoints as it were attorneys & solicitors in his name, to come and charge us with our offences. When a mortal man rebukes me for my misdoings, it is God's will he should do so, and he has appointed him in his place. And to what end? That we should not come before his Majesty to yield an account of them; for it were better for us to be drowned a hundred thousand times. God then does pity us, when he sends us mortal men to be our judges, yea even to be our judges to put us to some shame, and thereby to stir us up afterward to return again into the right way.

Therefore whenever God is so merciful unto us: let us profit ourselves by such grace, and beware that we embitter not ourselves with opinions that come incontinently in our heads, as that the party hates us, that he seeks us, that there is some heartburning, that there is some enmity, and that there is I wot not what. Let all this gear be trodden under foot, and let us accept their warnings if they be true. To be short, if any man blames us, we cannot do better, than to consider what our own conscience tells us of it. Mark this for a special point, that we must not look what the person is that speaks, nor pass whether there be any grudge or enmity in him: but only

what our own conscience judges of the matter and then must we needs conclude, I am rightly reproved. It is a marvelous thing, that they which do so chafe and storm and grind their teeth when they are rebuked, should nevertheless condemn themselves continually whether they would or no, if they entered into their own consciences, and yet had much rather to play the mad bedlams against God, and to spite him by all means possible, than to humble themselves in acknowledging their offences. You see then that the way which we have to keep when we are found fault with, is to hearken unto such as may make us to enter into account, and specially to have an eye to that which is in us. And where shall we find that? Even written and ingraven in our consciences. And although we perceive it not thoroughly: yet let us mistrust ourselves, for no man is a competent judge in his own case as they say. True it is that God does already make us judges in part: but yet must we rather receive the condemnation which we perceive not, than carp against it before we have well and thoroughly weighed whether we be faulty or no. But there are a number that are well apaid to shut up, or rather to seal up their eyes, that they might not see their own shame: when a man comes to provoke them to amendment, they fall to skirmishing at the first push, with, did they overshoot themselves so? And then all is dispatched, they will hear no further of the matter, let a hundred things be proved against them, and all is nothing with them. They do but wring their mouth awry at it. For they would always clear themselves, and although they be a laughing stock even to little children, they pass not for it, but glory still of the hardening of themselves in their own lewdness and filthiness. Therefore let us keep ourselves from falling into such willful stubbornness: and in judging unfeignedly of our vices according to truth, let us also be lowly-minded to humble ourselves and to beat down all pride in us, to the end that nothing may let us from acknowledging freely that we

have done amiss. This is the effect of that which we have to remember upon this text.

Now a man might think it strange that Saint Paul should say, that the Galatians had received him as an Angel of God, yea or rather as Jesus Christ. For what perfection of holiness soever was in him, yet could he not match with the Angels, as we see how he speaks in the seventh of the Romans, where he acknowledges himself to be wretched, and shows that he is as a poor captive and slave of the world under the bondage of sin.

Although Saint Paul had an earnest desire to serve God, yet notwithstanding he knew he did but drag his legs after him, and that he had many infirmities to pluck him back. And here he says that he was received as an Angel: yea and he stays not there, but adds further, as Jesus Christ, who (as we know) is the very Son of God, and highest King, which has sovereign power over all creatures.

But here the case concerns not Saint Paul's life, nor any worthiness that he pretends in himself. He has an eye only to the doctrine. It is said first, that he was received as an Angel of God. And why not? For the same title has been given to all such as have had charge to bear abroad the doctrine of the Law, and of much more reason ought to be given to the publishers of the Gospel: for there God utters his majesty and power, much more than he did in old times under the Law.

For as much then as God appoints mortal men to speak in his name and authority: it is requisite that they should be acknowledged to be his Angels, that is to say, Messengers or Ambassadors, for the word Angel betokens none other thing. And in good sooth to what purpose were the doctrine which we hear, if it came not of God? It were much better that we [preachers] were dumb and speechless, and that the

hearers were deaf and blind, than to stand hearkening to a man that were not sent of God.

For the chief honor that God requires at our hands, is that we should be hushed and hearken to his word, yielding him all authority, and holding ourselves bridled and captive as under the royal scepter whereunto he will have us to submit ourselves. Now if a mortal creature should usurp this to himself: what a thing were it? So then let us mark well that Saint Paul does justly compare himself with an Angel, as in respect of his doctrine. And why? For he knew well enough he had not forged it of his own brain, but had received it of God.

And that also is the cause why he adds, as Jesus Christ. For surely our Lord Jesus Christ will have us to receive such as he ordains to be his ministers, as if he himself were here in visible shape among us. He that hears you (says he) hears me. And nevertheless it is certain that he meant not to make idols when he ordained his Apostles and such as should be ministers of his word.

He meant not that they should be worshipped in his stead: for out of all doubt, that preeminence is not to be given to the very Angels of heaven: and what shall be done to us then, which are but dung and rottenness? However, our Lord Jesus Christ regarded not what manner of ones men are, but meant to advance his own word, to the end that all men should submit themselves to it.

Although then that we be but as brittle earthen pots, or rather already broken, so as we be nothing worth: yet must not the treasure of the Gospel which we bear abroad be therefore despised. For when God's word is preached purely unto us, it is all one as if he dwelt among us, and appeared personally unto us, and it behooves us to

give a proof of our fear, love and obedience towards him, by receiving his word though it come out of a mortal man's mouth.

And furthermore if we hold scorn of the Gospel, under color and pretense that they who speak unto us are neither Kings nor Princes over us: let us assure ourselves that that rebelliousness of ours heaves at our Lord Jesus Christ. He that despises you (says he) despises me: and he that rejects you rejects me. And this is well worth the marking.

For we see nowadays that God's word shall be so lightly esteemed under pretense of men's persons, as it is dreadful to behold. And all such as are loath to be rebuked, will by and by have this answer in their mouth: who are you Sir? who made you my Prince? As who should say, that God had not superiority over us, nor might speak to us by the mouth of his servants.

A Prince may well enough send his officer or some such man as he listeth to choose, and although the person be of no countenance, yet will he have him received without doubting, and men do so. And when God who has sovereign dominion over us, and sole preeminence over all the kingdoms and principalities of the world, sends us his servants whom he avouches, and will have us to give them the hearing: if we nevertheless disdain them, and in respect of their persons make none account of the message that he sends us by them, and therewithal allege, how now, is this fellow a ruler: what a presumptuousness were that?

If a man carries abroad God's word faithfully, and tell men that whosoever despises it sets and advances himself against God: what (say they)? this fellow makes himself God. As who should say, that God might not speak by those whom he has appointed to be his

instruments: for as I have said heretofore, cursed might we be if we bring our own inventions.

It were much better that we were drowned a hundred times, than that ever we should go up into the pulpit, if we should not utter God's will faithfully, and stick to that which he commands us, and draw it out of the clear fountain of his holy word. Should not these things be declared? Think we that God can be bereft of the thing that is peculiar to him, that is to wit of his truth? No: he and his truth can never be separated.

So then let us abhor the blasphemies of these naughtipackes which say, "Oh, he that speaketh will make himself a God." If he requires men to hear him without gainsaying, namely when he is sure in himself that he brings not anything which is not of God, it is good reason that he should commend the authority of his master. So then let us not have any acquaintance with these worldlings: but let us yield such reverence to our God, that although such as speak in his name be of no estimation, yet we may not cease to obey the things that they set forth, with a true and lowly faith. Yet nevertheless, we must also discern between those that pretend God's name falsely, and make a vain cloak of it, and those that be faithful dealers of his word which he has committed unto them.

Look upon the Pope with his whole kennel, who are not ashamed to say that whosoever hears them hears Christ, and that he who rejects them rejects Christ: for they allege that saying of Christ's, "he that hears you hears me" etc. to authorize themselves withal. But they that will be received as Angels, must do the duty of Angels, that is to say, they must be true messengers of God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who has sent them, and they must hold all of him, so as they serve him truly, and seek not sovereignty to themselves, but that

he may always be the shepherd of the Church, and that the sheep of his flock may hear his voice, and follow him whithersoever he calls them.

And as for them that be false: perverting the truth, and usurping superiority to deface God's word: it is meet that they should be taken for such as they be in deed: & this hath been showed by that which I said at the beginning: that is to wit, that whereas our Lord Jesus Christ has told us that he will have us to hear those that come in his name, as if he spoke in his own person: he meant not thereby to make them idols among men, to the end that such as have charge to speak in his name, should be exalted to have any tyranny: but he meant that his word should be received reverently and without gainsaying. And whereas Saint Paul says here that he was received as an Angel, or rather as Jesus Christ: it is as much to say as he came not in his own name, but endeavored to preach God's grace purely, and to make men to follow Jesus Christ, & to frame themselves wholly unto him, that he might have his due preeminence, that the Gospel might be received without gainsaying, and that it might bring forth such fruit as it ought to do: that is to wit, that it might be the power of God to the salvation of all believers, as it is said in the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans.

Now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us so to feel them, as we may be moved more and more to amendment, and that it may please him to bear with our infirmities, till he have rid us quite and clean of all, and so renewed us according to his own image, so as all may be pure and clean in us, and his glory show itself there, and we more and more fight in such wise against our own sinfulness, as it may be utterly emptied out of us, and he so fill us with the grace of his holy spirit, as we may draw others thereunto, so as all of us may

with one common consent endeavor to serve to his glory, and give over ourselves wholly thereto. And so let us all say, Almighty God heavenly father, etc.

The Twenty-Eighth Sermon,

which is the fifth upon the fourth Chapter.

15 Where is then your blessedness? for I bear you witness, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your eyes, and given them unto me.

16 Am I then become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

17 They be jealous over you, [howbeit] not for [any] good. Nay rather they mean to shut you out, to the end you should be fond of them.

18 It is good to be always earnest minded in good things, & not only when I am present with you.

19 My little children of whom I travail in birth again till Christ be fashioned in you.

20 I would I were with you now & could change my voice, for I stand in doubt of you.

WE need no teaching to seek the thing which we think to be good and profitable for us: for every man is inclined to that by nature, yea and too much given unto it. But the mischief is, that we know not the true profit from the thing that is harmful, but are oftentimes so blinded with our foolish lusts, that every of us overthroweth himself wilfully. Not that we forget the thing which I said to be imprinted in our hearts: but for that we be carried away by our unruly lusts, or else so bleared with the vanities of this world, that we have no discretion at all to judge rightly. And therefore we ought to flee unto God continually so much the more, that he may give us skill to discern what is good for us, to the intent we may serve him, and have our minds so wholly set upon him, as we may never be removed: specially for so much as it oftentimes falleth out, that such as are taken to be very wise to the worldward, become like little children according to the alteration of their desires, giving up the things which they had set much store by, and gadding after some pelting trifle that cometh in their sight, so as there is no stay at all in them.

Sometimes we shall see a chief run after three or four at once, and if there come a thing, that he fought for he catcheth at that by and by: and anon after if he spie an apple or a cherry, or some other thing that likes him, he leaves all the residue to run after that. Even so play we: no doubt but we always think ourselves wise enough, and we take scorn to be taught at any man's hand, or to be warned what is good for us, for it seems to us to be an offering of wrong to us: but yet experience shows that we want both wit and reason.

For what is the cause that men do so toss and turmoil themselves out of measure, and yet run astray all their life long? As I said afore, all of us with one common accord hold this principle, that we desire to seek our own profit, there is neither great nor small but he is inclined unto that. But let us see whereunto men apply their minds: there is

not that man whose affections boil not within him, inasmuch that ye shall see the greatest number (as you would say) rack themselves, and their minds never cease day nor night to run still upon the things that come before them, whereby they hope for any profit. And when they have well tormented themselves, a man shall scarcely find one among a thousand that has his affections well ordered: inasmuch that it were much better for them to be asleep all the time of their life, than to take so much travail without knowing why or wherefore.

Now then seeing that the most part of us are proved not to discern between good and evil as were requisite and expedient, we have need to submit ourselves unto God, praying him to guide us by his holy spirit. And especially when the sovereign felicity or welfare comes in question, surely whereas we should be carried away and ravished in love with it: we be haled another way, and do nothing but fiske to and fro, and there is so great inconstancy and lightness in us, that the thing which we love more dearly than our life today, shall be as good as despised tomorrow.

And that also is the cause why Saint Paul does in this text upbraid the Galatians with their forgetting of their own happiness. For this saying of our Lord Jesus Christ, that look where a man's treasure is there is his heart also, is taken of the common order of nature. He terms that thing our treasure, which we set most store by, and whereupon we do wholly repose ourselves: for there are many things which men do well like of, the which nevertheless they can easily find in their hearts to forbear. Though a man see a fair and costly thing, yet can he content himself quietly with his own state still, if he have wherewith to maintain himself. But if we esteem our life unhappy or unfortunate without the enjoying of any welfare at all, surely we shall be tossed with continual unquietness, till we have obtained it: and that does common experience show well enough.

Seeing then that our hearts must needs be tied to the thing which we take to be requisite to our chief felicity, let us now see how every man behaves himself. Such as are given to the flightful goods of this world, or are so inflamed with ambitiousness and desire of honour, that they seek nothing else but to magnify themselves, and to be in some high degree and great estate, that they might be had in estimation: will always labour for the same. Such as are possessed with covetousness, will never leave gathering of goods, nor never be satisfied with anything. They endure hunger and thirst, heat and cold, and dare neither eat nor drink half their fill, and all to the intent to heap up out of measure. Lo at what point they be.

Again, such as covet to be esteemed and exalted to the worldward, endure as great misery as if they were in the hands of the hangman: nay, the hangman would not torment them so cruelly as they do themselves: and yet they be so headstrong, as they cannot by any means be turned from it. But when God is so gracious as to show us where our welfare lies, that is to wit, in the kingdom of heaven: although we be warned that our life is of no continuance, and that we slip away out of hand: yet are we so ravished in love with our vanities, that we forsake the inestimable joy whereunto God calls us, and set light by the heritage of heaven, in comparison of these worldly things which are right nought.

Therefore let us consider, that Saint Paul's present upbraiding of the Galatians when he asks them where their happiness is become, touches and concerns us nowadays. For he presupposes that the Galatians knew that God could not have done them a greater good turn in this world, than to enlighten them with the knowledge of his Gospel, whereby they had been thoroughly persuaded and resolved, that the world has nothing but deceitfulness in it, for so much as it turns us away from the heritage of heaven, according also as our

Lord Jesus Christ alleged the same similitude, that the Gospel and the treasures and riches contained therein are a precious stone, and that if we should give over all the things which we esteem in this world, and which we like best of, we should lose nothing by the bargain, nor have any cause to repent us.

But now are we double to blame, seeing we turn away after we have known that God drew us from beneath to make us partakers of his heavenly glory, and put that inestimable benefit out of our remembrance for the whisking of a fly overthwart our eyes as they say. Forasmuch then as it has pleased God to open our eyes, and to pluck us out of the mire wherein we were plunged with the unbelievers and ignorant persons, not only in following superstitions and idolatries as others did, but also in giving ourselves over to our fleshly likings and wicked lusts: and seeing that God has made us to perceive where our true joy lies, and given us such a taste of it as we ought to rest wholly upon it: let us take good heed that we never change our purpose, nor alter our mind hereafter. And if we do: let us consider how the spirit of God does here condemn us of unthankfulness by the mouth of Saint Paul, saying, "Where is your happiness?" For had we been always let alone like brute beasts without knowing wherein our welfare and joy consist, it had been no marvel though we had still kept on our common trace.

But seeing that God has showed us that we must seek all our welfare in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he is the full perfection in whom we must wholly rest: if we do afterward fleet to and fro and be shaken now one way and now another: it is certain that we can no more excuse ourselves by ignorance. You see then that the thing which we have to bear in mind in this text, is that when we have once been taught the Gospel, we must set light by the things that we made too great account of before, and which men covet without end or

measure: that is to wit by the allurements of Satan and of the world, and by all transitory and flightful things which have no substantialness in them and continually seek our Lord Jesus Christ, till we come to the full enjoying of all the benefits which he has brought us.

And now hereupon Saint Paul blames the Galatians yet further, that he cannot be their enemy but for telling them the truth. For it is too great a lewdness to fall out with our friend, only for showing himself faithful towards us. What is the thing that we should chiefly desire in a friend, but that he should deal roundly with us, and not bear two faces in one hood, nor use any craft and untruth towards us? Every man can tell that well enough, and it is as a natural lesson which we know without schooling: and yet notwithstanding we be grieved and displeased with them that tell us the truth, and by that means do work our weal: and therefore must it not needs be that we are bewitched of Satan, if we step up against them and become their enemies? Saint Paul then shows the cause of his fear that they should be alienated from him, and blames them that they were become his enemies, for none other cause than that he had dealt soundly and roundly with them.

Now although this vice be horrible, and all men condemn it: yet is it as common as any other nowadays in the world. For what else maintains friendship, but lying, flattering, dissimulation, counterfeiting, and such other like things? Inasmuch that if a man go roundly to work, he shall purchase himself hatred and ill will on all sides. And the very cause of the greatest contentions and debates that are nowadays in the world, is that men stop their ears against all truth and reason: for we would fain have all things buried that might displease us: Therefore this was not written for the Galatians only, but is to be applied still at this day to the common instruction of all

such, as cannot abide that men should deal faithfully and truly with them.

For let every of us look upon himself and examine himself well, and he shall find that all of us are attainted with that vice, till God have purged us of it. So then let us assure ourselves that if we grieve such as tell us the truth, in so doing we despise God, and fall out with him rather than with the men. We will protest the clean contrary: nevertheless we do but lie, when we cannot endure that God should betray the thing that we would have concealed, I mean, that he should discover our faults, and rebuke them, and hold us in awe, and not bear with anything that is not lawful for us. Thus you see in effect what we have to mark upon this text.

Now hereupon Saint Paul labours to win the Galatians by great gentleness. "My little Babes" (says he) "of whom I travail in birth again, till our Lord Jesus Christ be fashioned in you." Howbeit, although that his words be somewhat sweet, yet does he not fail to sauce them a little to the intent to quicken them up, by calling them little babes, telling them that whereas they ought to have been fashioned and borne long ago, yea and to have been grown to man's estate in Jesus Christ, he wist not what to make of them. "For you drive me so to my shifts" (says he) "that I cannot tell what speech I may use towards you any more: and therefore seeing you be so strange and untoward, and so fickle to be dealt with that I cannot tell how to handle you, I must fain to transform myself into a new man." Lo how he uses a manner of speech mingled with rigour and great friendliness. And he is not contented to take upon him only the person of a father, whose love notwithstanding is tender enough towards his children: but he likens himself also to a mother that is toward her travail and full of throes, who (notwithstanding all the pains that she feels) is more chary over the child that is to come out

of her womb, than she is of her own bowels and life. When Saint Paul used this similitude, it is certain that he wist not how to show himself more affectionate towards them, to the intent to break, or at leastwise to soften the hardness that was in them to whom he spoke.

But yet whatsoever come of it, he is flat with them in upbraiding them with their lewdness, in that they acknowledged not their mother that bore them and nourished them with the substance of her own blood, but for all the gentleness that he used towards them, became as wild beasts that could not be tamed: and that was an outrageous unkindness. And so we see how Saint Paul does continually follow the mean that I told you of today: which is that to the uttermost of his power, he labors to bring those back again by lovingness, which were gone out of the way. And to that end he tells them, that he has a greater care of their welfare, than they would think. But yet however the case stands, he mingles their oil with tart vinegar, which quickened them up as need was, lest they should fall asleep in their sins. For it is no cockering of such as have offended God, and are as good as poisoned or rather bewitched by Satan, so as they perceive not their own filthiness: All such gear must be razed out. And therefore, happen what may, he holds such an even hand, as they must needs perceive that he procures their welfare, and that all his seeking is to bring them unto God. This in effect is the thing that we have to mark upon this text.

However, we have also to mark particularly, that when Saint Paul terms them little babes, he upbraids them closely for that they had not profited no better. For to what purpose is the Gospel daily preached unto us? It is said to be the incorruptible seed whereby we be begotten again to be the children of God. Now when we come into the world, we grow by nourishment of milk, and from time to time become stronger, so as at length we feed no more upon milk, but use

substantialer food, whereby we gather force and strength more and more, till we come to man's state. Now then, what a thing were it if after we have been made new creatures by means of the Gospel, we will needs hang still upon the dug, and have so little prospered, that we must still be lulled in arms, and be not able to swallow a piece of bread, but will needs be still muzzling at the teat? Does this proceed of the nature of the Gospel? No surely: and therefore we must acknowledge the fault to be in ourselves.

So then whereas Saint Paul calls the Galatians little babes, although he does therein show an earnest love towards them: yet does he sting them also, according also as we see how the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews says: "How now? You ought to be great Clerks considering the long time that you have gone to school: for this is not the first day that the Gospel has been preached unto you, and yet you be still at your apcie: and what a shame is that? For God has done the office of a good schoolmaster towards you and taught you sufficiently: and you on your part have played the truants: and so what will now become of you? For Saint Paul had long time been delivered of the Galatians in Jesus Christ, and they ought to have been grown strong in the faith of the Gospel. But behold, they be still novices & raw scholars, yea & so brutish as they wot not whereunto to stick, nor what to follow. That is the first point.

And now consequently he addeth: that he travails of them in birth new again. He had been brought abed of them before: howbeit, that was as you would say before their time. Not that he had not given them all that was requisite for their instruction: but for that they were not able to receive it, because they were still too much given to their earthly lusts and likings. Now we know that the sensual man comprehends not the secrets of God. Therefore we must be discharged of our own nature, that we may be renewed in God: and

the thing which we call Regeneration, that is to say new birth or second birth, does us to wit that the old man which is in us, must be mortified and as it were changed. For as much then as the Galatians had not given place to the doctrine of the Gospel: therefore Saint Paul says that he must be fain to be with child with them again, yea even till Jesus Christ be fashioned in you says he. This saying is added to sweeten that which was somewhat sour of itself. For what a shame was it that they which had received the earnest penny of their salvation in baptism, and in the Lord's supper, (as there were many of them both men and women that had been taught at the age of twenty, thirty, fifty, or threescore years) after protestation made before God that they were fully renewed in Jesus Christ, should need to be as it were new molten, cast, and fashioned again? And in that respect Saint Paul says, till Jesus Christ be fashioned in you. As if he should say, I marvel that you should be still as little babes, and that I should be forced (as you would say) to receive you again into my womb and bowels, till the time came that you might be riper than you have hitherto been: and yet am I afraid also lest the pain and travail that I have taken among you be lost and misspent, and that you be not so well shaped and fashioned as were to be desired.

Thus you see briefly how Saint Paul mitigates the rigor that might have been too great, and have wounded the Galatians too sore, when he said unto them, What? You be as it were born before your time: I thought I had conceived you, bred you, borne you, and brought you up in Jesus Christ, and I see now there is no life in you, at leastwise no spiritual life, and that all is slipped and vanished away. If Saint Paul had stayed there: surely those wretched people had been driven to confusion and utter despair.

Therefore to give them courage to return again, he says: Go to, truly you have profited very ill hitherto: but enter new again into the right

way, and let that which seems to be stark dead bring forth new fruit again, and let it be perceived that your protesting to walk according to the Gospel heretofore, has not been vain. For like as if a tree be as good as dead, and seem to be utterly withered, it will spring again if a man put new earth to the root of it and cherish it: so will it fall out that a man which is quite strayed away from the Gospel, shall not only be as it were eftsoons begotten new again, if he be brought back again into the way: but also the thing that he had received afore shall do him good, as is to be seen wheresoever God gives the grace to bring those back again into the right way which were strayed from it.

But surely that happens not to all men: and therefore let us beware that we abuse not God's goodness, as many of these scoffers do, which turn away as though they had confederated themselves with Satan, whereof we see examples in these folk that defile and unhallow themselves, and deface God's truth to the uttermost of their power. And if any man turn away through inconstancy, it seems that all is marred, and some will say, what shall a man win by teaching of them? Behold, he is but a lost child: and so they will conclude that there is not one drop of good knowledge in them.

But if God call them again, as there are many such examples to be seen: a man shall find that the thing which was as good as choked & overwhelmed before, sprouts again, like as if dung were cast upon a well-tilled ground, or as if dust and such other things were strewed upon it, that which is underneath it should lie hid for a time, but afterward it would shoot up again. This in effect is the thing that Saint Paul meant to tell us here.

But by the way we have to mark, that whereas he says that Jesus Christ shall be fashioned in them new again it is meant conditionally that they return under his obeisance. Surely this saying might seem

somewhat harsh at the first sight: for we be rather fashioned in Jesus Christ, than he in us. For proof whereof, behold, Jesus Christ is our full and whole perfection. Now, to say that he is nourished in us as a little babe, or that he grows or is furthered: is not seemly for his person. Nevertheless Saint Paul says so: however, that is but to show the union that is betwixt us and Jesus Christ our head.

Although then that Jesus Christ can neither increase nor diminish in himself: yet does he take all our faults and infirmities upon him. I have told you already that we are then born in him, when we are called to the hope of salvation by the doctrine of the Gospel: for we are all dead and damned in Adam. There is but one mean of life, which is, to be made one with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the fountain that has all fulness in it, and whereoutof it behooves us to draw.

Then we are born in Jesus Christ (as I said afore:) so does he suckle us with the doctrine of his Gospel, till we be able to receive perfecter learning, and till our faith be so far forward, that we resemble little babes no more, but increase still in profiting more and more, till we be come to man's age, as Saint Paul says in the fourth to the Ephesians. Furthermore, to the end we may know that our Lord Jesus Christ intends not to be separated from us, but that he and we be all one: he says that he takes our faults upon him, and becomes as a little babe in us.

How so? Can Jesus Christ be weak? No, not in respect of himself: but forasmuch as we be members of his body, he says he is little in us in respect of the little knowledge of him which we have. And forasmuch as we proceed still further and further: he says also that he grows and is increased in us. Lo here a record of excellent goodness, yea of the infinite goodness of God's son, in that it pleases him so to abase

himself, as not only to have compassion and pity of our infirmities, to relieve them and remedy them: but also transforms himself, and is contented to say that he is as it were imperfect, and as a little babe, and that he grows greater and greater according to the continual increasing of our faith.

And here you see also why in another place Saint Paul calls the Church the fullness of God and of his son our Lord Jesus Christ. But surely if we imagine that God is not thoroughly full and perfect in himself, but that he has need to borrow of us: it is rank traitorousness: for what are we able to give unto him? When he shall have gathered us all before him, what can he find in us but utter misery? For we are plunged, yea and utterly sapped in it.

Yet notwithstanding he tells us by the mouth of Saint Paul, that we are his accomplishment, and that in that respect he is after a sort imperfect. Not that he could not be without us. for he has been always eternally, before he had created the world. And although there were neither heaven nor earth, could not God be satisfied with himself? Were he not rich enough of his own glory? Yes surely: but he will not be perfect nor fully satisfied till he have us knit in one with him. Thus you see what we have to mark upon this text. And by this word Fashion we are warned, that it is not enough for us to have some slight knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: but that he must be so lively shaped in us to the full, as we may have such a print of his power, of all his graces, and of all his benefits graven in our hearts, as may never be blotted out or defaced again.

He said heretofore, that when the Gospel is preached with such efficacy as belongs unto it, Jesus Christ is after a sort crucified among us: in such a manner that we not only see him painted lively before us, but it is as much as if we saw him upon the Cross, with his

blood streaming down, as though he were presently offering up the everlasting sacrifice to God his father, to wash away all our offences and misdeeds. Now like as God shows us that favor: so let us on our side beware that we let not the thing slip that is set before us, as many folk do, who when they have gotten the understanding of a two or three words of the Gospel, do fall to flourishing, and think themselves to have too much, whereas notwithstanding they have but a confused imagination.

Therefore it is not to be wondered at, though they be utterly at their wits' ends in every temptation be it never so small, so as all that they ween themselves to have learned, serves them to no purpose: for God does by that means punish their negligence. Wherefore, inasmuch as God has granted us the grace to know his Son: let the foresaid representation be printed in us as often as we come to any Sermon, and let us be renewed in knowledge and remembrance: that when the Devil shall labor to darken, and finally to deface the faith which we shall conceive, he may gain nothing at our hands because we have the lively impression [of Christ's sacrifice] so deeply graven in our hearts, as it may well be said that he is truly and thoroughly fashioned in us.

And herein it is to be seen, that the Papists have utterly renounced our Lord Jesus Christ: For they coax the world, saying that it is enough to have a confused faith, and that men must not be too inquisitive, and that it is perilous for men to endeavor themselves to profit in the Gospel. Behold their blasphemies. But here we see how Saint Paul tells the Galatians, that it is a great shame for them that Jesus Christ Christ should be fashioned new again in them, saying that it is all one as if they were doted, and had not received the doctrine as they ought to have done which had been preached among them.

Therefore if we do our duty and be as good scholars toward Godward, as he is a good and faithful schoolmaster towards us: surely we shall not have an entangled faith of some confused imagination, but we shall behold the Son of God as he is spoken of by the Corinthians, where it is said that the Gospel is the true looking glass wherein we behold Jesus Christ as it were in the face. Not that we see him with our eyes, for that is reserved to the last day, at what time we shall be like unto God. As then his glory shall be fully discovered unto us: but as now we behold our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel so far forth as is meet for us, and as our weakness and rudeness will bear, that we may be transformed and fashioned like unto him.

And whereas Saint Paul adds, that he would fain be with the Galatians, to change his speech because he was sorry for them: therein he betrays again how gross and intolerable their fault is, since he knows not at which end to begin with them, and that although he have bred them in Jesus Christ, and fed them up with the doctrine of the Gospel, yet he knows not how to rule them any more, whereas notwithstanding, a mother ought to know the complexion and nature of her child. Needs then must those men be utterly froward and lewd-minded, whose fathers and mothers are at their wits' end and wot not how to behave themselves: and when their children are become either serpents full of poison, or Lions full of pride and stubbornness, so as they be past teaching or handling: it must needs be that they are become fiends. And yet does Saint Paul upbraid the Galatians with it.

Howbeit, instead of blaming them, let us see if the like vice be not to be found in us: namely that when God opens his mouth to teach us, he finds us so fickle-headed, that he must be fain to alter his speech at every turn. It is true that he can well enough wield our hearts

when it shall please him. But we treat not here of his secret power whereby he works in his chosen. We treat here but only of our own nature, how beastly it is if it be considered in itself, and of the preaching of the Gospel.

Are not they that would preach the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ faithfully, stricken continually in heaviness to see men so beastly as they show themselves to be? For our tasting of the goodness of our God ought to tame us. Surely we ought to give good ear to his doctrine: and if we could be drawn unto him by gentleness, or if we would be warned with every little beckoning of his finger, like the child that seeks to please his father, who as soon as his father does but speak the word, has his feet ready out of hand to run wherever his father sends him, and both his hands ready to do whatsoever he commands him: he should not need to use long process with us.

But when God speaks to us, we are so dull-witted as we know not what he means: or else we stop our ears, that cry he never so loud, it is to no purpose, for we abide always at one point. Therefore the thing that Saint Paul has spoken in this text, serves not for any one people alone: but it is all one as if he blamed the whole world in all ages for unthankfulness, saying that God is after a sort grieved with us for being so crooked and froward, and for the great number of lurking holes and hypocrisies that are in us: in so much that if he uses us gently, we become so much the more sturdy: and if he handles us roughly, we kick against the spur.

And in good sooth we see what his gentleness and roughness avail us: that is to wit, so little, that our lewdness must needs be overgreat, seeing he cannot win us by the one nor by the other. Therefore let us bethink ourselves thoroughly. Furthermore, forasmuch as God is willing to beget us by his word, to the end we should be his children,

and in the end obtain inheritance whereunto he has adopted us by our Lord Jesus Christ, and which he has purchased for us by the death & passion of him that is the true & only heir: as often as we come to Sermons, or any of us read the holy Scripture, let us consider to what end it serves.

And moreover, if we find not such power and efficacy in God's word when we hear it preached or read: let us blame our own naughtiness or dulness for it, assuring ourselves that the world does still hold us back and hinder us too much: and let us pray God that his word may not be unprofitable to us.

Besides this, when we be once reformed by it, so as we are become his children: let us daily feed upon it, assuring ourselves that we have need of it all the time of our life, and that we are not yet come to the perfection whereunto we must tend. Wherefore let that stir us up, and let us always be earnestly minded to go still forward, till we stick fast to our Lord Jesus Christ, and let us take good heed that we do not stop and shut up the passage that he should have to us, to guide and govern us to our safety.

And this is the very same thing which we have seen Saint Paul upbraid the Corinthians with, namely that he could not come at them: and why? It was not long of me, says he. Whereof then? Even of your own overstraightness & shrinking back: and because you submit not yourselves to God, but rather draw from him, or else shrink back into your lurking holes: I am fain to talk to you, now in one speech and now in another.

So then according to his upbraiding of the Corinthians there, and of the Galatians still here, let us beware that we be not so straight-laced as we be of our own nature: but let us pray God to give us access to his word. And seeing that all our lusts, our sinful vanities, and our

froward affections are as bars, gates, and such other things cast in the way, to the intent that God's word should not pass: let us fight against them, let it not only enter in unto us as at a crevice, but let it find the gate wide open, and whenever God speaks, let us give good ear, and open our hearts and minds, to receive the doctrine rightly and roundly, whereby we should be cleansed, till we be come to the fountain of all cleanness.

But now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God, with acknowledgement of our faults, praying him to make us so to feel them, as we may condemn ourselves, not only with our mouths, but also with a true meaning heart, and fight valiantly against all our vices, forsaking ourselves more & more, and laboring to rid ourselves quite and clean of them, and of all the corruption and sinfulness that is in us, till he have drawn us fully to himself, and that we be so transformed to the likeness of his image, as we may enjoy his immortal glory, whereunto he now allures us, & which we cannot possess as yet but in hope, until the latter day. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people and nations of the earth, bringing back all ignorant souls from the miserable bondage of error and darkness, to the right way of salvation. &c.

The Twenty-Ninth Sermon,

which is the sixth upon the fourth Chapter.

21 Tell me, you that would be under the Law, hear you not the Law?

22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondwoman, and the other by a free woman.

23 And he that was by the bondwoman was born after the flesh: but he that was of the free woman was born by promise.

24 Which things are spoken by an Allegory: for they be two Covenants. The one from mount Sinai which engendereth unto bondage, which is Agar.

25 For Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and representeth that which is now called Jerusalem, and is in bondage with her children.

Every man can say that freedom is a thing so greatly to be desired, that man's life is as it were half dead, or a continual pining away without it. And in very deed we shun bondage and subjection as much as is possible, and seek freedom and liberty, according also as it is named an inestimable benefit in the common Proverb. Now if it be so in respect of this earthly life: Much more is it so when it standeth upon the everlasting salvation of our souls. But we see that many run into bondage, and tie the rope about their own necks willfully. They can well enough say that they desire freedom: but in

the meantime they show themselves to have as it were vowed themselves unto slavery.

And this is specially seen and tried too much when we come to the enjoying of the freedom which is purchased us by our Lord Jesus Christ, to the end that our souls should have rest. For although God set us free from the bonds of Satan, and from tyranny of sin, by the Gospel, in telling us that he adopts us to be his children: yet do we scarcely see any that accept that benefit when it is offered them, but all do plunge themselves into the cursed captivity of sin, and had lever to be subject to their own lusts, than to walk at liberty by yielding themselves to the obeying of God. Not without cause therefore does Saint Paul reprove here the unthankfulness of such as long to be under the law, telling them that they forsake the thing which they ought most chiefly to wish for, that is, to be frank and free as the children of God.

And hereof he gives us as it were a looking-glass or lively picture, saying that even in the Law itself a man may perceive how wretched and miserable man's state is, so long as he abides under the Law. For Abraham's house was as a lively image of God's Church. There therefore we may see what the state of the Church is. Now it is said that Abraham had two sons: the one named Ishmael; and the other named Isaac. Ishmael was born of Hagar which was Abraham's handmaid, and had been given him to wife. However, there was a foul fault in that he could not discharge the promise and bond that he had made to his lawful wife Sarah. Again, we see that the cause of this marriage between Abraham and Hagar happened through the overmuch hastiness of Sarah, because she thought that God forslowed the performance of his promise so long, and she was desirous to have issue. But she thought that that could not come to pass by her own means, and therefore she made a very evil

construction upon God's word, and it appears that she was not so patient and well stayed in her faith as was requisite. To be short the marriage was to be condemned, and no better than whoredom, albeit that Abraham's intent was not so. For he was not led with wicked lust. He might very well have desired to have had the seed whereof the salvation of the world should spring: but see what our foolish intents do. When we attempt one thing or other without having God's word for our warrant, we shall be carried and led into many faults through our own rashness.

After this manner is Ishmael born of Hagar the bondwoman, and yet is that no lawful marriage nor allowed of God. Isaac is born of Sarah long time after Ishmael: for Ishmael might well have been sixteen years old ere Isaac was born. But Saint Paul, following the record of Moses, says that Isaac was born by promise, and Ishmael after the flesh. Not that Abraham begat not his son Isaac: but that he did it by power from heaven, because his body was already withered and as good as half dead, and he had not any more lustiness in him. He was a man of a hundred years old, and his wife also pricked much about the same age, who had been barren all the foretime of her life, and was full fourscore and ten years old or thereabouts ere she might conceive and be with child, inasmuch that even she herself also thought it to be but a tale and a laughing matter, when the message was brought him by the Angels.

You see then that Isaac was born by promise. For in that case God wrought by miracle, to the end it might be known that our Lord Jesus should be sent into the world, not after the common order of nature, but as proceeding of God's goodness and wonderful forepurpose. But however the case stands, you see here in the house of Abraham (who is as it were a figure and image of the Church) two women with their two children born of either of them one. Now as

touching Hagar, Saint Paul says that she represents mount Sinai where the Law is given: and he calls it a mountain of Arabia, to show that it was not in the holy land which God had appointed to be the inheritance of his people.

Also Sarah representeth Jerusalem: not the Jerusalem (saith he) which is now standing, for that was corrupted and gone away from the law and pure doctrine of God: I say from the law, not after the manner that Saint Paul taketh it here to engender unto bondage: but according to the covenant that God had made with his people in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. For as much then as the Jerusalem which was in Saint Paul's time, had forsaken Jesus Christ, and by that means disannulled God's covenant: Saint Paul says that it must be coupled with Hagar or mount Sinai. It is to no purpose (saith he) that the Jews make their brags under color of their Temple, Sacrifices and such other things, that they be God's chosen and peculiar people: for notwithstanding all that gear, yet are they as good as banished and rooted out of the holy land, and have no more but a vain title of the law. For let a man look upon the state of Jerusalem as it is now to be seen, and it differs nothing at all from Sinai.

But there is a Jerusalem from above (saith he), that is to wit, the Church, which breedeth us before God, and she having the incorruptible seed of the Gospel, beareth children that are free and unbound, and she is the mother of all the faithful, according as it is written, "Rejoice thou poor barren woman." And Isaiah speaks not to any one woman: but termeth God's Church so by a similitude, which Church should for a time be greatly scattered. His saying then is, very well, thou shalt be an outcast, and there shall be as it were a kind of divorce between God and thee: but in the end he will multiply thee again, and thou shalt have more children than if thou hadst

flourished all the while in prosperity: and that came to pass when the Gospel was preached openly to the world. For then the Church had not only the children of Abraham, or some one certain people: but through the heavenly seed of the Gospel, she brought forth infinite children unto God, of all Nations and Countries, far and wide, according to the power which God uttered through the whole world. Lo here in effect the substance of the text which I have rehearsed.

But first of all we have to mark, that whereas Saint Paul says, that these things are spoken by an Allegory: he meant not to impeach the natural sense of the holy Scripture, as we see how some have done, who through their foolish curiosity of seeking fond speculations in the holy Scripture, have turmoiled and disordered all things, esteeming the literal sense to be nothing worth. This was the cause that all things were falsified and perverted, and there has not been a more devilish device than these allegories, which have borne such sway in the world, and as yet still delight many men so much, that they be as it were bewitched with them, because they be very favorable and plausible. "O noble exposition," say they. And why so? Because that when as it touches neither heaven nor earth, the silly people are ravished at it, and it is an easy matter to hang in suspense and mammering at it.

But Saint Paul meant not that the things which Moses reporteth of Isaac and Ishmael, should only serve for such curious speculations: but he showeth that in that story we see in effect the state of the Church, because that at that time there was no Church in the world governed by God, but only the house of Abraham. There was as yet Salem where Melchizedek was king: Howbeit for as much as the same went still to decay, God gathered a people in the person of Abraham, whereby he gave an inkling, that he would be called upon by those whom he had schooled out from the rest of the world.

Therefore we must not read this story of Moses coldly without looking any further, that is to say, without consideration of the things that happened in that house, wherein the state of the Church is showed us. Mark that for one point.

But now to come to the principal, let us mark that whereas Saint Paul likeneth Hagar Abraham's bondwoman unto mount Sinai, and unto the Law that was published there: he meaneth not the Law with the whole contents and substance of it. For in the Law there are promises of salvation, which we must hope for by our Lord Jesus Christ, as Saint Paul declareth in divers places, and as we ourselves have seen. Then if we could take the Law in its right and lawful use, it is certain that we should have there the incorruptible seed of life, and God would be our father, and we should be set free by him. The law indeed hath ingendred unto bondage as in outward respect, as hath been declared heretofore.

Although the fathers of old time were God's children and heirs of the kingdom of heaven as well as we: yet were they under tutors and governors. For they were as yet like little children, and the perfection of things was reserved to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: and the Ceremonies were as bridles and thongs, so that they which kept them had not the full freedom that God grants us to enjoy nowadays as it is purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet notwithstanding Saint Paul speaking here of the Law that engenders unto bondage, takes it for the false opinion which they had against whom he disputes. For he will add anon, that all such as are so engendered, shall in the end be banished and driven out of God's house and heritage. Now although the fathers were engendered in outward bondage, as is said of them in the eighth to the Romans: yet were they free by the spirit of faith, which overruled the bondage, or

else they had been cut off from all hope of salvation. To be short, Saint Paul speaks here of the law, after the interpretation wherewith it had been corrupted by the hypocrites that busied their heads about pelting trifles, and would needs make meritorious deeds of them, and in the meanwhile did cast men's consciences into so strait bonds, as was enough to choke them. But hereof enough has been said heretofore.

Nevertheless we must call to mind how the law hath been compared with the Gospel, because that such as will needs purchase themselves righteousness by it, do bear themselves in hand that God is bound unto them, for their doing of their duty, and they think they do it thoroughly indeed. When they hear this promise, "he that doth these things shall live": by and by they strain themselves, and they believe that they shall bring the matter about to perform all that ever God requires and commands. And when they have once gotten the promise by the end, straightways they look for the wages too: and they never think any more that their salvation is a free gift, but that they have deserved and earned God's promise, so that the eternal life is with them but a recompense of their deserts. Thus you see what is meant by the Law when Saint Paul compares it with the Gospel.

And as touching the Gospel he doth us to wit, that it is a doctrine whereby God showeth himself to be our father, with covenant that we should be set free from the condemnation of Satan and sin, yea and from the curse of the law. For (as we have seen afore) it is said that all such as fulfill not the law in all points shall be accursed. Now the case is so, that all of us are in danger. And by that means all the world is swallowed up in despair, and there is no remedy, unless God draw wretched sinners out of that condemnation, and acquit them of the sentence that was pronounced against them. Now then we see after what manner Saint Paul took the name of the Law: namely that

he meant not, that the doctrine which is contained in Moses, doth not make us rightly the children of God, or that it contains not the promises which were for the everlasting salvation of mankind: but only that before Jesus Christ came into the world, there was not yet any full liberty or freedom as there is nowadays, and moreover that the hypocrites abused the law by their false interpretations. For they surmised that they could make God amends, and thereby purchase favor at his hand. And therefore Saint Paul says that we shall always be in bondage till we be begotten again by another kind of seed, that is to wit, by the Gospel. But let us mark well these words, where it is said that Hagar or Sinai represents the Jerusalem which was at that time, that is to wit, the same City which had erst been God's sanctuary, and should have been the wellspring of all heavenly doctrine, according to Isaiah and Micah, which say, "The law shall come from Zion," and "the word of God from Jerusalem." Howbeit for as much as the Jews were corrupt, and had mingled their own inventions and glosses with the pureness of the true doctrine, yea and had forsaken Jesus Christ the fountain of life: Saint Paul says that that Jerusalem of theirs is like Hagar the bondmaid, and like the mountain Sinai which cannot engender but to condemnation: and that is a thing well worthy to be marked: for it serves to show that God did never so tie his grace to any one place, but that he punished the thanklessness of the inhabitants, when they would not have the wit to make their benefit of the good things that he had put into their hands. Behold, Jerusalem is called God's holy city, his royal palace, his house, and the place of his abode: all these titles are given it in the holy Scripture. And yet notwithstanding Saint Paul says that she has become like Sinai, a barren hill in a desert and eldritch place, and out of the bounds of the holy land which God calls his resting place and the heritage of his faithful and chosen. Seeing there was such a change in the City of Jerusalem, which had been chosen of God and honored with so many goodly and excellent titles: what shall become

of all such people as do nowadays refuse the doctrine of the Gospel? Although they were exalted to the like honor, yet could God well enough make them to tumble into all reproach. We see what is said of all those Cities where our Lord Jesus Christ had preached the Gospel: as of Capernaum and the rest. For they might have boasted of their having of the message of salvation first afore all others, and of Christ's being conversant among them rather than at Jerusalem.

But he saith, thou shalt be cast down to the bottom of hell: and that was because they were stubborn and maliciously willful, in disdaining to receive the grace that was preached unto them. Yea and we see what Jeremiah saith of Shiloh. Because the Jews boasted so much of their town of Jerusalem, under the color of the Temple and the altar: Go your ways to Shiloh (saith he): was not the Ark placed there a long time? did not men resort thither from all coasts to worship God? did they not offer sacrifices there? And what see ye now? a terrible token of God's vengeance, because they had not profited themselves by the benefit that was offered to them first of all. Now therefore let us apply this to our own instruction, that whenever God shall have been so gracious to us, as to make his abode among us, and as it were to plant his royal siege with us to reign over us, we may walk in fear and wariness, endeavoring on our side to obey him, and to shroud ourselves soberly and advisedly under his wings. For if we think to hold him bound unto us, and thereupon presume to be willful in our own conceit, and unhallow the gracious gifts which he had dedicated to our salvation: surely such lewdness shall not abide unpunished. So then we be warned by the example of Jerusalem, to yield ourselves peaceably to the obeying of our God, and to suffer him to govern us, applying ourselves to him in all respects, without puffing up into vain presumption, when he shall have bestowed any of his spiritual gifts upon us, but rather confessing that we be so much the more beholding unto him, and

thereupon taking occasion to humble ourselves. And here by the way we see what a fondness it is of the Papists, to tie God unto Rome under color (as they say) that it is the Apostolic see. Let us put the case it were so, although we know not why, for all that they allege of Saint Peter is but tales and stark lies. It is very certain that Saint Paul was held prisoner at Rome, and it may be gathered that he was even put to death there. Behold, all the holiness of Rome is this, that the Gospel was persecuted there, and that that devilish dungeon hath been defiled with the blood of the martyrs, as it were to provoke God's wrath, and to confederate itself to fight against the truth, and as much as may be to abolish the name and remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ. Behold here all the worthiness of Rome. But now admit that they had the records which the City of Jerusalem had, whereof notwithstanding they find not one syllable in the holy Scripture. It is not said that God will reign or have any dwelling in the City of Rome, nor that it should be named the mother church, nor have any other dignity or preeminence at all. In deed Saint Paul saith that the faith of the Romans, (and yet they were then but a handful of people,) was at that time known everywhere, even to their great renown. For ye must not think that those which bare the sword there were the Christians: but they were a few folks gathered together in covert. Those doth Saint Paul praise and commend: but yet doth it not follow that the Church was over all the whole town of Rome, notwithstanding, whatsoever it were, we see what happened to Jerusalem. Saint Paul telleth us that it differed not from Hagar or Sinai, which is an unholy and defiled place, so that the holiness thereof was utterly done away, because it continued not in the pure doctrine of the Gospel. Therefore we may conclude that such as have been nearest unto God, and to whom he hath communicated himself most familiarly, shall be shaken off as strangers, if they abide not in the pureness [of the truth] which is the inseparable band whereby we be made one with our God. But surely we see that nowadays, the

pure doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ is not only shaken off, trodden under foot, despised, and scorned at Rome: but also cruelly persecuted with fire and sword, and finally that there is no religion at all there. For that place is so full of filth and lewdness, that if a man go thither, it is a wonder that ever he should return with any fear of God or with any good seed in him. We see then that it is as a dungeon of hell: and would God that they which have been there had rather broken their necks, than lifted up a foot to go thither. For we see presently, that the country of France has been infected with all ungodliness by it, so that the most part of them are become no better than hogs and dogs, having less religion in them than brute beasts. But yet (as I have touched heretofore) we be warned hereby to walk in fear and wariness, and to take good heed that we be not bereft and deprived of the benefit which we have received, if we abuse it, lest God pour out his horrible wrath upon us, and we become as a mirror and pattern of reproach after the manner of Jerusalem, which Saint Paul doth here set upon the scaffold, notwithstanding that it had been so highly honored before.

Furthermore let us mark, that under the figure of Abraham, God doth here show himself a father to all his: and so ye see we be begotten of God, so as we have room in his Church. But yet is it not enough for us to call upon God as our father, except we be rightly begotten again by the incorruptible seed, which is unto us as a pledge of everlasting life and salvation. If it be asked, how then is it possible that we should be begotten of God, and yet notwithstanding be as it were a bastard seed? The answer is, that we by our own vice and naughtiness do mar God's seed which is his word: for so is it named by Saint Peter.

But it is certain that in respect that the word proceedeth from God it containeth in itself nothing but all goodness. And again we see what

pureness shineth there, how that all the treasures of God's righteousness, mercy, and goodness are uttered there. Thus then you see what manner of thing God's word is, and what is the nature thereof. Nevertheless when we corrupt it and falsify it by our own fancies, and make a mingle-mangle of it: we may still be taken for God's children, howbeit we shall be but as bastard children, as shall be declared more at large (by God's leave) after dinner. For then will Saint Paul declare, that although Ishmael were the eldest Son, yet was he in the end driven out of the house wherein he had taken the chief room upon him, howbeit that he was but a bastard, and also born of a bondwoman. Then let us mark that we must not only be begotten by God's word into a pure faith, and God by his holy spirit enlighten us that we may know his will according as he witnesseth it unto us. For if we change his word after our own fancy, and disguise it: truly it may be called God's seed still, but yet is it not so in deed, whatsoever we make of it, because it abideth not in his own soundness.

And here ye see the cause why so many do nowadays falsely name themselves Christians: according as the Papists will well enough confess that they believe in God, and that they be contented to hold themselves to the holy Scripture. But yet for all that, it is apparent that they be utterly perverted, and that as touching the Scripture, whereas they ought to receive it with all reverence, they turn it to their own liking, yea and make a mockage and scoff of it, and (as I said erewhile) they spew out this blasphemy against it, that it is a nose of wax, and that men may turn it which way they list: and moreover it is apparent that they have turmoiled all things by their own forgeries. For what else do men call God's service in Popery, but the things that men have set down of their own brain. There is no mention of ruling themselves by God's commandment and ordinance. God must be thrust out of his place, and men take upon

them that which belongeth unto him, challenging authority to bring folks' consciences into bondage, and to make what laws they think good. But that is too villainous and outrageous a corruption. On the other side, whence do the Papists draw the Articles of their faith? even out of their own decrees, for they reck not to draw any resolution out of the holy Scripture. So then they pass not a whit what is in the holy Scripture: but if anything be agreed upon and received by common opinion, that is as an Oracle from heaven with them. And we see also that when they intend to prove any of their toys, the first reason that they make, is that it is received, and that antiquity ought to prevail, as who would say that there were any prescription in the matter: and thereupon they pull out certain texts of the Scripture by the hairs of the head, and these must also help forward the matter. But [when all comes to all] it is but flat mockery, & it is apparent that they willfully corrupt God's word. For there is such gross and beastly ignorance in them, that very children might justly spit in their faces for it. So then the Papists are a fair looking glass to us at this day, for the things that are contained here in Saint Paul: that is to wit, that many of them vaunt themselves to be God's children, and household members of his Church, and yet notwithstanding are but bastard slips, and of a corrupted seed, because that instead of cleaving thoroughly to the pure doctrine which were able to beget them again into the hope of the heavenly life, they be so given to their own minglings, that there is not any more soundness in them.

But we need not to go any further to show that the matter which Saint Paul treateth of here, is verified too much of the Papistry. For whereabouts is our greatest strife nowadays, but for freewill, for merits, for satisfactions, and for such other things? The Papists say that we are able by our own freewill, to purchase grace at God's hand, not that we need not to be aided and succored by his holy spirit, but

because there is a certain matching together (say they) between God and us, so as God worketh one piece and we another. Thus do they make us God's marrows, and like as our strength would be too weak if it were not succored on God's behalf: so should God's grace (say they) be unavailing, if we made it not of force by our own moving thereunto. And hereupon again they forge and build their merits: there is none other talk among them, but of purchasing the realm of paradise, by making God beholden to them: & then step forth their merits and satisfactions to ransom all the faults that they have committed. Thus ye see in effect what the Papists prate and jangle. Thereupon they conclude, that it is blasphemy to say that God's Law is impossible, and that we be not able to perform it: saying that there is no man but he may fully discharge himself of it when he listeth. It is an easy matter for them to prate after that fashion in the shadow: but they that say so, are naughty ruffians, drunkards, swearers, and folk given to all villainy and outrage. For men know well enough what the holiness of the Monks, of the shavelings, and of all the whole rabble of their riffraff and Cankerworms is. But we on our side say that we be born the bondslaves of sin, and are held in so strait bands under the tyranny of Satan, that we cannot so much as think one good thought of well doing, but go forward still unto all evil, like as if an Ass should always bear his yoke or burden with him, and yet we sin not but willingly.

But however we fare, we are so steeped in sin that naturally we cannot do anything but offend God, and therefore he must be forced to enlarge us and set us at liberty by his holy spirit. Moreover, we say that the law of God is impossible to be fulfilled, and that it shows us our duty to the end to condemn us and to stop our mouths, and to make us come before God as wretched offenders, to obtain grace at his hand for the sins which we have committed, and to confound us with shame, to the end we should grant ourselves to be damned, and

seek to be saved at God's hand, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, we say that to justify ourselves before him is a thing that surpasses all our ability, and that he supplies our wants because he sifts us not with rigor, nor enters into account with us: and that when we have offended him, there is none other satisfaction for it than the sacrifice that was offered by our Lord Jesus Christ, nor any other cleansing than to plunge ourselves over head and ears in his blood. Thus you see how the doctrine which is contained in Saint Paul is to be put in practice in respect of the disputations of the Papists against us. For it is certain that for all their bragging and false pretending of the name of God, and for all their saying that they be his children because they be begotten by the holy scripture: they show that their mother is Hagar or Sinai, and consequently that they be bondmen born, and do tie the rope about their own neck because they have no will to go unto God, to receive the freedom that he offers them, but will rather usurp to themselves the thing that belongs to God only, and will needs justify themselves by their own merits; and fulfill the law of themselves. Therefore they be bond children, and continue slaves still, and in the end must be driven quite out of the house. As for us, we shall see hereafter what proof the doctrine has which we hold, and what it brings with it: which is, that we have none other freedom than is given us by the doctrine of the gospel, according also as our Lord Jesus Christ shows in the eighth of Saint John, that it is his peculiar office to make us free, and that the drawing of us out of damnation is a special privilege given unto him by God his father. Therefore when we come to our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him seek, for all things that we want, knowing that by his means we are delivered from the yoke of the law, which we are not able to bear, and which not only made us to stoop, but also weighed us down to the bottom of hell: it is the true seed that begets us again into full freedom to be God's children, not only to be reputed so in this world, but also to be avowed so at his hand before

his Angels, that in the end we may come to the heritage that is bought so dearly for us, and which we cannot attain to by our own power, but by the means of him to whom it belongs who communicates it unto us according as he offers it to us daily by his Gospel.

But now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us feel them better than we have done, so as it may make us to grow and increase more and more in true repentance, that our coming unto him may be in all lowliness without hypocrisy, being ashamed of our wretchedness, and not seeking any other remedy than in our Lord Jesus Christ: and that forasmuch as our good God has adopted us and sealed the grace of his adoption in our hearts by his holy spirit, we may stand steadfast in the pureness of his Gospel, without adding anything of our own, and without marring it by our own interpretations, and that he so hold us in the obedience of faith by his holy spirit, that like as he has begun to show himself bountiful towards us, so we also may go continually forward to the said perfection; without swerving aside at any time. And so let us all say, Almighty God our heavenly father. &c.

The Thirtieth Sermon,

which is the seventh upon the fourth Chapter.

26 But the Jerusalem which is from above is free, which is the mother of us all.

27 For it is written, be glad thou barren which bearest Page [unnumbered] no children, break forth and cry thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she that hath a husband.

28 And we, my brethren, we are children of promise, after the manner of Isaac.

29 But like as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit: even so it is now.

30 Nevertheless, what says the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free woman.

We have seen this morning that many boast themselves to be faithful, falsely pretending to be God's children, and are so taken toward the worldward. However, they are but bastards, and God disclaims them because they have corrupted the good seed, which is the pure doctrine whereby we are begotten anew to be made partakers of the free adoption to which God calls us. Therefore, all that we have to do is not to be counted as part of the Church unless we are of the pure and sound seed, meaning we follow God's word without any corruption or mingling.

For this reason, S. Paul brings us back to the heavenly Jerusalem so we might know who our true mother is. Those who pervert the

natural sense of scripture are not the children of God, and all their crying and calling upon Him as their father is nothing but stark lying and hypocrisy. However, because they are often considered to be of that degree, S. Paul distinguishes them by their mother so that we might know who are God's true and lawful children approved by Him.

The name of the Church is often pretended, and in these days, the Papists use it as a shield to protect their errors. They think having the Church on their side can cover their falsehoods, but S. Paul tells us we must be wise to discern the true Church. The Jews had enough reason to believe God abided in Jerusalem, as He had chosen it with the assurance that He would forever rest there. Yet, the same Jerusalem became a den of thieves because our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified there. Due to their unfaithfulness, the Jews were cut off from the house of God.

While Jerusalem's name had been honorable, it was then held in reproach and disdain before the Angels and all the faithful. Similarly, today, we must carefully discern which is the true Church, lest we be children of a bastard seed and be cast out of God's house for falsely claiming His name through hypocrisy before men.

God honors His Church, calling her the mother of all the faithful, which aligns with S. Paul's report elsewhere, where he describes her as the pillar upholding God's truth in this world. The truth does not need our maintenance, as we are inclined to lightness and inconstancy by nature. Yet, by His infinite goodness, God wills to have His word preached here below. He entrusts this task to those He calls, and in this regard, the Church is called the mother of us all.

As our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, we have only one Father, God, who is the spiritual father of our bodies and souls. Through His Church,

God begets us into the hope of eternal life, as the Prophet Isaiah declares: "My word shall be in thy mouth, and continue with thy children from time to time, and with all those that shall come of thy race." Thus, God governs His faithful ones through His word, which serves as a pledge and invaluable treasure of salvation in His Church, where we are begotten and nourished.

Therefore, as I have touched already, we need to be even more skilled in discerning the Church. Since it is the mother of God's children, its name ought not to be dishonored, trampled underfoot, or defiled as it is seen to be nowadays. There is no more common treachery than using the name of the Church to deface and darken God's truth. Why do the Papists boast with full mouth and full throat that they are the Church? It's to silence God's voice, trample His word, and elevate their own forged doctrines. They aim to silence God's truth so that their own inventions are received without question or challenge.

We see men, who are but earthworms and rottenness, pitted against God under the guise of the Church. Saint Paul warns us to seek the Church that holds the pure doctrine through which we were adopted by God as His children. As I've mentioned before, it all lies in being ingrafted into the body of our Lord Jesus Christ and acknowledging our cursed nature. We must recognize that all our works are filthiness, the Devil holds us subject to his tyranny, and our only hope lies in God's mercy and pity.

Therefore, let us enter God's house through the gate, acknowledging that the only way for us to enter is by the sheer grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the Church breeds and bears us through the incorruptible seed. To better understand this text, we have two points to consider. Firstly, we must not be like those who think they can be faithful without reading or preaching, believing that the Holy

Ghost ought to reveal Himself through dreams or other means. Such individuals despise doctrine, considering all instruction as childish.

We must not fall into this trap by the wiles of Satan. If we desire to be counted as God's children and recognized before the angels, we must allow ourselves to be taught and uphold the order of the Church with reverence and humility. Even the greatest among us must acknowledge that the greatest dignity is to be children of the Church. Those who reject this status renounce God and forfeit all hope of salvation.

Secondly, we must discern and not behave like beasts driven aimlessly. We must recognize the signs God has imprinted on the Church, signs that will never deceive us. When we hear God's word preached purely, without corruption, and are led wholly to seek our welfare in Him, we are in God's house and sanctuary. When we follow the way shown to us—our Lord Jesus Christ—and cast away all pride and arrogance, we are clothed with the righteousness offered to us. This is when we truly become children of the Church, and we can be assured that God recognizes and accepts us as His own.

This is the most sure and infallible proof, unless we willingly become beasts, shutting our eyes and ears, pretending safety solely based on the name of the Church, to hide our abuses and deceptions of Satan. Therefore, let us not be so beastly by our own wilfulness, but consider whether God sends us to be truly regenerated by the seed of His word and to be fed with it as our only food. For this reason, the text of Isaiah is cited: God speaks not randomly to some multitude that might boast themselves to be the Church, but only to the flock that should be left after the Jews had been horribly led astray and scattered. At first sight, one might have thought that God had utterly banished and abolished His Church from the world. Yet, He had

gathered together a small remnant of them, called the remnant of the free election. The Prophet Isaiah says that those who are redeemed and sincerely returned to God, ruling their lives obediently according to His word, are the children of the Church.

We must note, by the way, that the Church does not triumph in this world or shine with such splendid pomp that men might be captivated by its sight alone, submitting themselves to it. Instead, it is most commonly forsaken and seemingly disfigured—a point worth marking. While the Papists boast of having the Church on their side, they must provide evidence. Yet, they only bring forth their riches, authority, and grandeur. However, these are not the things by which God will have His Church known. Our Lord Jesus Christ will reign amidst His enemies, and His disciples will be forsaken and despised by the world.

When anyone talks to us about the Church, let us remember what Saint Paul tells us here. He likens the Church to a widow, alone in her house, without aid or support. The world forsakes her, disregards her, and she is as good as half-dead and buried already. Nevertheless, God says she shall be restored and shall have more children than a married woman in good standing. This lesson must be applied nowadays when we see the poor Church trodden underfoot, and her enemies triumphing over her as though she were nothing but dust and smoke.

In such times, let us patiently wait for God to gather His chosen ones, content in the knowledge that He acknowledges us as His children, even if the world scorns and rejects us. We must not judge the Church with eyes full of vanity, seeking only pomp and outward displays. Instead, let us understand that God will afflict His Church

so severely that there will be no beauty or shape visible to the world—only utter desolation, with everyone rising up against her.

However she may fare, let us be content that God gathers us to Him as His children. When we are called by the pure doctrine of the Gospel, we become fellows with all the fathers chosen by God under the Law, with the holy kings, patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, and all the faithful since Abel. Despite the boasts of the Papists regarding their multitude, the Prophet laughs them to scorn. For we must always discern who are the true children. The churches of the Papists are nothing but brothels of Satan—infected with filthiness, marred God's service, and lack soundness.

Therefore, despite their claims to be God's Church, the Papists are nothing but misbegotten bastards, tied to the brothel with their mother, that synagogue of hell.

Ye see then how the case stands, and it is not I who say it, but it is the Prophet Isaiah who speaks so, and Saint Paul, who is a faithful expounder of God's meaning, confirms the matter. Therefore, let us learn to join with the true children of God, who have the infallible record of the Holy Ghost, and not follow the greater throng. Let all these wretches go, who cast themselves willfully into Satan's snares and wander like brute beasts without any discretion.

By the way, we have to mark that those who are the children of the Church do not cease to be our fathers. Besides the common brotherhood between them and us, there is also the fact that by their means we are begotten in the word of God. Therefore, we have those for our fathers who are also our brothers, and all of us together are the children of God and His Church. Our Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the only Son of God, and He is called our head so that being knitted together in Him and becoming members of His body, we might be

held and taken for God's children, becoming that thing by free adoption which we are not by nature.

Saint Paul tells us that this happens to us by promise after the example of Isaac, to express that we must not have any vain confidence in our own merits or in any virtue within ourselves. We must be utterly devoid of all pride, knowing that all the worthiness we have comes from God's mere grace and free gift. The difference between us and the bastard children who falsely boast of God's name is that while they are puffed up with self-liking, delight in their hypocrisy, and always prattle about their free will, meritorious works, satisfactions, and virtues, we stick to the promise.

We believe that God, having looked upon us with mercy, has drawn us out of the dungeon of destruction wherein we were and, by His Gospel, told us and assured us that He will be our Father and that an inheritance awaits us. This inheritance is not purchased by ourselves or by any mortal creature, but by Jesus Christ, who being very God became man so that we might obtain in Him what is not to be found in all the world. Therefore, if we wish to be well grounded in the doctrine of the Gospel and sure of a good stud and anchorhold of our salvation, we must not intermingle any opinion of our own deserving with it.

We must not surmise that we are able to contribute anything of ourselves but simply receive what God offers us and allow Jesus Christ to be our Savior wholly and not in halves. This is what the word promise signifies. The promise Saint Paul speaks of abolishes all man's pride and disgraces men themselves, showing them that there is nothing in them but utter confusion and that all their welfare lies enclosed in our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, we cannot come by it or enjoy it but by means of the Gospel. The Gospel tells us that we must hold all of God and do Him homage for our salvation because He gives it to us, and it is not a wages due to us that He should be bound to us by any means. Therefore, Saint Paul says that it is so even today, as Moses declared under the figure which he set forth.

In Abraham's house, there was an elder son called Ishmael, and he persecuted Isaac, who was the lawful son. Therefore, we must be so handled and dealt with that those who have nothing but dissimulation and hypocrisy in them, who are but bastards, and who are utterly corrupt and become strangers, may nevertheless boast and set up their bristles against us, as though we were unworthy to kiss their feet.

Such manner of men then must perk up in all pride and persecute us. But let us be constant, says Saint Paul, and let not our faith be shaken down by such loftiness or by the wiles cast in our way by those hypocrites and falsifiers who have perverted God's doctrine. For in the end, the same fate will happen to them as is reported of the house of Abraham—drive out the son of the bondwoman, for he shall not be heir. All those then who boast themselves to be faithful and who must be taken to be of God's household shall be cut off as rotten members and not have any part or piece of inheritance there.

And it is moreover a right excellent lesson, which contains a very profitable admonition, even to confirm the thing which I have touched already, which is that the pomp of this world must not blind our eyes to carry us away at a gaze when we see great solemnities and gorgeous deckings. If a man should believe no further than he sees, when the Pope were in his Pontificalibus, he might be taken for a God, he has so many knickknacks glistering about him. And no

marvel though many are amazed at it, as though one had knocked them on the head with a club and become as good as brute beasts. For why? Men are so given to judge fleshly that they are worse than little children in things that concern God's kingdom.

But yet for all this, behold, Saint Paul says that those who have the primacy, and are all in all, and are dreaded by every man, and finally who bear the title of first-begotten, are oftentimes but Ishmaelites, so they are but bastards, though they allege their eldership never so much. But if Saint Paul were alive at this day, that one text of his would be enough to make him to be burnt a hundred times. For let men write and speak as much as they list, and they cannot more livelily decipher or betray that the Pope and all his clergy are a heap of Ishmaelites and filthy bastards, who fight against God and all His true and right-begotten children, according also as Moses has reported it.

For what else allege the Papists for themselves, save that it is not a day or two ago or a hundred years ago that they have had possession, but that they have kept their traditions and ceremonies these eight or nine hundred years? But surely even in this behalf also they lie and are past shame. But put the case that the world had not appraised these eight hundred years; yet notwithstanding, that eldership of theirs which they allege is not better nor of greater value than was the eldership of Ishmael.

Again, unto their eldership they add also multitude, saying that we are but a handful of folk in comparison to them. They have kings and princes on their side; the whole world agrees with them; both great and small say as they say, and the largeness of their kingdom stretches out far and wide throughout all Europe well-near, and into a piece of Africa. When they have all this for themselves, very well, it

is even as the eldership of Ishmael. Nay, it were more meet for them to have begun at the other end, that is to wit, at the holding fast of the pure doctrine of the Law and the Gospel, without mingling anything at all with it. For else it is a general conclusion that there is nothing in them but corruption and bastardy. But they will not enter into this discourse, that men might know whether they be base-begotten of God's word or not, for it is seen too manifestly already.

And in good faith, as I have said already, under the name of the Church, they have boldly taken upon them to disannul and falsify the whole word of God. So, there is no bringing of the Papists to the true trial or touchstone, that men might discern certainly whether they be God's children or not; but they stand proudly upon their eldership as Ishmael did; they allege that they are an infinite number, and we but sprules, as you would say, and folk despised to the worldward, which have neither estimation nor credit. Thus, you see how Ishmael speaks nowadays by the mouth of the Papists.

Now we, for our part, had need to be armed with patience, for it is a right hard temptation that they who are God's deadly foes should, after a sort, possess the highest rooms in His house, and that we should be hidden under them like corn under chaff upon a barn floor. This is a hard and irksome plight. And surely we see many that give over the Gospel through infirmity.

When the poor simple souls hear these so brave titles of Catholic Church, of Apostolic see, of Vicar of Christ, of Successor of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, of Prelates, and of Bishops; I say when all this gay gear is flashed out before the silly souls, they are amazed at it and conclude by and by, then must we needs stick to it. For they are ravished at the sight of these visors that serve to scare little children. But they that have any firmness in them and judge according to that

which God shows them, are not at that point. And in good sooth, when the Papists say that they are the representing Church, they say truly; for indeed they make a godly representation [resemblance, or show]; that is to say, there is as it were a gay gazing stock; but as the Proverb says, "All is not gold that glistereth."

Therefore, they must be searched to the bottom, to see if there be truth in them or no. And so let us mark what is told us here by Saint Paul, that is to wit, that it was not once only that there was an Ishmael in God's Church to persecute Isaac: but that we see the like at this day: and that the children of God shall be borne down and trampled underfoot, by such as have no more but the bare title of Eldership, and under that shadow beguile the simple sort, cloaking all their filths and foulness under the pretense of gay colors.

But however the world go, let us prepare ourselves to battle (says Saint Paul) and let not our faith quail at the sight of the pride of the enemies of God's truth, yes, even of the household enemies of it, which are not as Turks and heathen men, but keep a garrison in the Church, and yet will needs be Prelates and more than great pillars of it. However the world go (I say), let us not be abashed for it, since we be fenced with the example of our father Isaac, to the intent we should hold out stoutly, forasmuch as we be regenerated by the pure seed which God allows, whereby we be made His lawful children, and heirs of His heavenly kingdom.

But here a man might think it strange that Saint Paul should say that Isaac was persecuted of his brother Ishmael. For Moses rehearses no more but that at the day when Isaac should be weaned, and at the feast that was made at it, Ishmael laughed him to scorn. It is not said that Ishmael laid any persecution upon Isaac, for aught that is recorded by Moses: only it is said that he being then of some age, and

thinking to have a much higher degree than Isaac, because he was already come to years of discretion, did laugh at him, and mock him. Now if there were nothing more than simple mocking and laughter, it seems that Saint Paul should not term it persecution.

We must mark that the persecutions of God's children are not done only by sword, fire, racking, imprisonment, or other torments of the body: but also in that they be wounded with the scornful reproaches which the unbelievers and enemies of God's truth do spew out against them. And if we do well practice the thing that is said in the Psalm, we shall not think the manner of speech strange which Saint Paul uses here. For where it is said, that the railings which are cast forth against God's majesty, ought to rebound back upon us: it is to show that we ought to be very tender-hearted or squeamish when we hear God's name set light, or His honor diminished in any manner of wise.

If any of us be touched in our good name or honesty, we will be angry and make a quarrel of it: we see that for one cross word, choleric fellows do by and by draw their swords, and all is under color that they must maintain their honor and honesty. If a man speak evil of our Parents or kinsfolk, we will be in such heat and fumish passions, as we cannot be appeased. Then if God be misused, or His majesty dishonored in men's mouths, ought we to suffer, and not to be moved to choler and anger? Even for that cause also it is said, that the zeal of God's house ought to eat us up, so as we must not only be well-minded and sorry for the defacing of the majesty of our God, and for the corrupting of the doctrine of salvation, and for the disordering of His Church: but these things must also bite us at the heart.

According hereto it is said here that Ishmael persecuted Isaac. If a man demand, what? had he neither torture, fire, nor sword to cut his throat? No, none of all these: but he scoffed at the promise that had been made concerning Isaac. For it was said expressly, Ishmael shall live: but yet is he not therefore heir of the promise, Isaac is he in whom they shall be blessed. You see then that Jesus Christ, and consequently all hope of salvation, was closed up in the person of Isaac. When Ishmael did so disdain and scorn the sovereign welfare and happiness, that mockery of his wounded all the children of adoption, and all the faithful, yes, even with a deadly stripe.

Now then we see what Saint Paul meant, and how we ought to put this doctrine in use, which is, that we must prepare ourselves to inward battles, knowing that not only the Turks and Paynims shall be adversaries of the Gospel, but also the hypocrites, who to the uttermost of their power, do deface the doctrine of grace that is offered them in our Lord Jesus Christ, to abolish all the dignity and reverence which we ought to give unto it in magnifying the mere bounteous goodness of God, and in acknowledging that all our whole welfare lies there. Let us be ready (I say) to abide such battles at the hands of our household enemies, which boast themselves to be God's children, which are advanced even above us, and which outface us with their eldership, as who should say, that under the color of that, we ought to be utterly borne down and overwhelmed.

But there is yet more: that is to wit, that we must be touched to the quick, and sorry at the heart to see God's doctrine so corrupted. True it is that naturally we shun the harms that come against us, as bodily persecutions and such others. But yet for all that, we must not be so wedded to this world, as not to prefer the heavenly heritage before all things that we esteem most worthy to be desired.

Therefore whenever God's name is blasphemed, and when men labor to abolish the doctrine of life: let us in those cases set such grief to our heart, as we cannot bear with it, or at leastwise as if we were persecuted in our bodies. For he that should cut our throats, yes and put us to all the torments that were possible, as we see the enemies of the Gospel do, whose rage against their poor brethren, cannot nowadays be stanched with racking, burning, cutting out of their tongues, and such other like torments: all this ought not to grieve us so much, as to see God's name torn in pieces, and scorned by the wicked. For the very same is such a cutting of our throats, as not only bereaves us of this frightful and transitory life, but also bears us quite out of the kingdom of heaven. For when God's doctrine is corrupted, then is food turned into poison, life into death, and light into darkness.

So then let this text of Saint Paul's warn and exhort us, not to be so given to the earth and to the world, but that we may always have our minds and understandings lifted up to the inestimable benefit that is offered us by the Gospel, and fight more earnestly for that quarrel, than for our own life. For truly a whole million of such lives as we have here beneath, cannot be comparable to the endless life that is promised us in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus you see wherein it behooves us to exercise ourselves, and we cannot exceed measure in being too angry, when we see wicked men blaspheme God after that sort, and labor by their wiles and policies to overthrow and to falsify the only doctrine whereby we live spiritually.

Furthermore, let us mark also, how Saint Paul adds in the end for a conclusion, that all they which nowadays boast themselves so highly to be the Church, and specially those that have the title of eldership, shall be driven out as bastard children. Therefore let us not be beguiled with all the pomp that are among those which fight against

God's pure truth, to maintain themselves in their tyranny by force, persecutions, bragging, and such other like things: but let us tarry the end, which is, that they shall be cut off, for they are none inheritors. Well may they dwell in the house, as it is said of Antichrist that he shall sit in the Temple of God: but yet must they needs be swept out of it, as filth and uncleanness.

And although this be not so before men, but that it is hidden from us for a time: yet let us wait till God show His truth more fully, and until our Lord Jesus Christ confound His enemies with the breath of His mouth, and by the power of His word. Thus you see how we ought to be settled in invincible constancy. And although we be now despised and scorned, yet let us not cease to hold out in the holy calling of our God, knowing that we shall not be disappointed, if we be grounded upon the doctrine of the Gospel, and rest wholly thereupon till God discovers the things that are now hidden, and that we be thoroughly gathered unto Him, and find that it was not in vain that we were trained up in His pure word, giving over all the fancies of men, and not seeking life elsewhere than in the seed whereby we were begotten again, and in the food whereby we are sustained and nourished to the end.

Now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our sins, praying Him to make us feel them in such wise, as it may lead us to true repentance, that we may mourn continually before His majesty, and be so abashed in ourselves, as yet notwithstanding we may not doubt but that He accepts us for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and that we shall always obtain sure forgiveness of our sins, if we seek it in true faith without swerving to the right hand or to the left, but only following the path which He has showed us, as indeed we can never go amiss when we have the day sun of righteousness shining upon us. That it may please Him to

grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people and nations of the earth.

The Thirty-First Sermon,

which is the first upon the fifth Chapter.

1 "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and put not yourselves again under the yoke of bondage.

2 Behold, I, Paul, do tell you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing at all.

3 And again I protest to every man that is circumcised, that he is bound to keep the whole law."

WE have seen heretofore, that to have a state of continuance in the Church, we must be grounded upon our Lord Jesus Christ. For many do boast themselves to be God's children, who notwithstanding are not begotten of the true seed, which makes the difference whereby God avows and acknowledges us for his children. Therefore, if we will be truly knit to our Lord Jesus Christ, we must hold fast the doctrine of the Gospel, that he as our head and mediator may join us to God his father. Therewithal, I have declared that the cause why Saint Paul speaks so of bond and free seed is that they who seek their righteousness in their own virtues do alienate themselves from our Lord Jesus Christ, and from his grace. For by that means, they bind themselves to an impossibility, that is to say, to satisfy God in

keeping his commandments. But there is such weakness in us, as none of us is able to perform the least point of the law: and therefore much less can we attain to the perfection that is showed us here. And for that cause Saint Paul concludes now, that we must stand fast in the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ has purchased for us.

It is certain that he treats here of the ceremonies of the law: but yet must we always resort to the wellhead and chief point. For if the matter concerned no further than the keeping of a holy day, or the forbearing of some kind of meat: it were not of so great weight, that such strife should be moved for it in the Church. But Saint Paul pored not upon a matter so slight and of so small importance. He had an eye to the doctrine: he considered that if men should be tied to do this thing or that thing of necessity: it were an excluding of them from the hope of salvation. For if I must needs perform a thing under pain of deadly sin: then if I fail, I am become a transgressor, and there is no shift for me because God is my judge, and I must be fain to come to account, and there is no means to redeem me. Now it is certain that all of us are subject to the keeping of the law: but yet notwithstanding, there is a remedy for it, which is to run unto our Lord Jesus Christ in all our needs, who was made subject to the law to purchase us freedom, and bore our curse to discharge us of it. Now if any necessity be laid upon us again, to say that the doing of this or that is sin: then cannot our Lord Jesus Christ stand us in any more stead as I said before: by reason whereof we must needs be plunged in our own cursedness, without any manner of relief. Therefore it is not without cause that Saint Paul exhorts the Galatians to hold their own, and not to suffer themselves to be brought into bondage. For by that means, he faith that they shall be bereft of inestimable benefit, even so far forth as they shall be fallen quite away from God's grace or favour, and utterly separated from our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom lies all our welfare and happiness.

Now, that we may the better conceive Saint Paul's meaning, and also reap the fruit that is offered us in this text: Let us mark, that by this word Liberty or freedom, it is meant that we may walk with full confidence before God, and that he will always be favourable, so that although we be guilty of many offences, yet we shall be quit of them for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake: and moreover that it is not in man's power to bridle us or to hold us in bondage: but that it ought to suffice us to yield ourselves obedient unto God, albeit not after a slavish and constrained fashion, but as children yield themselves subject to their father, knowing well that their father will not handle them roughly. Thus you see what is meant by the word liberty or freedom which Saint Paul uses. Nevertheless, to the end that this shortness be not darksome: I will declare it more at large.

So long as we be in doubt whether God do love us or hate us, there will always be trouble and unquietness in our consciences, and we shall be as it were locked up in prison. So then there will be no freedom in our minds, till we know and be thoroughly persuaded that God is at one with us, and that he receives us into his favour and grace, though we be not worthy of it. But it is impossible for us to have any certainty of it, except we have our quittance always before our eyes, which was made us in the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why so? For as I said before, we be indebted unto God many ways, yea infinite ways. For we be bound to keep the law, and we break it a hundred times a day, yea even ere ever we think of it. Again we offend even in gross faults. But however we deal, we cannot assure ourselves of God's love, unless we be discharged against him of the obligation of everlasting death wherein we stand bound. Now we attain that benefit when we be persuaded by the Gospel, that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed to wash away all our spots, and that his death is a sufficient sacrifice to appease God's wrath, and to wipe out the remembrance of all our offences and iniquities.

You see then that the way to set us free, is to know that God receives us to mercy for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and that our faults and sins shall not hinder us to find favour always in his sight, or to have familiar access unto him, as children have unto their fathers. Secondly, we must not be wavering to and fro, to make conscience of every thing that men devise of their own heads: but walk steadfastly according to God's word, knowing moreover that our consciences are free, and that whether men command or forbid anything, it is nothing to us, I mean as in respect of the spiritual regiment of our souls: For we talk not here of civil policy nor of the common life of men, but of our salvation.

So then, all things ought to be free unto us when they are not forbidden by God's own mouth. Yet it is not enough that we have God's word for our guide without mingling anything at all with it: but (as I have touched already) we must therewithal know that God accepts our affection when he sees us willing to obey him, and that although there be much faultiness and over many infirmities in us, and that we come halting unto him, and that all that ever we do were trifling toys if he listed to examine them with rigour: yet nevertheless, he takes all in good worth. And why? For he bears with us as a father with his children. That therefore is the freedom wherein we must stand, except we will be separated from our Lord Jesus Christ. For (as I have said already) if we believe not assuredly that God loves us, though we be unworthy of it, and that his loving of us is because our sins are buried by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ: what will become of us? What shall Jesus Christ boot us? Again if we be in doubt and unquietness, not knowing whether God accepts our service or not, and therewithal be bound to the keeping of this or that at men's appointment, the entangling of ourselves in so many debatings will never suffer us to have any rest.

Neither is it without cause that Saint Paul, having exhorted the faithful to continue in the freedom that was purchased for them so dearly, adds, that Jesus Christ shall not profit them at all unless they know the thing that he has purchased for them, and suffer not themselves to be in any wise bereft of it by men. Now we see here, that the freedom which Saint Paul speaks of, is not to give us leave to do what we ourselves think good, as though he laid the reins of the bridle upon our neck: and that will he also protest in place convenient. Then intends he none other thing, than that we might serve God quietly without grief of mind, without constraint, and without any continual tormenting of ourselves with diversity of debatings and doubtful scruples as we see the unbelievers do, namely such as have not their trust wholly settled upon our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, besides that which has been said already, we have to mark further, that the end of that freedom is, to be able to carry a cheerful and quiet mind before God. For without that, we shall never have the heart to obey him, but we shall always be in trouble, and not be able to call upon him, which is the chief service that he demands and allows of. We see then that this matter concerns the chief point of our welfare, if it be well understood.

When we speak nowadays of Christian liberty, the Papists say we go about to abolish all the ordinances and traditions of the Church, and that we pass not what comes of it, so every man may live as he listeth, to eat flesh on all days alike without let, and to despise all other such ordinances. But their saying so, is because they never knew, that it is no obeying of God, unless it be done with an unconstrained will. For let the Papists be thoroughly sifted all the pack of them, yea even the devoutest of them: and it is certain that they chafe upon the bit, when they tire and overlabour themselves

most to serve God. For all that ever they do is but unwillingly: and if they could pluck their heads out of the collar, they would full fain do it. Furthermore, when they have toiled after that fashion in their fond devotions, they bear themselves in hand that God ought to like well of it. And if a man tell them that they cannot do anything that God should accept, and furthermore that although their works were good, yet they deserve not aught before him: you shall see them spew out their poison (as they do) and fall to blaspheming of God unless you believe them that they are able to work wonders by their own merits.

Howsoever the case stand, they are never able to know and to taste what it is to obey God. For why? They understand not what it is to be quiet: namely that it is an unconstrained offering of their doings unto God with a free heart, and an assuring of themselves that he accepts the same, even because he handles them gently, and bears with them as with his children. The Papists know not this, and therefore it is not to be wondered at, though they think it strange that we should strive for that freedom, for they wot not what it meaneth. But yet does not Saint Paul speak it without cause: and by those words we see how precious that liberty is, and that it is not a thing to be despised. For Jesus Christ did not jest in his death and passion when he offered up himself unto God his father: but wrought a work that in excellency and worthiness surpasses the creation of heaven and earth.

Now if Saint Paul brings in this liberty for an excellent fruit purchased to us by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ: it must needs follow that it is a high and precious thing. And to the intent we may conceive what the nature and power of it is: we must learn to gather in ourselves unto God when we be spoken to of it. As for example: if we be commanded or enjoined of necessity to do such a thing or such a thing: very well, the doing thereof to the worldward

hinders not our freedom before God: for the things that concern common policy may be bidden or forbidden, because that otherwise they might turn to the hurt of the common weal, or else such things may be expedient, and then must one of us serve another's turn in common.

Therefore let us have a regard of the things that concern the policy, because it behooves us to be knit and united together, and to have such an onement among us, that every of us serve his neighbor's turn, and none of us be addicted to himself. But when the case concerns the spiritual liberty: then must every of us draw home into himself, to consider the nature and property thereof. Every of us (say I) must draw home himself as it were before God. For our account is to be made to the heavenly judge, and therefore it behooves us to enter into ourselves, to say thus: How may I present myself before God's judgment seat? If my life come to be tried by the law: woe worth me. For I am guilty after so many sorts, yea even without number, that if I should suffer a million of deaths, it were too little for the offenses that I have committed. Nevertheless God will be favorable to me, and take me to mercy for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and when I resort to him, I may come with my head bolt upright, as having my quits est and clear discharge, which was given me in the sacrifice that he offered up for us, because that therein he has made full satisfaction for me, and set me at full liberty. Mark this for one point, that I must serve God, and it is good reason that I should dedicate my life unto him. But at which end shall I begin? I cannot bring such perfection as is requisite, no nor the hundredth part of it. Yet for all that, God bears with me, and ceases not to take the things in good worth which are imperfect and weak, yea and sinful too. And why does he so? Because he admits me as one of his children for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. After this manner (say I)

must we come before God, if we will conceive and understand the fruit of this liberty or freedom that Saint Paul treats of.

Now whereas he adds, that we should not wrap ourselves again in the yoke of bondage: thereby he shows, that before we be come to the faith of the Gospel, and do know what benefit is brought us by the death and passion of the Son of God, we be all held in strait bonds like prisoners, and have not any freedom or liberty at all. And in very deed, were it not that Jesus Christ makes intercession, and is a mean between God his father and us: it is certain that our minds should be in continual torment and unquietness. For there is none of us all but he is convicted to be more than guilty, and therefore we should needs stand at a stay as drowned in despair, till we were succored by our Lord Jesus Christ and knew that God will be favorable to us, and thereupon could find peace and assurance to call upon him, as knowing that Jesus Christ will be there beforehand.

On the other side, if we know not that God has so received us into his favor, as he is contented with our willingness to obey him, and with our coming towards him, though it be with infirmity: we see yet another halter that serves to hang us withal. But yet so is it with all unbelievers. Saint Paul therefore does purposely warn us, that until such time as the Gospel has taught us that God loves us, and of his own free goodness takes us as his children, and moreover will not have us to be overtrodden by men's tyranny, and specially that he delivers us from the bond and rigor of the Law: we are all of us drowned in bondage, and that when Jesus Christ has once set us free, it behooves us to maintain well such a benefit.

Now let us come to the reason that he adds, "Verily (says he) I Paul, yea even I do tell you, if you be circumcised, Jesus Christ shall profit you nothing at all." It is a very sore saying that circumcision should

cut men off in such wise, as they should have no part in the salvation that is purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. But first of all we must mark, that when as Saint Paul speaks here of Circumcision, he looks not at the thing in itself, but unto the end of it, because the deceivers that had perverted the pureness of the Gospel among the Galatians, made them believe that they ought to be circumcised, to the end to keep the Law. Saint Paul stands upon that point, and says, that if we do so constrain and bind ourselves before God, or enter into such covenant with him: Jesus Christ shall profit us nothing at all. And this is well worth the noting.

For when we nowadays do say, that it is a hellish Tyranny for men to command the keeping of a thing under pain of deadly sin, or to forbid a thing because themselves like not of it: (as the commandment of keeping the Lent, or the shriving of men's sins once a year:) if we strive against such things, the Papists (as I said) cast forth their desperate rage, without considering of the cause that moves and constrains us to stand upon that point and ground. For why? They look no further than to the outward thing. But it behooves us to go further. For when the Papists command a thing under pain of deadly sin: it is a binding of us in such wise as we may not have God's favor but upon condition of doing our duty in that point. And he that shall have so done his duty, he I say shall have as it were bound God unto him, yea truly after the devilish opinion that reigns in popery, which is that we must earn grace by our own deserts, and also that we must pacify God's wrath and wipe out the remembrance of our sins and offenses by making amends.

Whereby it appears well, that if we can so discharge ourselves, then is Jesus Christ made unavailable to us, and he shall profit us nothing at all. For why? Jesus Christ cannot be our righteousness, except we seek the forgiveness of our sins in the sacrifice of his death, and

therewithal be well assured that God is our father, to the end we may call upon him with quiet consciences, because he has adopted us in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is true that the deceivers which had beguiled the Galatians, could well have found in their heart that Jesus Christ should have been acknowledged and called the Savior of the world. And they did so mingle the law with the Gospel, as yet notwithstanding Jesus Christ should have had his titles still. But they made a coparceny, that men on their side should deserve, and that by that means God should be appeased. As if they had said, that Jesus Christ supplied men's wants: howbeit after such a sort, as the wretched consciences were always out of quiet. The like dealing is at this day in the Papacy. And the Pope with all the rabble of his Clergy, differ nothing at all from the cosiners against whom Saint Paul encounters here, saving that those cosiners did put forth their own inventions and would have had them to prevail under the shadow and authority of Moses' Law. They then against whom Saint Paul disputes, said, we must keep still Circumcision, we must needs be circumcised still. And to what purpose? to the end we may discharge ourselves towards God, and be accepted at his hand for doing of our duty. Whereunto then shall Jesus Christ serve? He shall serve for to fill up a void room: for he is not utterly unprofitable: but when men have so discharged and cleared themselves, then if there be any want, Jesus Christ shall supply that. After that manner did those Cousiners speak, which were Saint Paul's adversary party.

And what says the Pope? He says that instead of the Ceremonial law of Moses, we must keep his ordinances, and the things that are decreed by Councils, or by this man or that man: and that the same binds us upon pain of deadly sin, so that if we offend God, we must make him amends for it by our own satisfactions, and not by the things that God has commanded. For the amends that we must make is not any of the things appointed by God's law: but an addition of an

overplus of our own device besides, and so are we discharged to Godward, and God must needs take it as worth. We see then that the Pope holds the same devilish foundation which those cosiners labored to bring in. Howbeit that this is yet worse, that whereas they enforced the law of Moses which ought to bear some sway: the Pope brings in his own inventions, and the forgeries of his own brain. But contrariwise Saint Paul says that Jesus Christ shall profit us nothing at all: when we will needs indent with God after that fashion. And why? For it is all one to pull Christ in pieces, and to give him but the one half of that which belongs fully and wholly unto him alone. He is given us to be our righteousness, and he is called our peace, and what betokens the word Righteousness? That God accepts us freely for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. Now then if we say that we win God's favor by our own deserts, and that Jesus Christ is but a supplier of wants: is it not a rending of him in pieces, and a dismembering of him as much as in us lies? But that cannot be done nor suffered. Moreover, our Lord Jesus Christ is given for our satisfaction or amends-making: for there is none other means to set God and us at one, but by knowing that we be quite and clean discharged, and freely quit of the bond of endless death. For if we think to ransom ourselves by our own deserts, and say that if there be any want in us, Christ shall make it good as a small matter: it is a flat mockery, and that is in no wise to be borne with. We see then that the cause why Saint Paul tells us that Jesus Christ shall profit us nothing, is that men should not beguile themselves in devising a new Jesus Christ, that should do but half his duty: for we must receive him in such wise, as he is given us of God his father. Now he is given us with condition that we should rid ourselves of all self-trust, and resort wholly unto him, and furthermore that it should suffice us to have him to be our head, and thereupon serve God his father, offering him all that we have, and assuring ourselves that although the same all be nothing, yet notwithstanding howsoever we fare, it fails not to be taken in good

part, because the adoption that is gone afore, and grounded in our Lord Jesus Christ, makes us and our works to be always accepted of God, us (I say) that are nothing worth, and our works that are but pelting trash, and yet notwithstanding God takes them in good worth, because he looks not what we be, or what we do, nor upon the quality or quantity of our works: but only looks at this, that we come unto him as members of his only son, resting wholly upon the sacrifice whereby he has redeemed us.

And therefore Saint Paul, for a larger confirmation, adds that he protests and witnesses that he who is circumcised is a debtor of the performance of the whole law. For (says he) Jesus Christ is unavailable when folk will need to justify themselves by that means. We have a declaration clear and easy enough of the things that Paul has said: and we must mark it well, because it is hard to persuade men that Jesus Christ is utterly unavailable when they go about to make him unavailable in any part. For although the Turks and other Heathen folk never knew what Jesus Christ is: yet have they had an opinion fully like the Papists, and a man shall find them to be both of one stamp. For there were never yet any heathen men in the world, which have not been of the opinion that they could not satisfy God: and yet they have gloried in their own works, believing that their salvation or welfare proceeded of them.

The Heathen men then did always bear themselves in hand, that they were able to purchase grace, and to deserve somewhat at God's hand. And thereupon they offered Sacrifices, knowing not that the same were a figure of Jesus Christ, but yet howsoever the world went, they thought to make some satisfaction or amends. Even so also did the Jews, when they had once marred and corrupted the true meaning of the Law. As much also do the Papists at this day, fully resolving that God accepts their doings, and that he is in a manner bound to them

so to do. Let them then bargain with him to allow of their doings, though they do amiss. For they are sure enough that they cannot make satisfaction to the full, nor in all points: but yet on the other side they say, that they can do more than God has commanded and that that shall serve for recompense and payment. Now forasmuch as it is so hard a matter to persuade men, that Jesus Christ will not serve their turn by halves: it stands us on hand to mark this Text so much the better, where Saint Paul says, that whosoever is circumcised is a debtor of the performance of the whole Law. When Saint Paul speaks after that sort of Circumcision, we must mark that he talks not according to God's first instituting of it: for to what purpose did God give it unto Abraham? He gave it him as a seal of the righteousness of faith, and so does he himself say in the fourth to the Romans. Therefore the Circumcising of Abraham, was not to make him a debtor of the performance of the whole Law: but contrariwise, to assure him of the forgiveness of his sins, and that God accepted him for one of his children, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. You see then that Circumcision did set our father Abraham at full liberty. Why then did he take it? Because God gave it him as a record and Sacrament of his free goodness. But contrariwise, those against whom Saint Paul reasons, took Circumcision as a meritorious work, and thought thereby to deserve at God's hand: they entered into a kind of bargaining with him, as if they should say, very well, I am beholding to you for such a thing, and I have done this or that in recompense of it. Therefore whenever we fall to indenting after that sort with God:

we become debtors of the whole Law. As if he should say, you must not bargain in this case: men must not bear themselves in hand that they can partly bind God, so as he should of right be in their debt, and bound of necessity to take them into his Paradise for doing this or that for him. No no (says Saint Paul) we must go more

substantially to work, we must not fall to bargaining with God, to say that he binds us to perform the whole Law, and that we bind him to give us everlasting life. If we come to that point, we become debtors of the whole Law. To be short, Saint Paul strives here against the devilish error that reigns in the Papadome. They term it a parting righteousness, that is to say, a righteousness that comes partly of God's grace, and partly of meritorious works. And why so? For it is well known that there was never yet man in this world, that performed God's Law, and that does experience show too much. Forasmuch then as the Papists (as shameless as they be) do know well enough (as I said) that it is too manifest a thing, that men are not able to keep all the Law: they say, we maintain not that we be fully righteous in all points, but we say that Jesus Christ is partly our righteousness and redeemer, and we ourselves do partly deserve well by our own works. Fie, fie, says Saint Paul, whosoever falls to indenting after that fashion, to say that he will earn aught at God's hand, or make him any recompense, so as he will play the hireling with him, and make him as it were his debtor, as if he would say, I have done this, and therefore you shall pay me that: he makes himself a debtor of the whole, and they are but fond imaginations wherewith men deceive themselves, thinking that God must be fain to take what they will give him, and to release them all the rest.

As for example, if a man be bound to pay a hundred Crowns, and must needs pay and deliver them, and yet notwithstanding imagines that his creditor ought to content himself if he bring him but four florins, and say unto him here sir, take this upon further reckoning, and afterward bring him half a dozen or half a score more, and (to be short) do with much ado make up the third or fourth part of the principal, and believes he is by that means quite and clean discharged: is it not (think you) too lewd an unthankfulness? For behold, his friend opened his purse to help him in his need, and

spared not himself to succor him: and yet for all that he will be discharged for bringing I wot not what, and for saying, here sir, take this in full payment, whereas all that he brings is not a quarter of the whole sum. Men see well that this were but a mockery: what then shall become of such as will needs enter into account with God to deserve at his hand? For God avows that whosoever performs not all the things that are contained in the law, shall be cursed, and Saint Paul has alleged the same text.

Whereunto then does God bind us in his law? To perform it to the full. And who is able to do that? There is no man that is able to fulfill any one point of it with such perfection, but that there shall always be somewhat amiss. And now what do these hypocrites which think themselves to have some worthiness in their own works? They bring this and that, and will needs be righteous in part. But God accepts no such dealing, for he will not unsay this definitive sentence which he has uttered with his own mouth, "Cursed be he that fulfills not all." Thus you see whereupon Saint Paul stands here, when he says that whosoever is circumcised is a debtor of the whole law. As if he had said, Let not men beguile themselves any more, for God walks not two ways at once, he has told us in his Law, that if we discharge not ourselves fully towards him, we shall be cursed. But there is not any man that discharges himself, therefore you see we are all accursed. Wherefore there is none other remedy but to resort [wholly] to our Lord Jesus Christ. For if we think to make Jesus Christ available in part, and therewithal to hold still somewhat of our own doing: it is a deceit: for we must needs confess that there is nothing but cursedness in us, till our Lord Jesus Christ have released us, and that we had need to seek our wants in him, in such wise, as we may acknowledge all our own works to be nothing worth, no nor any better than filth before God, till he receives us for his children, that we may walk in freedom of conscience, knowing that our sins are

forgiven us by virtue of the satisfaction that is purchased for us, so as God imputes not our sins and misdoings to us, because he looks upon us in the person of his only son.

Thus you see how Saint Paul proves that which he had said before: that is to wit, that Jesus Christ shall not profit any of all those who are circumcised. For why? If they seek the hope of their salvation in their own works, they must discharge themselves thoroughly and wholly towards God, and not pelt him out with gobbets and morsels as they say, but fulfill the whole Law without missing any one iota of it. And who is able to bring that to pass? For take me the holiest and perfectest man that ever could be found, and he cannot do the hundredth part of that which is commanded him. You see then that men are disappointed of the hope of salvation, if they come not void and altogether empty of all their own merits, and give themselves in such wise to our Lord Jesus Christ: as they acknowledge that they cannot be justified by him and by his grace, except they have first renounced all that ever may hold them back in the trust of any other thing. And furthermore, whereas Saint Paul speaks here of being circumcised: he means the error which the deceivers did set forth, in thinking to bind God to them, and to fulfill the whole Law. As if it should be said nowadays, that all such as keep the Pope's ordinances, do overthrow the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not that a man is damned for not eating of flesh upon Fridays, or in Lent time: but if he forbears the eating of flesh for superstition's sake, and thinks to merit by so doing: it is certain that he renounces our Lord Jesus Christ. For Christ is given us to be our Advocate, so as we be reconciled to God his father by his means, and he has so set us free, as he will not have us to be oppressed anymore with the traditions of men. But they which keep the Pope's traditions, bearing themselves in hand that it is deadly sin to taste flesh upon any such day, and that in forbearing it they deserve well at God's hand, and that they be

good satisfactions, yea and that Jesus Christ is well honored by doing of this or that: I say if they acknowledge that, they do also believe that the gate of Paradise should be shut against them if it were not opened to them by that confession, and they think it to be the means to make their atonement with God.

Now in making themselves to believe that, it is certain that they make themselves debtors as I said before, and forsake the grace that was purchased by our Lord Jesus Christ. Now we see how we must profit ourselves by this doctrine: namely first of all we must understand that God has told us by his Gospel, that we shall be welcome as oft as we come to him, conditionally notwithstanding that we be not overcombered by wavering too and fro like wind-shaken Reeds, but be able to call upon him freely, and with open mouth, as upon our father which has adopted us to be his children.

Secondly we must understand that the mean to be in his favor, is to have him to forgive us our sins. And why? Because Jesus Christ has made satisfaction for them, and utterly discharged us of them.

Thirdly, we must understand that this is not done to the intent to lay the bridle loose in our neck, that we might fall a-scutterloping, and play the wild beasts, so as God should not tame us: but rather to the intent we should repair unto him with a good courage, to obey him freely. For if we were not sure that he takes us for his children, and bears with us so gently, that the things which are nothing worth are taken in good worth at his hand, for the fatherly love which he bears us: surely we shall do nothing but gnash our teeth when we intend to serve God. But if we be persuaded that God casts such a favor towards us, that although we be full of infirmities, and cannot do anything that may deserve to be well liked at his hand, yet he accepts

us for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake: must it not needs give us courage as though our sail were set up, and we had the wind on our stern.

Therefore it is certain that our hearts must needs run swiftly as a ship that has the full wind upon her sails, when we know that we are in God's favor, and that he accepts our works, and intends not to bind us to any bondage, but is contented to take us for his children, and accepts our willingness to obey his. Now then, when we be once sure of that: we may serve our God with the better courage, and because we be grounded upon his grace, it will cheer us in such wise, as we shall offer him the sacrifice of praise and prayer, assuring ourselves that he will hear us, and thereupon yield him thanks for that so great and inestimable benefit, which he communicates unto us every day.

Now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to vouchsafe to make us so to feel them, as it may humble us truly, and make us yield ourselves wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ, and that when we be once come unto him, we may persist in the faith of his Gospel, without swerving aside in any wise, and that he may so sustain us in our infirmities, as we notwithstanding may be touched with true repentance, to sigh and groan before him, till he have taken us out of this mortal body, wherein we be held in prison under the bondage of sin. And so let us all say, Almighty God our heavenly father. &c.

The Thirty-Second Sermon,

which is the second upon the fifth Chapter.

4 Christ is become unprofitable to you, to all of you that are justified by the Law, and you be fallen from grace.

5 For we in spirit do wait by faith for the hope of Righteousness.

6 For neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision is anything worth in Jesus Christ, but faith that works by love.

We have seen heretofore that those who seek to establish a partnership between their own works and God's grace greatly deceive themselves. For when we come to settle accounts, God must judge us rigorously. Thus, if we endeavor to gain His favor and purchase our salvation through our own works, we must fulfill the Law completely without any shortcomings. However, let us consider whether any man has ever discharged himself so perfectly. Surely, we fall very far short of it. Therefore, we must come empty to God, that He may receive us in mercy and impute to us the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must renounce all our own merits and bring nothing of the Law with us except a simple and pure confession that we are damned and forlorn until God pities us. We must bury all our faults and transgressions and clothe ourselves again with the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Son.

For this reason, Saint Paul concludes here that those who seek to justify themselves by the law have fallen from grace, and Jesus Christ shall profit them nothing at all. It is not without reason that he speaks in this manner. The false teachers who had partly corrupted the doctrine of the Gospel in the Church of the Galatians intended to mix one with the other: that is, they acknowledged that Jesus Christ

is given to us to supply our needs, yet they also believed that we should still strive to be partly righteous by endeavoring to do well. They did not entirely renounce our Lord Jesus Christ, nor did they say that all the promises wherein God tells us that He will, of His goodness, forgive the faithful their sins are deceit and mockery. But their intent was that men should labor to justify themselves, that is, to purchase favor from God by their own works. Since we are far from perfection, they meant that Jesus Christ should provide it as a second remedy. Similarly, in Popery today, they do not openly utter this blasphemy that Jesus Christ serves us for no other purpose but to teach us the will of God His Father. They are willing to say that He has redeemed us and purchased the ground of deserving for us, for He has opened the gate of Paradise for us to enter and also that His death and passion daily profit us to reconcile us to God daily when we have offended Him. However, they insist that we should deserve or earn the kingdom of heaven in parts and redeem our sins by various means. Hence, all their satisfactions and the belief that if a man cannot perform all during his life, the rest shall be fulfilled in Purgatory.

Thus, you see how Jesus Christ has only half a place with them in receiving us unto God. In the meantime, they shoulder Him in such a way that free will, merits, works of supererogation or overplus as they term them, and such like things take at least half of our salvation. But Saint Paul tells us that God does not like such partnership. For either we must bring such a full performance of the Law that God may be contented with, or else yield ourselves guilty. If there be even the smallest fault, all the residue deserves nothing at all. For God promises salvation not to those who serve Him halfheartedly or to those who serve Him after a fashion but to those who keep His Law throughout. "He that does all the things shall live," and conversely, "he that performs not all shall be cursed."

However, no man does all the things that are required and commanded in the Law. For whatever good zeal or will we have to serve God, there is always much feebleness in us, and we go to Him limping and make many false steps. Many times we happen to step aside and go astray, and thus, we are all shut out from the promise of salvation concerning our own works, and the curse waits for us, which we cannot escape. For who is so foolish as to claim that he has performed the whole Law? Therefore, if all of us are found guilty of offenses against God, we are as good as utterly undone until our Lord Jesus Christ reaches out His hand.

Therefore, it follows that we must forget the righteousness of the law and lay it underfoot so that it may be utterly abolished. Then, we must go naked to our Lord Jesus Christ for remedy, confessing our own poverty without being ashamed to be defaced with all reproach before God so that we may be clothed again with His glory. Thus, you see in effect what we have to gather from this text where Saint Paul says that Jesus Christ is made unprofitable if men hope to justify themselves by the Law. It has been a common error in all ages that, at the first setting forth and first brunt, men will need to pay God all that is due to Him. In the end, they seek loopholes when they see no power or ability in themselves to do it. "Well," they say, "though we cannot do all, yet will we do somewhat." But in this case, it is not for us to follow our own imaginations, for God will judge us according to His own word. Therefore, let us not reckon without our host, as the proverb says, by making ourselves believe that God will accept what we think good. Instead, let us understand that Jesus Christ cannot benefit us at all unless we seek the fullness of our salvation in Him.

For it is not said in the Scripture that the Father has given us Him as a help to obtain our salvation, but that He is given to us to be our righteousness and life. It follows, then, that in ourselves, there is

nothing but wickedness and endless death until we have recovered the thing in Jesus Christ that we lost and were utterly bereft of in Adam. And these two things are joined together here: namely, that Jesus Christ profits us not at all, and that we have fallen from grace. Indeed, all the grace or favor that we must find at God's hand is communicated to us by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a very notable point. For everyone will readily grant that we must resort unto God because He is the wellspring of all welfare. However, in the meantime, the majority of people wander in their own imaginations and instead of coming unto God, they go from Him. This can be seen in the Papacy, where wretched hypocrites and the ignorant sort say that their wandering after their saints and puppets, and their martyring of themselves in their foolish devotions, is to gain God's favor. But in the meantime, Jesus Christ is let alone, and no one makes account of Him. Instead, they hasten to some stock or stone which they call their Lady, rather than to the Son of God. And where does this come from? It is because they do not know how God has given us His grace, nor after what manner He will have us to seek it, nor what way and order it behooves us to hold.

Therefore, when we are thoroughly resolved that God is our Father and also know perfectly that whatever we have need of, He will have us to draw it from our Lord Jesus Christ, who is like a spring that was under the earth and afterward is opened and flows abroad so that every man may take his fill of it, then do we know that God's grace cannot be drained dry. However, it does not come to us except through the means of our Lord Jesus Christ. In short, let us understand that all that belongs to our salvation is so placed in the person of God's only Son that He alone must suffice us, and we go straight unto Him and find all our contentment there.

As I said before, let us keep ourselves from this imagination of thinking to purchase anything by our deserts, for it separates us utterly from our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, Saint Paul adds here that we wait for the hope of righteousness by faith in the Spirit. This serves to confirm what he has said heretofore concerning the diversity that is between us and the fathers who lived under the Law. For how was Abraham received into favor but through faith? Yet, he differed from us in one thing. For inasmuch as Jesus Christ was not yet revealed, ceremonies were given to him, and many more were added at the publishing of the Law according to the need which the people had to be so led and guided.

In short, the faithful of all ages have ever sought their whole righteousness in the grace of God. Nevertheless, they were helped by the ceremonies and shadows because the Gospel was not yet so revealed unto them as it is unto us, nor was Jesus Christ (who is the very pledge of righteousness) made yet so manifest. But now let us come to that which Saint Paul says. He sets the Spirit nowadays among the Christians to exclude all figures and shadows. As if he should say that it ought to suffice us that the Son of God has appeared to us for our righteousness. Therefore, we must let go of the ceremonies because the shadows are needless nowadays. And not in this text alone does Saint Paul match the word "spirit" against the shadows of the Law. Truly, when God in old times ordained Circumcision, Sacrifices, and such other things, it was not to set folks at a gaze here below. For all things that are contained in the Law are, in very deed, spiritual. There was a pattern of them shown to Moses on the Mount.

So then, it is certain that the fathers had a spiritual belief as well as we, so they knew they were not washed and made clean by three or four drops of water, nor reconciled to God by the sacrificing of a calf

or of some other brute beast. Instead, our Lord Jesus Christ was their only washing and cleansing, and that He, by the sacrifice of His death, had discharged them quite, or at least would, because the thing was not yet done, but the fathers looked aloof at the thing which was not yet disclosed.

Moreover, it is noted without cause that the said word "Spirit" is set down here to show that the fathers could not embrace the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ but by the means which our Lord had ordained for the time. Therefore, when any man had done amiss, he came with a sacrifice to acknowledge himself worthy of death before God, not to seek his atonement in a calf, or in a sheep, or in any such other thing, for that was to be had in Jesus Christ. Yet, it was necessary that the figure of Him should go before. The same is to be said of the washings and of the residue of those things. In these days, we have the body, says Saint Paul, and therefore the shadows are not requisite anymore. If a man were present before my eyes, would I seek to know him by his shadow? That would be too dark a dealing. And if I might behold him in the face, what a doltishness would it be for me to turn away from him and to go seek some tracings to know him by? Even so, it is nowadays with such as turn back again to the old figures. They turn their backs upon Jesus Christ, not knowing that the rending asunder of the veil of the Temple at His death betokened that all the ancient figures were abolished, and that we at this day may enter into the heavenly Sanctuary, from which we were as good as strangers before.

In short, Saint Paul meant here to declare that his condemning of the Ceremonies of the Law is not to condemn the fathers that used them, nor God that was the author of them, but to show that we in these days have the truth and substance of them. Consequently, the things which were shadowed heretofore are no more so, and therefore we

must content ourselves with Jesus Christ, who has brought all perfection with Him. This much concerning the Ceremonies of the Law.

Now, whereas Saint Paul says that we wait for the hope of righteousness in spirit, he uses a kind of speech that may seem strange. For what is meant by waiting for the hope of righteousness? Let us mark that here Saint Paul intended to draw us away from all things that are to be seen in this world. Because we are too much inclined and subject to sticking fast here below when we have anything for our senses to rest upon, so we cannot lift up our minds aloft. And because men are too fleshly, they ever covet to have all things open before their eyes. But God purposes to try our obedience by referring us to His pure and single word. And we do then honor Him aright when we shut our eyes at all these outward things and hold ourselves satisfied with God's will, which He has shown to us, thinking ourselves to want nothing when we have that. For this word "wait" signifies that we perceive not by eyesight the thing that we wait for (according as it is said in the eighth to the Romans). And so much the more, because the word "Hope" is added to it. Therefore, it is as much as if Saint Paul had said: Verily, my friends, if a man would go about to know the righteousness of Christians (that is to wit that they are God's children, that they are heirs of the heavenly life, and that God accepts them as if they were Angels without spot or blemish), I say if a man would know this after a worldly manner, he should deceive himself.

For we see that the faithful are despised folk, men vouchsafe not to look upon them but askew, they bear a low sail to the worldward, and to be short, there is neither pomp nor outward show in the righteousness that we obtain by our Lord Jesus Christ. For we seek not estimation when we say that before God we cannot rest upon

anything but His mere mercy, and that all our deservings hang upon His mere grace, and that we must go out of ourselves to have Jesus Christ as the full perfection of all goodness and welfare. When we speak after that fashion, it is not to vaunt ourselves, but to confess ourselves to be full of all reproach, so all our worthiness is but dung and filth, and all our works uncleanness, and that we should be loathly in God's sight like wretched Lazar-men that are full of sores and botches if we were not so washed and cleansed by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ that God did like well of us by His means.

Now then, the righteousness which ought to reign among the faithful is not a thing full of pomp, nor a thing that is greatly gazed at and commended by the world. No, but it is utter wretchedness. And therefore, Saint Paul says here that when the world laughs at our simplicity because they see us hope after that fashion in our Lord Jesus Christ, and every of us humbly abases himself even to the dungeon of hell, to the end we may be lifted up by the grace of God to the kingdom of heaven, although the worldlings do mock and scorn us for it, yet must we hold on steadfastly, assuring ourselves that we shall not be disappointed.

For we know with whom we have left our gage in keeping, namely even with him that has promised to call us to salvation. Therefore, let us walk on in the said faith and embrace Jesus Christ, and when we have Him, let us set light by all the rest. Let us not do Him the dishonor and wrong to shrink away from Him into a corner and to make Him serve our turn but in part, but let us acknowledge that we are justified thoroughly and in all points by His means.

Now, upon this, a man might yet make a question and say: What, I pray you, were the Ceremonies commanded in the Law without cause why? Truly, Saint Paul has answered this matter sufficiently already.

However, inasmuch as men are slow in resolving matters that concern the holding fast of God's pure truth, therefore, he shows anew that there is a difference between us and those that lived before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also, he had a consideration to stop the mouths of many railers. For if a man preaches God's mere mercy in Jesus Christ, straightway some Mastiff curs or others fall to barking and cast forth store of slanders, as is to be seen yet still at this day. For if we condemn the devilish self-trust wherewith men beguile themselves, intending to obtain salvation by their own deserts, oh, how so say they? That were a condemning of all good works. And after that manner do the hypocrites nowadays slander the doctrine of the Gospel which we bear abroad, as though we meant to give leave and license to do evil, that there might be no more difference between vice and virtue.

Again, if we tell them that their Ceremonies are but pelting baggage, and that the more they take pride in them, the more abominable they are before God, oh, how should that be, say they? Behold, these fellows would abolish all religion, and what a thing were that? Shall God be no more served and honored? Such is the speech and talk that is used nowadays by those cur-dogs, which cannot abide that our Lord Jesus Christ should be the only foundation whereon to settle the trust of our salvation, nor also abide that we should be governed by the pure and all-only word of God. And for that cause, Saint Paul says here that in Jesus Christ there is neither Circumcision nor uncircumcision but faith that works through charity.

In saying that there is neither Circumcision nor uncircumcision in Jesus Christ, he means that God's commanding of the Ceremonies was but for a time, and that we must always have an eye whereto He tended, namely that He meant to maintain the people in hope

because Jesus Christ was not yet appeared to the world. For if they had not had washings, and Sacrifices and such other like things, they would have been dismayed, and the frailty of man is such that they would have quite quailed a hundred thousand times. And therefore, although they saw not yet fully how they should be saved, yet notwithstanding they had therein as it were lively pictures and looking glasses where they might behold the grace of God. Thus, you see how the shadows and figures served but for a time.

So then, Saint Paul declares that he will not in any point diminish the authority of God who had established that Law among the Jews, nor also say that all those things were fruitless and unavailing, but that we, now after our Lord Jesus Christ is manifested, are come to the fullness of time, and therefore that we must have no more veils to keep us from beholding Him face to face, according as He is set forth to us in the Gospel. For whenever the Gospel is preached unto us, it is all one as if we saw God's son crucified presently before us, or as if we saw His blood streaming down, for so much as we be besprinkled with it by the power of the Holy Ghost, as Saint Peter says in his first Epistle.

So then, seeing that our Lord Jesus Christ has by His death and passion opened us the way whereby we may come to God His father, it is not for us to busy ourselves anymore about the things that were appointed for the time of His absence. It is true that He dwells not nowadays in the world, but yet we have His Gospel, which is the accomplishment of all things that are needful to our salvation. Therefore, it is as good as if He were crucified among us, as Saint Paul has said already. Now that we have the understanding of these words in Jesus Christ, that is to wit, that the Gospel is preached, let us come to this addition of His, that there is neither Circumcision

nor uncircumcision, that is to say, that those things must henceforth cease, and men must rest only upon charity.

And wherefore does Saint Paul add the word charity? To show that Christen-folk will not be idle, and that they have enough to occupy themselves about, though they keep not the figures of the Law.

For albeit that it was God's meaning to lead the people unto Jesus Christ, in ordaining the sacrifices, circumcision, and all the residue, yet notwithstanding men being of themselves corrupt, marred all. And truly the Jews were of opinion that they bound God to them in offering up sacrifice, but it was clean contrary. For he that offered sacrifice did there pass a recognition to bind himself solemnly to cursedness, as if he should say, "I am worthy of death," in token whereof a poor beast is here killed and has his throat cut, and is it the beast that has deserved it? No, it is I. You see then that a man might there behold his own sinfulness, like as also it behooved him to seek his salvation elsewhere than in himself. Lo, I pray you how the figures ought to have brought folk to such a lowliness, that all men from the greatest to the least should have condemned themselves, and thereupon embracing the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, have rested themselves wholly upon that.

But nowadays in the Papacy, there is a like deceitfulness used, in so much that men do falsify all that God has ordained. As how? Look upon Baptism, look upon the Lord's Supper, which were instituted to the end that we should come and protest before God that we hold all things of him. What is there in Baptism? It is showed us there, that we must die in ourselves. And why so? Even because there is nothing but frowardness and cursedness in us, so as we are the children of wrath and utter strangers unto God. You see then in Baptism a man is utterly rid of all his trust in himself. In the Supper, we come to

seek our life in Jesus Christ, and so are we stark dead both the ways. Yet for all this, the Papists ween these things to be meritorious works. And that is the cause why they, by the hellish abomination of their mischievous Mass, have falsified yea and utterly defaced all things that our Lord Jesus Christ had appointed.

For such a work even as it is done by man, or the very working of the deed, that is to say, the very doing of it as it comes and proceeds of man, must (say they) of necessity be meritorious. But therein we see a manifest falsehood. Howbeit Saint Paul meant to go yet further, in rebuking the hypocrisy of such as are so much given to these outward things: the like whereof is still at this day in the papacy. It is true that these miserable wretches take great pains to serve God: they trot up and down without end or measure. But what do they? They martyr themselves in vain things, and such as God never required but utterly mislikes. And yet in the meantime, there is nothing but hypocrisy in all their doings. For what does the devoutest person among them but only make much babbling and mumbling? He must hear Matins in the night, and two or three Masses in a day. He must gad on pilgrimage, and fast the Lent and Saints' eves. He must keep all the ape's toys that have been appointed at the device of men. And what are all these things? Surely if men put their trust in them, they are devilish devices. But although there were none other harm in them saving that every man follows his own imaginations, yet are they but gewgaws and ape's toys before God. And why? For he loves obedience better than all sacrifices.

But if we will obey God, we must serve Him after a spiritual manner, and not with these childish playing toys. Now let us come to that which Saint Paul says, "Circumcision is nothing but faith that works by charity." Hereby he betokens that although Ceremonies be laid aside, we have enough to occupy ourselves with in doing the things

that God commands: that is to wit, that all the perfection and holiness of the faithful consisteth in charity. That is the fulfilling of the Law, that is the end and shoetanker whereunto God brings us. Therefore, if we have charity, let us not think that we are unoccupied. But nowadays, if a man rebukes the superstitions of Popery and scorns them, saying, "Go to, you have much baggage amongst you: when you come at Church you besprinkle yourselves with holy water, you kneel down before a puppet, you scud from altar to altar, you do this and that, and to be short, there is an endless hotchpotch of all manner of gewgaws among you: and poor souls as you be, think you that these things will go for payment?" No, for God will not allow any of them.

They reply unto it again and say, "Why not? Shall God be no more served? What shall we do for Him?" Verily it seems to them that unless they go to Mass, and be shriven, and pay some ransom, and do one thing or another, there is nothing at all done. And indeed we see how they leave the principal undone. For even they that are the devoutest of them will not stick at all, some to keep whores, some to blaspheme God, and some to rob and spoil other men, in so much that if they which pretend greatest holiness can find occasion to pill and poll their neighbors, they will bite them to the bones.

Their cruelty shall be so excessive that they shall be brute beasts rather than men. Thereunto they be full of subtlety and wiliness. It is nothing with them to forswear themselves, if they may beguile any man by it. For they nestle themselves in all kinds of lewdness, bearing themselves in hand that God must serve them for a cloak when they fall once to making of fair countenances, that it may be said they be devout or holy folk. You see then that this hypocrisy is as a den of thieves, as our Lord Jesus Christ himself terms it. And it is an ordinary matter for men to forget the chief principal when they

give themselves to Ceremonies, according also as our Lord Jesus upbraids them, saying: "For your own traditions' sakes you have abolished the law of God, my father." And for the same cause it is said in the fifth Psalm, "Thinkest thou that I will drink the blood of brute beasts? If I be hungry (saith God) thinkest thou that all is not mine? This is the thing that I would have thee to offer unto me, namely the sacrifice of praise."

Now we see Paul's meaning. He mocks the hypocrites which think that all is marred if there be not store of gauds and gewgaws when men should go unto God, and that they may not go to him as it were with banner displayed. According whereto we see how they prank up things with pomp, of lamps, perfumes, and tapers, gay disguised coats, puppets, and such other things. When they have this gear once, to their own seeming they be so well cloaked that God knows no more what they do, and that their vices are well sheltered under such shadow, and yet for all that, they do but spite him openly.

Now Saint Paul laughs that opinion to scorn, saying that although we have none of all those pomps, there is enough besides wherewith to God to keep us occupied, and that is charity. But to be short, Saint Paul meant to tell us here that God's service is spiritual. For when we love our neighbors, it is a token that we love God, I mean when we love them according to God's ordinance. For it is no love to love a man for our own profit's sake, but to love even our enemies, so as we be patient to bear the wrongs that are done us, so as we strain ourselves to do good to such as have need of our help, and so as none of us be given to himself nor to his own peculiar profit, but that we endeavor as members of one body to help each other as much as is possible. If we be once at that point, then does our life sufficiently answer for us, and witness that we love God. But we cannot love him before we know him. Therefore is charity an infallible sign and token

that we be willing to serve God, not in paying him with chaff instead of corn, but by loving our neighbor truly and unfeignedly.

And so let the Papists brag as much as they list of their gewgaws and gay shows wherewith they think to cousin God, as it were to make a mockingstock of him, yet shall the thing that is uttered here by Saint Paul's mouth stand always sure, that is to wit, that such things are naught worth before God. And why? For if Circumcision were abolished when the time and term of it was expired, what shall become of the things that have been foolishly and malapertly forged in the shops of men's own fancies, which took upon them that which belonged not to them, nor was by any means lawful for them to do? You see then what we have to bear in mind.

But before we go any further, we must resolve a doubt which the Papists cast here. For to their seeming, it makes wholly on their side when Saint Paul says that faith which works by charity is the thing that makes all the faithful perfect. And thereupon they conclude that only faith does not purchase us grace, but faith and charity matched together. Put the case it were so, whereunto would it serve them? For whereupon do they ground their merits but upon childish toys? as who should say they would appease God with a Rattle. But Saint Paul's meaning is far otherwise. For although he have hitherto showed the true way how to be in God's favor, yet notwithstanding he minds not to ground our righteousness or our hope of salvation upon charity.

What then? It is enough for him to show that God can find means enough to keep the faithful occupied, although they have no Ceremonies, wherewith the hypocrites beguile themselves, in making that their principal. To be short, we see that Saint Paul is so far off from favoring the Papists anything at all, that he fights directly

against them. Now under the color of that which is spoken here, they have imagined that faith is but a single knowledge that there is a God, and that His only Son Jesus Christ is come into the world for the redeeming and saving of mankind, notwithstanding that the same knowledge be without any affection more than if a man should tell us some story, and we should believe it and hold it for a certainty. After that manner do the Papists speak of faith, and say that when faith is all alone, it hath not yet her full shape before God, but when it is joined with a hearty good will and love of God, then is it fully fashioned say they.

But when the scripture speaks to us of faith, it means the knowledge that is given us by the Holy Ghost: not which flitters in our own brain, but which is sealed in our hearts, in such wise as God must needs have wrought wonderfully in us before we can have been enlightened and fashioned in faith, for there is nothing but darkness in our minds. The light must come from above. Again, we be utterly inclined to distrust, and therefore the Holy Ghost must be fain to set this seal upon us, that we be thoroughly saved by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, it is not enough to know generally that Christ is our Redeemer, but faith importeth that every one of us must acknowledge him to be his Redeemer. And is that possible to be unless our Lord Jesus do dwell in us and reign in us, and that we be inflamed with the love of him to give ourselves wholly unto him? The Papists therefore never wist what faith meaneth, notwithstanding that they chatter of it not altogether so well as Pyes in a Cage, which do yet understand some words here and there, but they show so shameful a beastliness as they may be gazing stocks of God's horrible vengeance, in that they have so forgotten the whole phrase of the holy Ghost, and have no more skill of the holy scripture than a

Paynim or a Turk that hath been always in heathenness, and never heard of God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lo in what taking the Papists are.

Now then let us mark well that Saint Paul hath not here imagined a shapeless or unfashioned faith as they do, nor meant to set down charity as the cause of our righteousness, but only intended to show that we have enough to serve God with, without snarling of ourselves in a sort of pelting trifles. However, that we may fare the better by this text, (for we must now come to an end, and the time will not suffer us to proceed any further) if the Papists nowadays do make their brags that they have a more apparent service of God than we, and a service that hath a gayer gloss, let us on our side be well advised that we despise every whit of it. For why? God will not be served after men's likings. Mark that for one point. Besides this, the things which the Papists call God's service are pelting trifles imagined and forged in their own brain, so that it is all rejected, notwithstanding that men do greatly delight in them and like well of them.

And therefore let us have an eye to serve God as he commandeth. Wherein will he have us to be occupied? Not in needless things, but he will have a true trial of us, which deceiveth not. And what shall that be? To walk uprightly and faithfully with our neighbors, every of us to help where need is according to his ability, that no man be given wholly to himself, that we be trusty, that we deal soundly and faithfully, that we live peaceably, and that if we see any man destitute of succor and to stand in need of our help, we in that case do as it were offer a sacrifice unto God, knowing that he calls us to it, to show what love we bear towards him. For if we love not our neighbors which are as it were visible grounds to work kindness upon, how shall we love God (says Saint John in his Epistle) whom we see not,

and which is absent from us and has no need of anything? Therefore if we will serve God well, let us learn to yield him such obedience as he likes of, that is to say, let us walk in such faithfulness and friendliness as none of us beguile, fleece, or overreach his neighbor.

And moreover that we not only abstain from all wrongful or wicked dealing, but also that all such as are called Christians do well bethink them of our Lord Jesus Christ's saying, which is, "Cursed be you that have your several devotions alone by yourselves, and occupy your heads about small trifles, making conscience of everything, and yet in the meanwhile leave the principal points of the law undone, that is to wit, faithfulness, justice, righteousness, and mercy." As if he should say, Is it not a strange thing that men should so mock with God, making a countenance to honor him, as though they took him but for a babe? God will have men to walk faithfully and uprightly, he will have every man to pity and to succor the needy, he will have no man to do his brother wrong, and behold, they on the contrary part will needs busy themselves about Moonsine in the water, and things of no value. They will be full of cruelty, craft, and maliciousness, and yet think to pacify God with things of nothing. Therefore let us learn to serve God with charity, that is to say, let us learn to give ourselves to the things that he calls us to, and to hold ourselves as it were at a stay to the rule which he gives us by his word.

Furthermore, when we walk uprightly after that fashion, we must not for men's sakes forget God. For (as I said before) that is the thing wherein he tries our charity, and by that means we show the reverence and love that we bear towards him. And therefore we cease not to call upon God when we love our neighbors, neither intend we to displease God under color of doing them service, but he is always our mark on whom we have our eyes fastened. Nevertheless, to conclude, like as we endeavor to live as God commands by his word,

and pass not for the gaudies, gewgaws, and Ceremonies of the hypocrites, but walk rightly in pureness of life, and in all faithfulness and upright dealing (as I said erst), knowing nevertheless that when we have done all, it serves not to justify us or to purchase us favor in his sight, and that although we be sure that he takes in good worth the willingness which we have to honor him, yet his so doing is but because he accepts us in our Lord Jesus Christ (as I have declared heretofore) and because we repose the trust of our salvation in him.

Even so also shall we walk in charity and labor to discharge our duty, knowing that by reason of our feebleness we be not able to come near that which God points us to, but yet that we be in the way thereward, and that he must be fain to take us to mercy, whereupon we doubt not but that all our works do like him well when they be so dedicated to him by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is the true priest that offers up our oblations and makes them acceptable to God, and he must be fain to step in to make our works pleasant to God his father, specially seeing that even our prayers and the very praises which we yield unto him should be but filthiness if they were not purified by our Lord Jesus Christ, according also as the Apostle says, that it is he by whom we offer up unto God the calves of our lips, that is to say, the sacrifices of praise whereby he is glorified.

But now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us perceive them more and more, and that we may be so touched with them, as it may bring us to true repentance, and that we may seek all our wants in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that there may be such humility in us, that being utterly brought down, and having put away all false presumptuousness whereby we may be deceived, we may not tend to any other end than to be received through the mere mercy of our God, so as we may come to the everlasting inheritance, and in the

meantime endeavor to walk in such wise in his commandments, as it may please him to bear with our frailty, till he have quite and clean rid us of it. And so let us all say, "Almighty God, heavenly father..."

The Thirty-Third Sermon,

which is the third upon the fifth Chapter.

> 7 Ye ran well, who hath letted you that ye should not obey the truth?
>
> 8 That counsel came not of him that called you.
>
> 9 A little leaven sourth a whole lump of dough.
>
> 10 I have hope of you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded. But he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment whatsoever he be.

We know that God has set down such a rule for us to live by, that if we give ear to his word, we shall not be subject to walking at rovers, but sure to hold the right way. And that is a thing wherein the faithful differ from the faithless. For all such as submit themselves to God's word, are not in any doubt or disputation with themselves, whether their doings are allowable or not: for who has power to judge of that matter but only God? But he has given his sentence already. So then forasmuch as man's life is likened to a race: let us learn to follow whithersoever God calls us, and then shall we not

stray as wretched wanderers that do greatly overtravel and tire themselves without any profit.

And for that cause also does Saint Paul in this text set down a double race, the one good which has a right direction, and the other wandering and uncertain. Now it is not enough for men to take great pains: but they must also aim at a certain end. Moreover we see herewithal a true difference between the race that is to be counted good, and the race that does but over-labor men in vain. For Saint Paul lays them forth certainly and infallibly, saying that all such as obey the truth do run well. Lo here a saying of great weight. For thereupon we may gather, that when men be given to their own fancies, or walk only by guess, or receive all that is told them without discretion or skill: they may run swiftly enough, but they shall come never the nearer unto God. When they have spent all their life in traveling, they shall find themselves further off than they were at the first. And therefore let us learn to begin at this point, that is to wit, to give ear unto God who does us the grace and honor to teach us, assuring ourselves that there is none other truth but that which proceeds of him, and that when men follow the devises of their own brain, it shall be but untruth and leasing.

You see then that the way for us to fare the better by this saying of Saint Paul's, is first of all to consider, that all the devotions which men do frame of their own heads, are but mere illusions of Satan, and that all such as do what they like best themselves, may run fast enough, howbeit they shall be never the further forward in the right way, but rather the further back. Then is nothing to be taken and allowed for a good course or race, but only the obedience which we yield unto God's truth. Were this thoroughly well known to the world nowadays, there would not be so much trouble and contention as is seen. For what is the cause that we draw not all by one line, and that

every of us reaches not out his hand to his neighbor? It is for that most men cannot be persuaded to obey God. Therefore the true course of the faithful is well showed to us by the Prophet Isaiah when he says, that every man shall take his fellow by the hand, and say, "Go we, let us go up to the Lord's hill, and he will teach us his ways." Now were we fully resolved of this point, so as we were altogether willing and desirous to submit ourselves to God: it is certain that we should all of us run together, and the foremost should help forward the hindermost, and the weaker sort should not envy such as were their guides, yea and that would give them courage to go on.

But although we see the world full of stubbornness, and every man given to his own liking, yet must we profit ourselves by this doctrine: that is to wit, by imprisoning our senses, that we take not a licentious liberty to do what we list, but that we obey the truth, assuring ourselves that the foundation whereupon it behooves us to build, is the said faithful obedience which we yield unto God's word. And whereas Saint Paul uses this word "Truth," it is specially to beat down all foolish presumptuousness and overweening, because men bear themselves in hand that they be wise enough to order their own life. And out of this overboldness sprang also the Seagull of all superstitions. For if men knew themselves to be such as they are indeed, that is to wit, to be poor, blind, and ignorant: it is certain that they would with all humbleness hearken unto God, and then should not there be so many partakings and sects as there be. But what? As I said afore, men will needs be overwise. Now Saint Paul, to pull down all loftiness, and to rid us of all pride and presumption, says that there is no truth to be found but in the doctrine that comes from God, and that however sure we ween ourselves to be, there is nothing but mere folly in us, except God govern us, and God's word reign wholly over us.

Further let us understand, that to yield ourselves teachable is a far greater virtue without all comparison, than to enter into disputation, and to be inquisitive of things that belong not to us, nor are lawful for us. It is true that faith is not a dotage or sottishness to receive and believe without gainsaying, whatsoever shall be told us: but yet when God speaks, it behooves us to yield him so much honor, as to keep our mouths shut, and to open our ears to hearken advisedly to that which he tells us, and to frame ourselves simply to the same.

You see then that the good race wherein we cannot go amiss, nor be carried aside one way nor other, is to follow the way that God shows us by his word. Otherwise (as I said) we shall but rove, according also as Saint Paul uses the self-same similitude, in taunting all the things that the ignorant and unbelievers do to serve God withal. For although they take never so much pain, yet they do but lose their labor.

But by the way let us mark also how he blames the Galatians for turning aside in the midst of their race, saying that their fault is so much the less to be excused, in that they had begun well, and not held out likewise to the end. True it is that even the ignorantest in the world shall not fail to be condemned if they follow not God's word: but howsoever they fare, we offend much more grossly, when God has once been so gracious unto us as to call us unto him, and to show us his will. Then if we turn head, and forsake our holy calling from heaven after we have been taught in God's school, and entered into the way: surely our fault is double, and we deserve much sorer punishment. This is it that Saint Paul meant in this text by saying, "How now? You ran well." Surely this forwardness of faith is a great virtue, namely when we be ready to answer God as soon as he speaks the word to us: but yet it is nothing worth without holding out. Then if we be so fickle and inconstant, that when we have gone forward a

step or twain, we be ready to run back again, or else to start out on the one side or on the other: such unthankfulness is much more shameful, than if we had never hearkened to God at all: for we cannot so shield ourselves by ignorance, as they do which are bred and brought up in error and misknowledge, who will say, if we knew which is the truth, we would not do so as we should need to be pulled by the ear: but we be in doubt, and we wot not on which side to turn us.

Then if they which have begun to follow God, yea and have had some certain and infallible instruction by his word, do afterward start aside, or go back again: do they not show that they do it not of ignorance, but of willfulness and stubbornness, as though they meant of set purpose to spite God? Now it behooves us to mark well this thing, especially for so much as God is so gracious unto us, as to show us which is the way of salvation, which thing he does not to the rest of the world. For we see many blind wretches, that run and trot up and down, and wot not what they do: but yet they show some desire of serving God. If a man asks them whether they think they do well, or no, they answer, yea: howbeit it is but a weening, they are not sure of it. But we on our side have the warrant of the holy Ghost, which ought to be sealed in our hearts, that the doctrine which is preached unto us is not devised by men, but that God is the very author of it. The holy Scripture is sufficiently proved: we know, without adding of any thing, that God is our guide, so that nowadays there is not so very a dullard or idiot, but he is justly to be condemned, if he receive not the doctrine that is preached and set forth, and may upon his own knowledge judge that he does manifestly make willful war against God.

Seeing that our Lord has done us the prerogative to call us to him, and does still daily allure us and encourage us to come forward, till

we be come to our race's end: if we be weary to hear him, and every of us would fain take his own scope, to follow whatever his own lust liketh: what excuse or shift can we hope to have, that we should not be condemned with the Galatians, for falling to our own byass after we have run well, and been well forward on our way? Yea and we must also mark this saying which Saint Paul interlaceth, "Who hath letted you," says he? He might have said simply as he said in the beginning of the Epistle, that they were quite gone away, yea and utterly revolted as Apostates or backsliders. But he uses the word "Let," to show that it is not enough for us not to turn quite and clean away from God, but that if we do but stop or linger that we go not right forth on still, nor continue always steadfastly in coming nearer and nearer unto God: it is already a very dangerous matter. So then let us beware of Satan's wiles, and not only be afraid of utter revolting from the obedience of our God, but also bear well in mind, that when the Devil shall once have cooled us, and made us to slack our pace, so as we fall to loitering in our going: he shall have gained over much at our hands.

Thus you see in effect what we have to gather upon this text. Now to condemn the unthankfulness of the Galatians the better, he adds, that that counsel came not of him that called them. In the first chapter he had said, "I marvel that you be so soon carried away from Jesus Christ which called you to the grace of his Gospel." For it is good reason that God should be heard when he openeth his holy mouth to teach us. What are we? Wretched worms of the earth, and rottenness: and yet notwithstanding our Lord makes his voice to ring from heaven, to assure us that if he enlighten and guide us, we cannot do amiss, and therefore that we must depend wholly upon him, and rest upon his truth.

But if we give ear to this and that, and when God speaketh we be soaring in the air, and hearken to one that whistleth, and to another that singeth: Is it not too shameful an unthankfulness? If a Schoolmaster sees his scholars prattling together while he speaks to them, or building of Castles in Spain, so as they hear not what he says: the rod must be fain to walk among them, and good right it should so. Verily a man cannot abide that his mate or companion should muse upon other matters when he is talking with him, but he will take it in scorn and derision. But behold, God calleth us, and yet if there come any deceiver to whisper us in the ear, we hearken to him and follow his counsel: which is a token that there was never any knowledge in us to discern the majesty of our God, and to yield him the reverence that he deserveth.

We know that the chief honor that he requires of us, is to have our wits and minds bent to understand what he commandeth and appointeth. For that cause therefore Saint Paul says, that the said counsel came not of God, who had called the Galatians. Now it is certain that he had called them long before that time: Nevertheless he thinks it not enough to have told us once for all how we should walk: but also he holds on still, according also as we have need to have the remembrance of that doctrine to be renewed daily.

Then seeing it is so that God is always at hand with us, yea (as the Prophet Isaiah says, both early and late, that is to say, seeing he has a continual care to bring us to himself, and to draw us nearer and nearer: it is certain that our fault is so much the heinouser if we have one of our ears in the field, and the other in the town, as the Proverb says, and that we be not wholly given to him and to his word. To be short, we see here that the true perfection of God's children, is to offer up themselves wholly unto him, and to suffer themselves to be governed after a peaceable manner with all teachableness, so as none

of them say, this is mine opinion, this is my fancy, this have I learned of men: but always prefer the obedience of faith before all things. For there is none other lamp to guide us aright, than God's word. Mark that for one point.

Now after that Saint Paul has spoken so: he adds, that a little Leaven marreth a whole lump of Dough. This serves to confirm the matter which I touched not long since: which is, that it is not enough for us, not to make any full revolting from God, and to forsake him utterly, and to renounce all his word: but that we must also continue pure and sound, and be as it were untrussed to put ourselves more and more forward, and although Satan devise and practise to cast blocks and bars in our ways to stop us, yet must we not cease to go on forth still. And this is to be marked the better, because the devil shows not his horns at the first (as they say) to withdraw us away from God, but transformeth himself into an Angel of light, and creepeth upon us by bypaths and mines under the ground. And by that means are we beguiled. For to our seeming, this or that is no great matter, by means whereof we overleap it lightly, and strike sail as they say. But we be utterly amazed when the Devil holden us masked in his nets.

To be short, Saint Paul meant to say here, that when men have learned the Gospel, it is not enough for them to profess the receiving of the doctrine that is contained there: but they must also have a pure, sound, and substantial faith, and not swerve aside to the right hand nor to the left, nor be corrupted with any error, nor admit any mingling, but hold fast the pure truth which God shows us. This is the sum of the matter which we have to gather upon this text.

But if ever this warning were necessary, it is necessary at this day. For Satan strains himself to the uttermost, to entangle, yea and to embrace God's word, to the end that men might no more discern

between white and black, but that all Religions whatsoever men list to have, might be taken for good. And such as use that cunning do serve the devil, and have no more fear of God nor Religion, than dogs have. Nowadays, those who are the best upholders of the Pope, perceiving well that their abuses have been so gross and out of all square, as it is impossible to maintain them, say, very well, yet must you not seek such a reformation, as to break off the Eel by the waist as they say: men must be contented with some good mean. And all this is but to cover their filthiness, as if a man that would pluck up a venomous weed, should but nip off some leaves of it, and say, Lo, now it is as good as cut up. Yea but the root is still behind together with the residue of it, which is able to do harm enough, and that is all one as if it had not been touched at all. Nevertheless, the world nowadays is full of such vermin and corruption: for we see that these sticklers and neutrals which row between two streams, would fain disguise our Lord Jesus Christ after such a sort, as he should be Jack out of office, and be no more known, and that the doctrine of the Gospel might be mingled like a hotchpotch. And so much the more does it stand us in hand to mark well the thing that is told us here by the holy Ghost, namely that a little Leaven soureth a whole batch of Dough. Sometimes this similitude is applied to men: for one scabbed sheep is enough to infect a whole flock, as they say. But Saint Paul speaks now of doctrine, as if he should say, that we must hold our own, and not suffer anything to be added to God's pure word, according as we have seen in the second to the Corinthians, how he said that such as give ear to Satan's illusions, are like a woman that hearkeneth to a bawd, whose coming is to beguile and abuse her.

Now as soon as we be so corrupted in our faith: by and by we be alienated from our Lord Jesus Christ, and we break the promise of marriage which is made betwixt him and us, as soon as we swerve aside from the simplicity of the Gospel. And like as in that place he

useth the word simplicity of set purpose: so in this place he says, that if we mingle never so little leaven with the dough, by and by it is all made sour. What must we do then? Whereas it pleased God to show the Jews by his law the true mean to walk in such wise as they should not be harried here and there: in the Gospel he has taught us yet with much greater perfection, because that there he has made an end of all prophecies. Then seeing it is so: let us now frame ourselves thereafter. And although Satan whisper us on either side, let us not be as reeds that are shaken with every wind, but let us be so rooted in our Lord Jesus Christ, as he may make us to endure all winds and weathers by the power of faith, and all assaults that can be put unto us.

To be short, if we will be taken for Disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ: let us not hearken to any other master or teacher than him: for we cannot do him greater wrong than to add anything to that which he brings us. For it is said that it is he whom the father has set over us with full preeminence, and which is the good shepherd, and that they which are of his flock, will hear his voice, and eschew the voice of strangers. However the world goes, we must stand fast at that stay, and without resistance follow whithersoever God calleth us, and suffer ourselves to be so turned and returned by, as we may desire nothing but to submit ourselves to his word as I have declared before. And therefore although that now and then men find fair cloaks to varnish the minglings withal which they put forth: yet let us hold us to that which is said here, namely that a little Leaven is enough to mar a whole batch of dough: according as we shall see many, who to make us swerve aside, will allege, what? It is no renouncing of Jesus Christ, so we hold the grounds of the Gospel, that we be justified by the free goodness of God, and that we can call upon him in the name of him that hath promised to be our mediator. When we have done amiss we flee to the only and everlasting

sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ; and if there be any small spots or worms beside, they must be borne with and winked at. And especially such as would win by their pride, will say, yea marry Sir, and what else seek we but concord? For we be contented that every man should walk in the doctrine of the Gospel: but yet is not that a matter of so great importance, that it should be so greatly stood upon.

Therefore when the Devil goes about to beguile us with such baits, let us always set this buckler against him, that a little Leaven sours a whole lump of Dough. And in very deed even experience (which is termed the mistress of fools) has well showed in our time how true this Saint Paul's saying is. For we see nowadays that where the Gospel has been preached purely, there are so many diverse opinions as it is horrible to think, so as it seems daily that all should go to ruin, and God's truth is as it were torn in pieces. And whereof comes this, but of men's laziness in that they would maintain themselves in rest, and have their commodities and ease at will, to take their pleasure everywhere, and so have consented to such as came to disguise the pureness of the Gospel? God, therefore, has yielded them their deserved hire. For as much then as we see such examples, let us be so much the warier, and let us so walk in the pureness of the Gospel, as we may refuse all mingling, and utterly abhor it. Now hereupon Saint Paul adds further, that he trusts of the Galatians, that they will not be otherwise minded.

We have seen how the rebukes that he did set down hitherto heretofore, were rough and sharp. Now when men exceed measure, it is always dangerous for discouraging of men, and for casting them into a melancholy. For this cause Saint Paul moderates himself, and seeks still to be at one again with the Galatians. And in good sooth that is the order which all men ought to keep, that are desirous to

build up God's Church. It is true that men's vices ought not to be spared, and especially if there appear any hindrance of the pure doctrine, or to the overthrowing of faith: then must we have a fiery zeal to fight manfully, and to maintain the quarrel of our God. Yet notwithstanding we must labor to the uttermost of our power to bring those back that are gone astray, and to keep still those that are yet in good way, though they be weak and go not forward with such strength and courage as were requisite and to be wished.

Ye see then what the duty of those is which have the charge to bear abroad God's word committed unto them: that is to wit, that in reproving such as were gone astray, their using of severity and rigour should be such, as yet nevertheless they should show some good hope, to the intent that their hearers be not utterly overgrieved, and thereupon fall into wilfulness, and shake off all good doctrine. But every of us must apply this to his own use. For what causes us now and then to gnash our teeth when God rebukes us, and to be forepossessed with such stubbornness that we rebel against him? It is because we be past hope, and thereupon play double or quit as they say. Therefore our Lord labors to bring us back when he sees us so forlorn, or rather in the way of perdition, and he would still fain win us to himself again, howbeit that in the meanwhile we know not the end and intent that he aims at. By reason whereof we shut the gate against him, so as he cannot by any means compass us.

So much the more then ought we to mind well the thing that is showed us here by Saint Paul which is that if our sores be rubbed, although it grieve us and sting us to be sharply rebuked: yet we must not cease to abide it patiently, because God means not to throw us headlong into the bottomless pit, but rather calls us home to himself. And now according hereto, let us mark that there is none other remedy for all our vices, than to yield ourselves to that which God

tells us. For Saint Paul presupposes that which was true: namely that he had preached the doctrine of the Gospel purely, and that he had not intruded himself to put forth his own dreams and dotages, but had purely discharged his duty and the commission that was given unto him. He says now that the Galatians will think all that to be so. And so he shows us generally, that if we have been overseen and the Devil have troubled our minds, and the deceivers also have thrust us out of the way: there is none other help but to hold our peace and to answer Amen unto our God, and to suffer ourselves to be guided by his word, ceasing not to yield him true obedience though he come not down from heaven in visible shape, nor send any of his Angels that bear the badges of his Majesty, but speak to us by frail men, that are not of any great estimation. Lo here in effect what we have to bear in mind.

Now upon this, Saint Paul turns aside the sorest matters unto the Cousiners that had sown their darnel in the Church of the Galatians. "He that hath disquieted you," says he, "shall bear his judgment, whatsoever he be." Hereby he declares that if there be any whom Satan has so sorely poisoned, that they willfully provoke God's wrath upon their heads: we must not be shaken down nor moved therewith. This warning is very necessary. For though we be hard and slow to believe the things that God tells us: yet notwithstanding on the contrary part, when we spy any error, we be ready to run after it, and so you see a froward inclination, which is common nearly everywhere, and a vice more than ordinary. Furthermore, to our seeming we be well at ease, if we can get any covert, to suffer Satan to beguile us though he seeks nothing but our destruction. Therefore, it behooves us so much the more to mark well how it is said here, that such as trouble the Church shall bear their own judgment. For thereby Saint Paul does us to understand, that there are many despisers of God, which make no conscience to pervert all things: so

they may win themselves estimation with the world, and purchase themselves credit, all is one with them, for they pass for nothing but to exalt themselves. Such manner of men do trouble the church a thousand ways. There are others who through vain glory and to seem skillful and sharp-witted, forge new doctrines. That is one other kind of Cousiners. And there are others some so malicious and spiteful, as they cannot brook any peace and concord, according as it is said that the hand of Ismael should be against all men, and all men's hands against him. Then there are a sort that seek nothing but dissension and variance. Seeing then that we perceive that the Devils have so many bolsterers to turn us from the right way: had not every of us need to look well to himself, lest he be shaken down: and to continue always steadfast in the thing which we know to be of our God, whatever this man or that man do babble or prate?

Ye see then that the thing which Saint Paul meant, is that we should not one of us look at another, like sheep which leap one after another into a river or a pit when one is leapt in afore them, or like Cranes and other birds that fly all on a row one after another, no we may not do so: but we must always be constant without swerving aside from the word of God. Mark that for one point. But above all things Saint Paul tells us, that we must not be dazzled at men's gay shows, when they pervert God's pure truth under color of their own skill: but that when we see them to have no regard of anything, nor religion, no fear of God, no awe, yea and that sometimes they be worse than past shame, so that if they once come so far forward as to get the Law in their own hands, they pass for no man, but do after a sort spit even in God's face: I say when we see them become such Monsters, we must wait that God should execute his justice upon them, and show how much store he sets by the souls which he has bought so dearly. And that is the cause why he adds purposely "whosoever he be." For here he intended to deface all the gay titles whereof men vaunt

themselves, in setting up their bristles against God. Like as at this day, whereas the Pope turns God's truth upside down, and through Devilish pride mingles and mangles all things: yet notwithstanding he ceases not to call himself the Servant of God's Servants, the Successor of Jesus Christ, and the Vicar of Saint Peter. The Bishops also suppose themselves to have a very lawful title to suppress all knowledge of the truth, in naming themselves Prelates. But Saint Paul tells us here, that when men are so disguised, they are but Idols for all that, and God is unchangeable and alters neither his nature nor his mind. Then since it is so: although men were exalted to the third heaven, yet ought we to take them for stark Devils, if they go about to mingle aught at all of their own devising, with the pure simplicity of God's word.

To be short, we see here all worthlessness of man beaten down when the obedience of faith comes in presence. True it is that in civil cases there has always been superiority: but yet must God notwithstanding govern still by his word, and his service must be ruled thereby, that our faith may be wholly conformable thereunto: and though all the world should set itself against it, and heap up never so huge and high mountains of most excellent titles even up to the clouds, all must be held but as smoke, yea and as filth and dung.

Thus you see in effect what Saint Paul meant to say. Yet he does it not to excuse the Galatians of their unadvised overshooting of themselves, but to give them courage to return unto God. There are many to be seen nowadays which think themselves to be escaped out of God's hands, and to be quite discharged, when they can say that their Prelates and Shepherds have taught them so. But Saint Paul admits no such excuse, but says that the way for them to escape the damnation that is prepared for the deceivers, is to return to God's pure truth, and not to refuse to be brought back again, though they

have swerved from it for a time. And herewithal also for a conclusion, he does us to understand how dear our salvation is to God, and how great store he sets by it. For whereof comes that which Saint Paul says here, namely that all such as trouble the Church shall give a reckoning of it, and be overwhelmed at God's hand: but of that we are his heritage, and he takes all his pleasure in us, as in them whom he has chosen and adopted, and for that we be as it were his accomplishment, as Saint Paul terms us? Seeing it is so: let us learn to trust in God, seeing he has so fatherly care of our salvation. And so let us learn to put from us all false doctrine constantly and with such stoutness as we ought to do. For we see that God is chafed and moved to anger, telling us that he will never pardon those that have so troubled his. Forasmuch then as we see that God pours out his indignation upon them that have troubled his Church: let us have a zeal answerable thereto, and let us abhor all false doctrines. And when we see men desirous of nothing but to sow some troubles: let us take them as our mortal enemies, let us make war valiantly against them, and let us fight to the uttermost for the truth of our God, assuring ourselves that that is the thing wherein lies all our happiness.

Thus you see in effect what we have to gather upon this strain. And so forasmuch as God has once called us to him, and ceases not to prick us forward daily by exhortations: let us hold us under his obedience. And although we see many troubles, dissensions, and debates in the world: yet let us always stick steadfastly to the truth which cannot deceive us. And forasmuch as we may be soon seduced and deceived: let us pray God to give us wisdom and discretion: and also let us give diligent ear to his word, as which is able to strengthen us against all Satan's illusions, and let us no more be led to dance after other men's pipes, as Saint Paul warns us in the end of this Epistle. Seeing then that we have the means which God has

established to hold us always to be of his house and Church: let us stand steadfast therein. And if we happen to be turned aside through the foolishness and unadvisedness of our flesh: let us by and by hearken to the warnings that are given us here, let us mourn for our faults, and when we have mourned, let us serve our God, knowing that he is ever ready to receive us. And although we see never so great a number of despisers and worldlings which cease not to corrupt and pervert the doctrine of the Gospel, yea and to be utterly sodden in their corruptions: although (I say) that we see such stumbling blocks: yet let us take good heed, that under the color thereof we be not turned away unto wickedness, and so be wrapped in the same damnation with them for following of their steps: but let us go forward to the salvation that is set before us, and whereunto God provokes us daily to come.

Now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us feel them more and more, and therewithal to bear with our infirmities till he have rid us quite and clean of them, and clothed us again with the pureness of his righteousness, which ought to grow in us until it be fully perfect. And so let us all say, Almighty God our heavenly father etc.

The Thirty-Fourth Sermon,

which is the fourth upon the fifth Chapter.

11 My brethren, if I preach still the circumcision, why suffer I yet persecution? [For] then is the stumblingblock of the cross put away.

12 I would to God that they which trouble you were cut off.

13 For you, my brethren, were called unto liberty: only make not your liberty an occasion to the flesh, but serve ye one another through love.

14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, which is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

It is seen that men are so given to their own profit in all their doings, that always they bow crookedly and overthwartly without respect of equity and uprightness. For men's covetousness, and the respect which they have either to their profit or to their ease, doth so blind their eyes, as they can discern nothing. Especially when God's word is to be carried abroad, then if a man forget not himself, and shut not his eyes against the things that may turn him away in this world from walking purely before God: surely he shall never hold on his course, but be still starting out, now on the one side and now on the other. By means whereof God's doctrine is oftentimes corrupted, because that they which ought to bear it abroad, are inclined either to hatred or favor, and are afraid of purchasing themselves some displeasure, or of provoking some anger against them.

Therefore it is impossible to serve God purely in our state of calling, unless we be fully resolved, yea even with an invincible constancy, not to be grieved if we be driven to suffer for the doctrine which we bear abroad: but to fight lustily under the standard of our Captain Jesus Christ, knowing that we cannot come to the glory of his resurrection, but by suffering beforehand with him after his example. The faithful must be fain to fashion themselves unto that. But the case of such as should teach and have the office of preaching God's word, is more particular: for it is certain that the Devil is always practicing to put us out of heart, and he shall find furtherers enough in this world, according as there are full many that cannot abide that God's word should be preached purely and uncorruptly. They will not say with open mouth, that God's name ought to be buried: but yet would they fain devise a fashion of doctrine to their own liking. Now therefore it behooves us to look simply to that which God commands, and to harden ourselves thoroughly to it: according also as we see how Jeremiah was willed to fight, and God promised to give him a forehead of brass, to push against those that should come to assail him. And for that cause does St. Paul say now, that if he listed to preach circumcision, and to make such a minglemangle as the deceivers went about to do: he could rid his hands of all vexation, and make every man to clap their hands at him, or at leastwise he could bring to pass that no man should persecute him and trouble him. For the Jews would easily have granted that Jesus Christ should have been preached, so they might have held still the state of Eldership, and the Ceremonies have been used still, and the Gentiles have been as little untimely born things to come in array in their train behind them. You see then what the Jews' desire was. Saint Paul could have pleased them well in so doing, but that he minded to serve God faithfully and substantially.

But on the contrary part St. Paul shows, that they which labored to overthrow the doctrine that he had preached, sought more the favor and friendship of men, than to discharge their duty. Now then we see what is meant by this sentence where he says, "My brethren, if I preached Circumcision still," that is to say, if I would agree to make a minglemangle, that Jesus Christ might be disguised, and every man have what he would ask: no man would be any more offended with me, I should be welcome everywhere, and I should have credit by it. But now, is it likely that I will be at defiance with all the world, of purpose to be tormented? You see then at a word, that I seek not mine own profit. For what moves these goodly doctors to make such a minglemangle as you see, but that they would fain pleasure every man, and are loath that any man should trouble them in any wise? Seeing that their seeking is for ease and commodity: you ought of good right to suspect them.

Now then we see here, on the one side the thing that I touched not long since: namely that all such as are called of God to the preaching of his word, ought to be fully determined upon this, that although the whole world should step up against them, yet they would not bow, but abide all assaults, being well assured that God will maintain them at their need, and always give them victory, so they follow their vocation in pure singleness.

For we cannot do God any greater wrong and outrage, than to submit ourselves to men's likings, by turning away from his word, either to the right hand or to the left. Neither is it for us to leave any piece of our duty undone, but we must steadfastly maintain the truth of God which is unchangeable, and ought not in any wise to be altered, though men be never so variable and unconstant.

And this is to be marked well, because that although men have some good willingness that God should be known, and that his truth should be preached accordingly: yet the most part will commonly bow, when they see the slanders that are raised of them, and hear men's grudgings and repinings against them, specially when sometimes there shall be so great broils, that all is like to go to wreck.

For if we may maintain God's quarrel as we ought to do, by and by the slanderers will give it out that we be willful. Like as at this day the Papists do charge us, first of all with great rashness, that we, (who be but a handful in comparison of themselves which are so huge a multitude, yea and men of so great experience, which have seen so much, and are had in so great estimation and reputation,) will take upon us to control all the states of the world: and secondly that we be too precise, yea and too malapert, in that we will have all men's heads under our girdle, and do seek nothing else but to overmaster all men, and to make every man to stoop to our lure.

Lo how we be wrongfully slandered. Nevertheless we must rather swallow up this slander, than forbear the doing of any piece of our duty. For why? in this behalf it is not for us to make any composition as it were between man and man. For if two parties be at variance for some sum of Money, or for some Land, an umpire may so qualify the matter on either side, as peace shall soon be made betwixt them.

But if we grant God's enemies their own asking, specially to the prejudice of him that will have his own right thoroughly maintained (as good reason is that it should be:) what a thing is that? So much the more then behooves it us to mark well this lesson, where Saint Paul tells us, that to serve God we must not shun, neither trouble, nor vexation, nor repinings, nor reproaches, nor any thing else,

insomuch that if it stand upon the hazarding of our life, we must go through with it.

And though there be great frailty in us: yet let us consider that God calls us unto him, and that he is able to remedy all our weakness, and to give us sufficient strength to hold out to the uttermost. Howsoever the case stands, seeing he employs us in his service, (us I say which are nothing of ourselves:) we must not dishonor him so much, as to make him subject to men's lusts.

Thus ye see what we have to consider in the first place. Furthermore we be warned therewithal, to suspect all such as seek their own advantage and profit, and all such as disguise themselves, rowing between two streams, and falsifying God's pure truth at every turn, to please men withal. For as I have told you already, we must prepare ourselves to many battles, if we mind to serve God simply.

And we must call to mind this sentence where Saint Paul said, that if his mind were to please men, he must of necessity forsake the service of our Lord Jesus Christ his master. For as I have told you before, the devil will not cease to make war upon us on all sides: and again, men are naturally disposed thereto: every man covets to be soothed and upheld, and to have all his vices cloaked.

To be short, there is none but he desires to be fed and maintained in his recklessness. And therefore if we will be friends with men to frame ourselves unto their wills and desires: Jesus Christ can have no more mastership over us, and we shall not only become unprofitable for him, but also utter perverters of all.

Now, therefore, when we see that those who pretend great zeal for the Christian religion seek their own profit, let us boldly conclude that they deserve not to have any authority. Of which sort are they

which nowadays keep a barking to maintain popish abuses and cease not to slander the doctrine of the Gospel, but labor to bring it in discredit with the blind and ignorant, and yet notwithstanding what is it that the most part of them do seek?

Some to maintain themselves in their estate, with their red hats, horned caps, and crosses: Others run after them like hounds in a chase, and these poor stervelings ply them apace that they may have their wages. Besides this, all that ever is done of these pelting hypocrites, and of all the whole stinging and stinking rabble of shavelings, (what pretense so ever they make) tends to none other end, but to have their dishes always full, so that all their fighting is but for their belly.

Also there are a great number of Neuters, which are contented to have the Gospel preached by halves, but to go to it with so great rigor and severity, "O (say they) it is no reason at all, for the world cannot away with it. And why should not men pass much for Ceremonies (say they)? Although they sprung of superstitions and abuses, yet should we not go to work so roughly: for that were too importunate dealing."

All they then which cannot abide to have the filthy dregs and corruptions of Popery cut off to the quick, do certainly aim at none other mark, than to eschew persecution, and to shrink away from it. And would God that examples of it were not too rife.

But nowadays you shall see an infinite number of such as would be ashamed to withstand the Gospel in all respects, consent well enough with us to say, "In deed it is true, but yet many things had need to be borne withal, and we had need to go to it with gentleness and modesty." And what moves them to this? What foundation have they? See I pray you what they allege.

"O (say they) we see fires kindled everywhere: and what a thing were it to move yet further troubles that should make them greater? It should seem that we be bent of set purpose to provoke those that are already enemies to the Gospel, and have the sword in their hand, and are able to rend all up by the root: were it not better to bear with things awhile, till God had given some rest to his Church?"

It is certain therefore that such folk as desire to make truce with those that fight openly against our Lord Jesus Christ, are full of treason. And so see ye the second warning that is to be marked upon this text.

Furthermore when Saint Paul says, that the stumbling block of the Cross shall be done away, he means that the world shall no more be so provoked to refuse the doctrine of the Gospel: for when we preach Jesus Christ crucified simply without any mixture, that doth he purposely name the preaching of the Cross.

Now the world would always fain have solemnities, and first of all we see that many men's ears itch, and they desire nothing but that men should flourish in Rhetoric and painted speech, and such other like things. Again we see that many are ashamed of the simplicity of the Gospel, because that if the great and small should be coupled together, it might seem that it tends to the pulling down of all highness. And should men be spoiled and robbed after that manner of all their glory [think they?] Many therefore are ashamed of that.

Now for this cause Saint Paul says, "Go to, it is the preaching of a Gibbet or Gallows." It is true: for to the intent to open unto us the Kingdom of heaven, the son of God was fain to suffer our curse, and to endure that death which is so slanderous before men, yea and to be cursed of God's own mouth according to the saying of the Law, "Cursed is he that hangs on tree."

Then was our Lord Jesus Christ fain to come to that point, that he might be our borrow. To be short, he was as good as overwhelmed. And we see how the Prophet Esay says of him, that he was disfigured like a poor Lazerman, so as men vouchsafed not to look upon him, or to count him in the number of men. Also we see how the .xxij. Psalm says, "I am a worm and not a man, I am a mockingstock even to the rascallest sort: insomuch that the thief did scorn him and scoff at him."

Well then, at the first sight this doctrine seemeth unworthy to be received. But we must bethink ourselves what Saint Paul says in another text: that is to wit, that the world knew not God in true wisdom, and therefore he was fain to use another fashion of teaching, which is by foolishness. For were we thoroughly wise, as we would be taken to be: we have as good an instruction as can be, in beholding the skies and the earth. We see there a mirror wherein God shows us his infinite goodness, power, righteousness, mercy, and wisdom. And so we see there the great treasures of God's wisdom, which ought to ravish our wits to wonder at it.

But who fares the better by it? Nay, contrariwise, we see men cobble up God's benefits and fill their paunches with them, without any thinking upon him at all, and not only that, but also to kick against him that has pampered them. And when they ween to do God service, they pluck away the honor that belongs to him, and set up idols after their own fancy.

Seeing then that the world has not known God in true wisdom, and by the order of nature: God was fain to try another way, as he did. For if we judge after our natural wit, it is a kind of stark folly to say, that the son of God, the head of the Angels, the Lord of glory, the wellspring of life, the person to whom all majesty belongs, was not

only made a mortal man, and clothed with our state: but also utterly abased, (as Saint Paul says in the second to the Philippians) yea and became subject to our curse, and bore the name of sin, which is more.

When a man speaks to us in such phrase of speech, it must needs seem strange to us as it is in deed. But we must submit ourselves with all lowliness, and consider that forasmuch as we have not profited by the things that God has showed us from the beginning both in heaven and earth, we must be fain to come to this other school.

Thus much concerning this strain where Saint Paul says, "then is the stumbling block of the Cross put away." But to be short, we must gather upon this Text, that if there be any absurdity in the Gospel according to our understanding, the same must not make it out of taste with us, but we must consider that God intends to try our obedience, by sending us to the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that there we see as it were the gulf of hell, seeing that the son of God is there to bear our condemnation, and is become our surety there to pay all our debts.

Again let us consider further, that from death there was a goodly passage unto glory, which appeared in his resurrection. For the Son of God having suffered through infirmity, (that is to say, according to the ordinance of God his father, and according to his own good will also, whereby he consented to submit himself to such bondage) and having suffered in such wise that he overcame death by the power of his holy spirit: he obtained such a victory, as all knees must now bow before him, and he has a name above all names, and men must know that all the Majesty of God appeared and shone forth in his person.

Thus you see that we need not to be ashamed of the Gospel. And above all things let us hold fast that which Saint Paul in the first to the Romans calls the power of God to the salvation of all believers.

Then as for the worldlings and such as are swollen with pride and overweening like toads, let them despise the Gospel as much as they list, and let them perish in their own cursedness: and in the meantime let us with all humbleness of faith embrace the Son of God, who offers himself to us of purpose, to lift us up to the glory of the kingdom of heaven.

But here is yet more: namely that Saint Paul matches Stumbling, and the preaching of the Gospel together as things inseparable. It is true that we must eschew all stumbling blocks as much as is possible: for woe be to him by whom stumbling blocks come. But yet must Jesus Christ reign, and have his full scope, though all the whole world should stumble at him.

The word Stumbling block, importeth a stop, hindrance, or let, as if there were a rough and stony way that had some thorns and bushes, or some other comberances in it, the same were a means to make men stumble. Now it were to be wished that Jesus Christ might go on freely, and that all the world would receive him, and that nothing might stop the preaching of the Gospel from the one end of the world to the other. I say we ought to wish it as much as in us is. Howbeit let us learn that God intends to try the obedience of our faith, by giving Satan the bridle who casteth many stumbling blocks and cumbrances in our ways.

To be short, our Lord Jesus Christ is not without cause called a stone to stumble at, and a stop for all men to dash against, and by that means to break their necks. And in the end (as it is said in Saint Luke) they must be crushed by that stone, for it is too hard for their

stubbornness. And this is very much for our behoof. For we see many men so nice, that if men agree not to the Gospel out of hand, they think themselves quite and clean discharged and set free before God, from maintaining the quarrel or case any longer.

If all Kings and Princes had caused it to be proclaimed by the sound of a trumpet, that there should be no more fighting against God's truth: every man would make countenance to be of the same mind. But nowadays you shall see great cruelty, tyranny, spitefulness, menacing, and such other like things. Again you shall see that the most part of the enemies are as greedy wolves that desire to devour all, and seek to shed innocent blood, to the intent that they may have their goods. Others have a frenzied zeal, insomuch that they would fain have the name of God clean wiped out, and the doctrine of the Gospel utterly quenched.

When men see this: oh (say they) I will not meddle with it. What? Shall I bring all the world in my top? Is it not manifest that they which have tasted this doctrine are but a handful of men, and that all others are enemies to them, or else they do reject them or laugh them to scorn, or at leastwise bear a poisoned and malicious heart against them? You see then, that very few are so strong, as to bear out the stumbling blocks of the Gospel, when they see as it were logs cast in their ways, and that Jesus Christ is hindered by Satan, and by the practices of his underlings.

Oh (say they) we must needs back again. Yea and what a number are to be seen at this day, which will say that this doctrine brings store of stumbling blocks? Again, see I pray you what diversity of opinions it has (say they). Behold such a one speaks thus, and such a one thus. Furthermore when the wicked sort which set their tongues to sale like harlots in a Brothelhouse, and cast out blasphemies against God

and his word, find any cloak either to despise or to reject the Gospel: by and by many wretched folk have their tongues filed to say, Alas, we see that this doctrine brings great stumbling blocks with it. Yea and Jesus Christ should not be that which the holy Scripture reports him to be, if the Gospel caused not many stumblings.

But yet must we not be dismayed at them: we must rather overcome them. Thus you see what we have to gather upon this strain, where Saint Paul says that we shall never hold out in the faith of the Gospel, except we be armed with such constancy, as not to turn out of the way, let Satan do what he can. Verily (as I said afore) we must (as much as we can) eschew all stumbling blocks, and go on forward, and put them aside. We have seen heretofore how every of us ought to behave himself, insomuch that the Prophet Esay speaking of the preaching of the Gospel, says that the way must be made level, and that the thing which was rough and crooked before, must now be made smooth and straight.

Well then, we must do what we can that it may be so. Howbeit forasmuch as God will have us to be humbled, and that there must needs be stumbling blocks and cumbrances, and it cannot be but that Jesus Christ must reign in the midst of his enemies: let us go forward and defy all Satan's practices, and not dislike of the Gospel for it, though we see never so many stumblings and stumbling blocks abroad in the world.

Now Saint Paul, having said so, adds, "I would to God that all they which trouble you were cut off." It may seem at the first blush, that Saint Paul is moved here with too much choler, when he wishes that all those which sow their darnell and errors abroad to pervert God's pure doctrine should be dispatched, that the devil might possess them, and that they might never find mercy at God's hand. For so

does the word "Cut off" betoken. But we must mark, that the zeal which we ought to have of God's glory, forgets all worldly respects when they are put into the balance together.

Howbeit before we go any further, let us first note that in this word "Cut off," Saint Paul has spoken by a similitude. For those rascals that had corrupted and falsified the doctrine of the Gospel, strove for Circumcision. "Well then," says he, "pare off and cut off as much as you list, and yet all your seeking is but to have other men busied about such pelting trifles as well as yourselves. But as for me, I would that all such deceivers were quite and clean cut off, and that God would sink them or root them out, and so cast them off and damn them, as they might not have any hope of salvation."

Now let us come to that which I have touched. I told you shortly, that when men make war against God, we must become such deadly enemies unto them, as we must utterly put out of mind all kindred and friendship, and all that else is: for otherwise we do not our duty in any wise unto our God, who, seeing he bears the name of our father, and does us the honor to take us for his children, ought at the least to have his glory esteemed of us above all things.

But we must pass on yet further. For what is the Majesty of God? Again, how precious ought his truth to be unto us? Moreover, seeing that he doth so join his glory with our welfare, as we cannot procure the one without the other: yea and that we can neither profit him nor disprofit him, though we were never so zealous to maintain his quarrel, for he has no need of us, neither needs he to borrow our helping hand, but yet he makes us his deputies or agents, to none other end but that every of us should seek his own profit, howbeit not of this world, nor in these corruptible things, but in the everlasting salvation of our souls: seeing (I say) that God employs us after such

sort, and we notwithstanding be still reckless and cold: is this treachery of ours excusable? Nay we must come to that which is said in the Psalm, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and the railings of them that railed on thee, I have taken to myself."

Certainly, this was fully accomplished in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, as in the head of the Church. And Saint Paul shows that we must be fashioned like unto him as our pattern, so that whenever we see God's honor defaced by men, every of us must set himself manfully against it. Thus you see briefly that the rule which we must gather here, is that we must prefer God's honor before all things, yea even before a whole million of lives if we had them.

Then is it not for us to spare men, when they strain themselves to the uttermost of their power to trample God's name under foot, to turmoil the doctrine of salvation, to bring to pass that we might no more know what religion to stick unto, and to drive away all peace utterly out of the Church. Therefore if we see men apply their endeavors that way, is it not reason that we should be their adversaries?

Truly if it be possible, we must procure friendship and agreement with all men, yea on our own behalf, and so far forth as lies in us, says Saint Paul to the Romans. But when we see these naughtipacks advance themselves against God, and thrust forth their horns to doss at him: it is good reason that every of us should step forward, and show indeed that we are no more our own men, but that for as much as our Lord Jesus Christ has bought and paid for us so dearly, he ought of right to be Lord both of our life, and of our death.

Ye see then why Saint Paul makes here so sharp a wish, namely that they which had troubled the Galatians might be utterly alienated from God, and drowned in the gulf of damnation.

Now if it be objected that this wish is against the rule of charity: the answer is easy enough. For we are bound to love our enemies, yea though they persecute and vex us: and although they seek nothing but our destruction, yet must we procure their welfare and salvation to the uttermost of our power, and we must have pity and compassion of them to see them so given over unto Satan. Thus you see what charity imports. But yet for all this, God must be above all, as I have declared already. Therefore Charity is between man and man. When any man shall have done me wrong, I must forget it. Though he bear me malice, yet must I procure his welfare. But when it comes to the maintaining of God's quarrel, there men must be esteemed less than nothing as I have said already.

Yet notwithstanding we do clean contrary. For what else is the common practice, than to stoop and strike sail when God is misdelt with? And yet in the meanwhile every man will follow his own right to the uttermost. As for example: There is a man that has committed a very heinous crime, he deserves to be punished: and if he be not corrected there is an evil gap opened to bring in corruption. There is some man of authority, and (to go no further) they that ought to show the way of salvation, they that preach the word of God, even they I say are seen to live wickedly, they be ribalds and lewd folk that serve to no purpose but to make confusion and debate. And yet for all this, they must not be cut off, they must not be handled roughly will some say. A drunkard, a whoremonger, a varlet shall be maintained. To be short, there shall be nothing but contempt of God, and the Gospel shall be unregarded everywhere, and yet must all of it be suffered under color that there must some clemency be used: yea marry, and in the meanwhile God's honor must be left at random.

But if ye do never so little touch these men that are so gentle, or at leastwise pretend to be so: by and by they fall out into deadly

defiance, saying: why not? such a man has done me such a wrong. They fight it out to the uttermost. Well then, they endure all things that can be at the hand of Satan's underlings, yea even to be buffeted and boxed about the ears by them with shame enough, as Saint Paul says in the second to the Corinthians: and yet in the meanwhile they cannot abide that God should be avenged of the dishonor that is done unto him.

Now then we see that Saint Paul's zeal was well ruled, and if any man had done him wrong in his own person, we know he would have been patient in that behalf. But now that he sees God's Gospel coming to such an afterdeed: he cannot abide that: but sets himself against it, wishing that such men were damned. Yea verily: for he had no regard of himself, but (as I said before) preferred God's honor before all the whole world. Thus you see how we may be safe from straying: namely if we look simply unto God, and give not heed to our own affections, but be governed by the spirit of uprightness and discretion, so as God make us to discern how far forth we must fight, and how far forth we must resist.

Then if we once have such discretion, and be governed by the Holy Ghost, we may, with Saint Paul, with David, and with the residue of the holy Prophets, defy men when they go about to turn us away from the pureness of the known doctrine: yea, and we might curse the very Angels if need were, according as Saint Paul has said heretofore, where he defied the Angels of heaven, if they should set themselves against the doctrine of the Gospel that he had preached. Not that the Angels do ever set themselves against it: but that if it were possible for them to do so. As if he should say, put the case that an Angel should go about to overthrow your faith: yet should ye rather send him to hell, and hold him for a fiend, and curse him, than be turned aside from the right way by him.

You see then that we must in all respects rest wholly upon God: and moreover, let us be afraid of that saying, as though we heard it thunder from heaven against all such as trouble the Church. For though it be but Paul that has spoken it, yet did the Holy Ghost guide and govern his tongue. For as much then as he was the instrument of God to utter the said sentence: it is as much as if unrepeatable judgment were already given against all such as go about to break the union of faith, and the agreement of brotherhood that ought to be among all God's children, and to sow errors and heresies to falsify the pure truth.

Furthermore, God shows how dearly he loves us, (as has been declared this morning) wherein he gives us a warrant of the fatherly care which he has of our salvation, in that he takes such vengeance on all such as would disappoint the same. And finally he says, "Brethren, ye are called to freedom: only make it not an occasion of fleshliness, but serve ye one another in love, because it is the true fulfilling of the Law, and the very square also whereby we must rule all our works."

Here Saint Paul shows, first, that his striving is not to bring to pass that men might live at their own ease, and everybody sport as they list themselves: but that we might be free before God. And that is well worth the marking. For as soon as this word freedom or liberty is spoken of, every of us is so inclined to his fleshly lusts, that by and by we think with ourselves, very well, then may I do what I list, I am no more restrained, I need not any more to think myself so much bound, nor to make so great scruple of conscience as I have done. Thus you see how that under the pretense of liberty, every of us makes himself thrall to his own affections. For it is a policy of the Devils, to deceive and beguile us in the things that seem to be good, yea and to turn them to the clean contrary.

For (as I have declared heretofore) it is certain that all such as covet to live after their own liking, become wretched bondslaves, and are held in straiter bondage than such as are set in the stocks or manacles. And why? Let us consider a little what tyranny there is in our lusts and passions. If a man follow his own lusts, surely he must needs shake off all shame, and forget himself, and become a very beast. Lo here the goodly liberty that all men seek commonly by nature.

But I have told you that the liberty whereto Saint Paul exhorts us, is another manner of thing. It is not that we should run as rovers, and have no bridle to hold us in awe: but that we should consider what God requires of us, and be ruled by his holy word, and none of us become so lordly as to say, this or that must be done. For when men take upon them to rule us by laws and ordinances of their own making, it is certain that they do but (as you would say) make infinite cords to strangle poor souls withal. Saint Paul then shows that the liberty which he preached, and for the maintenance whereof he stood so stoutly against the deceivers, is not that men should overshoot themselves and take leave to do what they list, but that they might freely serve God, and be no more racked and tormented with unquietness, as we see poor ignorant souls to be, who being held fast in superstition, are evermore in doubt and grudge of conscience, making questions of everything, and never being resolved of any one point. Of which sort also are the Papists, who have an infinite number of doubts among them. And no marvel at all: for they know not to what master they must yield their account. Every of them talks according to the disposition of his own brain: [one says] to my seeming such a thing would be good: [another says] Lo this my devotion tells me: [and the third says] it were good yet that this or that were done more.

Now when they be once entered into such a maze, at length they fall to doubting whether they may comb their heads or no, and make a scrupulousness with which finger they should feed themselves, and of everything else. To be short, there is neither end nor measure of their fondness. When Saint Paul intends to show what it is to be wrapped in men's traditions: he says that when they have once forbidden to eat flesh, anon after they forbid to taste it: and when they have forbidden to taste it, soon after they forbid to touch it. You see then that the way for us to maintain the liberty that is purchased for us by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, is first to know in what wise God will be served and honored, to the end we be not tossed with so many scruples of conscience for want of discerning what is good or evil, but determine fully and certainly with ourselves, to follow God's word, assuring ourselves also, that in so doing we cannot do amiss.

And secondly to serve one another's turn, that none of us be so addicted to his own self as to overmate his fellows, but be so gentle and kind-hearted as every of us have an eye wherein he may advantage or succor his neighbor: abstaining from all offense giving so as it be not said, "I care not for such a one or for such a one, I pass not whether he sink or swim:" but that (for as much as our Lord Jesus Christ has linked us together to be members of his Church) we hold fast the said doctrine, that is to wit, first that God be honored and served among us as he commands, and secondly that we agree in such wise together, as we labor through meekness to match ourselves one with another, and to serve one another's turn, notwithstanding that we be free still Godward as in respect of our consciences.

And now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our sins, praying him to make us so to feel them, as it may humble us before him, and draw us to true repentance, and

we go forward therein more and more, groaning continually under the burden of our sin, till we be quite cleansed and utterly rid of it: And that it may please the same good God to bear with us, and not to handle us so rigorously as he could do, but to guide us in such wise by his holy spirit, as he may both forgive and forget our sins, till we be fully cleansed from them. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people and Nations of the earth. &c.

The Thirty Fifth Sermon,

which is the fifth upon the fifth Chapter.

14 For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, which is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

15 If you bite and devour one another, beware that you be not consumed one of another.

16 But I say unto you, walk after the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

17 Surely the flesh lusteth contrary to the spirit, and the spirit contrary to the flesh. For these things are one against another, so as you cannot do all things as you would.

18 But if you be led by the spirit, then are you not under the Law.

We see that Moses, intending to bring the law into a sum, to the end we might know what was taught us and told us, says that God will be loved of us, as good reason it is that we should first stick unto him and be knit unto him, and afterward that there should be such a bond of friendship among ourselves, as we might be knit together as members of one body.

And our Lord Jesus Christ also says that that is the thing whereby his disciples may be known: showing therein that he brought not up any doctrine contrary to that which God had always given to the people of old time. And for that cause, Saint Paul says now, that the fulfilling of the law consists in this word, that we love our neighbors.

Not that God ought in the meanwhile to be forgotten (as I have told you heretofore) for it is good reason that he should be set foremost, and be preferred before all his creatures, in so much that for his sake we ought to forget even our father and mother, our wife and children, and all that ever is in this world. Nevertheless, to love God, and to love our neighbors in their degree, are not things contrary.

For when every man walks in charity, thereby he shows the love that he bears to his God, according also as I have declared. And that is the cause why I stand no longer on these points. To be short, if we be given to ourselves, it is a token that we know not what it is to carry God's yoke: for that is the thing whereunto our own nature drives us.

Now (as we shall see anon) men are wholly inclined to all evil, and therewithal they give the bridle to all their lusts, they make war against God, and all their whole life is nothing else but a rebellion, which shows that the devil does so possess all our affections that God cannot weigh with us, till we have beaten down all that is of our own nature.

Now then we know that he who loves his neighbors, seeks not his own, nor is given to himself. That therefore is a true and certain proof that we be desirous to obey God, and to rule our life according to his word. Also, our Lord Jesus Christ begins at the same point when he intends to show briefly what his doctrine is: It is (says he) a learning to renounce or forsake ourselves.

For so long as we follow our own trace, we must needs go full contrary to God's will. So then it is not without cause that Saint Paul says in this text, that the whole law consists in this point, that we love our neighbors. But it behooves us to mark, that by this word neighbor, God means not our kinsfolk and friends, at whose hands we hope for some profit or advantage, or which have deserved some recompense at our hands: but he will have us to have an eye to the common alliance which he has set among us.

Therefore we all are formed after his image, and we bear his mark. Besides this, we all are of one nature, and that ought to hold us in true unity and brotherhood. But many make themselves unworthy of it: for some are full of wiliness and malice like foxes: some are full of pride like lions: some are like ravening wolves, that seek nothing but to devour all: and others are full of shrewd turns and harmfulness [like Apes.]

All these (as much as in them is) do cut themselves off from the array and company of neighbors: but in this case, we may observe God's order. And although men on their side deserve not to be counted and taken for neighbors: yet notwithstanding in bearing them love, we show it is good reason that God should overweigh our own naughtiness. We see then that such as are our enemies and labor to devour us, do notwithstanding not cease to be our neighbors, in respect of the order that God has set.

And for the same cause also our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, that it is no charity to recompense him that has done us a good turn or service, nor to love those whom we like off, or at whose hands we look for some profit. For the heathen do as much as that comes to, but they do it not to obey God and his law, and when we have regard of our own profit, it is rather a loving of ourselves than any point of charity.

For the marks that charity shooteth at are God and the communion or fellowship that ought to be among us, as I have said afore. Now then we see it is a true proof that we be desirous to love God when we endeavor to do good even to them that are unworthy of it. Moreover, the adding of this saying, as ourselves, is not to the intent that every man should first love himself, and then afterward love his neighbor next.

But our Lord meant to rip up the sore that hinders us to live in charity: which is (as I have told you already) that if men were not so given to self-love as they be, there would be good love and agreement among all men: but forasmuch as we be so much given to love ourselves, and the excess of that affection blinds us in such wise, that it bereaves us of all reason, equity, and uprightness: therefore God says that we must love our neighbors as ourselves. For were not that said expressly: we would talk much of loving our neighbors, and say they ought to be loved: but all would be but dissimulation, after the manner of these hypocrites, which protest that they would their enemies no harm, but rather that they wish them good, and could find in their hearts to procure them good.

But let us come to the trial that God sets down here, and let every man look into himself, and then let him judge whether he loves

himself too much or not, or whether the love that he bears towards his neighbors, be not over faint and cold.

To be short, here God meant to remedy the hypocrisy wherewith we be too much blinded. Also, he meant to waken men, that they might learn to leave their flattering of themselves when it is said, it is not enough for you to love one another, but you must love your neighbors as yourselves. And thereby we see how far we be wide from the perfection of the Law, and that it stands us in hand to fight against our own nature that we may obey God.

What is then the true exercise of Christians? It is to acknowledge and bewail their own sinfulness and infirmity in discharging their duty towards God, and thereupon to labor and endeavor to win of themselves from day to day, so as their lusts may not overpower them, but rather that God may have such superiority, that instead of loving ourselves, we may labor to employ ourselves in doing good wherever he calls us.

Furthermore, Saint Paul having showed the perfection of the law, and the mark that we must aim at to rule our life according to God's word, adds that if men do bite and snatch one at another like dogs and cats, they must needs be consumed in the end. And this is to shame them the more, who are so fleshed in their quarrelings and brawlings, and do so close their eyes against all reason, that they care not what come of it so they may satisfy their lust of revenging.

And what shall you learn by it says Saint Paul? Naturally you covet to preserve yourselves: for that is common to us even with the beasts. You see that the beast which has neither reason nor understanding, does notwithstanding labor to preserve himself, and shuns harm. Much more reason is it that men which discern between good and

bad, should have the same endeavor of maintaining themselves, and of continuing safe and sound.

But now let us see what follows upon hatred, quarreling, brawling, strife, railing, and such other like things. It follows that we must all be consumed in the end. Needs then must the devil have utterly bereft them of all reason, which rage and rush forth after that fashion in their excessive hatred, and cannot by any means be moderated.

To be short, Saint Paul shows that although there were no Law of God to make us afraid to offend him: yet if we were well advised or had any drop of discretion in us: we should have some stay of ourselves, so as we should not quarrel and brawl one with another as we do. But we run willfully and as it were of set purpose into our destruction: and that is against nature.

You see then how devilish men become when they be once chafed, insomuch that they seek their own decay. And why do we hate our enemies? It is because we will needs give bridle to our affections. But mark our excuse: O (say we) they meant me harm, they procured it, and they have done it. Very well-what for that? What shall thou win by making two devils of one (as the proverb says)? or by seeking to make the fire to burn hotter which is kindled enough and too much already? It will but double his rage and make him fiercer than he was before.

Seeing it is so: why wilt thou go about to end the matter with the destruction of you both? However, if we should do it in none other respect than that, it were not enough: for therein we should be too fleshly. For if I abstain from all hatred, because I should receive harm by it, I do still seek my own profit. But God will have us to shut our eyes continually in respect of ourselves, and to shake off all ill

will, and to tread all strife underfoot. And why? To the end that he himself may have all mastery over us.

And although men give us cause to hate them for their naughtiness: yet notwithstanding forasmuch as God has knit us together, let us abide in that unity. Therefore the honor that we must yield unto God, is to renounce ourselves, to the end we may love them that hate us. And as I have told you already, this warning is not superfluous. For Saint Paul's intent is to shame such as are so fiery at the first dash, that reason can neither appease them nor stay them.

Therefore, when men are so hot, and fling themselves at all adventure: things must be alleged agreeable to their nature, to make them ashamed, that they may be drawn to the obedience of God. Saint Paul then meant here to bring us by little and little to the overcoming of all our affections, which are too far out of square, to the end that whenever we be provoked to hate any man, or to be revenged of him, we may consider thus with ourselves: what will be the end of it, but that we shall one of us consume another like dogs and cats?

And when we have considered that, we must proceed yet further: which is, that although our hatred might advantage us never so much, although we might always have the upper hand of our enemies, and although we could bring all our practices and attempts to effect: I say although we might have advantage by giving head to our passions: yet were it but a provoking of God's wrath, seeing we could not yield so far unto him, as to love those that are unworthy.

Since the case standeth so, let us be afraid and submit ourselves with all humility. And forasmuch as it is a hard thing, let us fight so much the more manfully, till God has gotten the mastery, and we renounce ourselves as I said, forsaking all our own nature, to the end that we

may keep the sacred unity which he did set among us when it pleased him that we should be one flesh.

Now thereupon Saint Paul adds, that if we mind to restrain the lusts of our flesh from reigning in us: we must walk in the spirit. Furthermore, the battle is right hard: so that we do not what we would do: but although God have reformed us and touched us to the quick, so as we would fain please him in all points: yet notwithstanding we shall not yet attain to perfection, because our own nature will always lead us unto evil.

But before we go any further, we must mark that by the word Flesh, Saint Paul means all that is in man, and whatsoever we bring with us by our birth. According also as our Lord Jesus Christ declares sufficiently in the third of John. That which is born of flesh (says he) is flesh. By the word Spirit he means not the Soul of man, but the grace which God gives us when he brings us back to his obedience, and corrects our vices and all that is contrary to his word.

And the terming of men by the name of Flesh in the holy scripture is in way of contempt. But yet in this text it is a mark of vice and corruption. Sometimes when the Scripture speaks of flesh, it says: very well, what else are men but flesh? that is to say, but rottenness? Again, all flesh is grass. And again, what are the Egyptians? They be flesh and not spirit.

You see then that under this word flesh, men are taught their own frailty, and done to understand that they be but earth and dust, worms, and worm's meat. And this serves first of all to humble them. But when flesh is matched against Spirit, then are not men taken in their first state as they were created of God: but it serves to show that they be corrupted and full of infection and wickedness, so as there is

no taste at all in them to discern aright, but they are utterly perverted in all their lusts.

You see then that whereas our Lord Jesus Christ says we be flesh even from our birth: his meaning is that we be blind wretches, which have no wit at all to come unto God: and that although he have put an understanding in us to discern good and evil: yet notwithstanding we be grown brutish, and cannot come to him, and all the reason that we have, serves but to make us unexcusable: and finally that we covet nothing but utter evil, and that look how many affections we have, so many are the enemies that fight against all righteousness.

Lo how the holy Ghost blazes our arms, whereas most men brag of their own free will and of their virtues: it is said that there is nothing in us but stark corruption, and that the same is as an enmity against God, and separates us from his righteousness.

True it is, that our Soul or mind is oftentimes called by the name of Spirit: for the word Spirit or Ghost betokens an invisible substance, which cannot be seen nor felt as can a body. The Angels are Spirits, and so are the Devils also. However, these are corrupted spirits and alienated from God, so as there is nothing but utter wickedness in them.

So then our souls also are Spirits, but yet they are spirits infected with sin, which thing happened to them when we were changed and abased and God's image defaced in us by the fall of Adam. Now then there had need to be some renewal thereof: and that renewal is called spirit, which is when God reforms us and makes us new creatures by his holy spirit.

The first point whereof is, that we be enlightened so as we conceive the things that were hidden from us by nature: for faith is the special

gift of God, because it is impossible for man to conceive the things that are for his soul health, unless God have wrought in him.

You see then that faith is a gift of the spirit (as we shall see hereafter in due time and place) insomuch that as we have not one good motion to come unto God, and to frame ourselves to his will, except he govern us: so also forasmuch as he has adopted us, he gives us his holy spirit, which is the true mark that shows us to be God's children.

To be short, look whatsoever God puts into his chosen and faithful ones to correct their wicked and sinful nature: the same is comprehended under the word Spirit.

Now Saint Paul says that we must walk after the spirit, and then we shall not fulfill the lusts of our flesh. Hereby he gives warning to such as delight too much in their own vices and take leave to do naughtily under pretense that they are not able to withstand it. Here he wakens them up, and tells them that they are without excuse: and that although they are given unto naughtiness, yet they ought to seek the remedy of it. And what is that? Truly we shall not find it in ourselves, but God will supply in that behalf, by giving us grace to fight in such wise against all our lusts and wicked affections, as his holy spirit shall reign in us, and get the upper hand of them. God will not deceive us in making such a promise: and therefore let us hasten to him as diseased folk to a physician.

To be short, Saint Paul has an eye to the excuse that men would bring, and are wont to bring in this case. O (say they) we are fleshly, and charity is an Angelicall perfection: and how then can we keep it, seeing we are given to all evil, and our own sinfulness carries us away? If sin reigned not in us, then it might be said that we ought to be united unto God: but our frailty is too great. Thus you see what excuse many folks allege, thinking to be quit by it. But Saint Paul

says: It is true that there is nothing but a gulf of all naughtiness in us, and that as long as men slumber after that fashion in their own affections, they must needs serve the devil, and become every day more beasts than other: but seek the remedy. God calls you to him by his Gospel, he offers you his holy spirit. So then, condemn the evil, that you may be sorry for it, and God will so work in you as he will get the upper hand of all your affections. You see then what Saint Paul meant in this text.

Nevertheless therewithal he meant to give an overthwart blow to those against whom he disputes. For I have told you heretofore, that the deceivers which had troubled the Church of that country, were given to many pelting trifles which were utterly needless, in so much as they grounded all holiness upon the Ceremonies of the Law. Now, it is true that God's enjoining of the Ceremonies for a time was not in vain: for they were figures till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But now that he is come, they are unprofitable things, and things that hinder us from walking as we should do. For the Ceremonies and shadows were helps to bring the ancient fathers to our Lord Jesus Christ. But if we should hold them still nowadays, they would make us turn our back to Jesus Christ: so that it is not without cause that Saint Paul has showed heretofore, that the keeping of such things is no more of any value: and he will speak yet more of it hereafter.

Now then forasmuch as he had to dispute against such as did set forth the Ceremonies, he says unto them, walk after the spirit. As if he should say, consider which is the true service of God: it consists not in Lamps, nor in Incense, nor in Circumcision, nor in the observing of days, nor in forbearing to eat any certain kind of meats. These are not the things wherein God will have his to rest: but upon his spiritual service. Therefore walk you in the spirit, and then shall you not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. However, as I have told you

before, this is not all. But yet by the way Saint Paul does, after an indirect manner, glance at this, that the deceivers against whom he strove, were gravelled in those small and light things, which are but as introductions of this world, and as trainments of young children. For as much therefore as they were utterly entangled in them: he tells the Galatians that they must walk in the spirit.

Furthermore (as I have declared already) here he sets down the true means to knit us together in love. For it is impossible for us to come unto God and to forget all enmity, till we have fought manfully [against our own affections]. And the remedy thereof (as I said) is in God. Therefore we must pray him to increase the grace of his holy spirit more and more in us, and then we shall find that the flesh, however furious it be, however great bubbles and boilings it cast up, yea and though it seem like a wild beast that cannot be tamed: I say we shall find that it shall not be stronger than God's spirit, and the grace that shall be given us from above, which shall be able to bring us back, and to hold us under the yoke and obedience of our God. To be short, Saint Paul declares, that the cause why we cannot resist our lewd lusts, proceeds of our own negligence and coldness, because every of us feeds himself in his naughtiness by vain self-soothing, and we do not go to God with such affection and zeal as were requisite.

Then let us conclude that there is no excuse for men when they sin. For they delight in it, and would fain that God should let them welter in it, and (as much as they can) they flee the remedy and amendment of it, yea and they are so sotted in it, as they do not care to provoke God's wrath, because they cannot in any wise abide to be taught. It is true that sometimes they will well enough protest with their mouths, that they would very fain have their nature and inclination changed: but yet would they still covenant with God, that he should let them

alone as they are, without altering of anything, after the fashion of a sick man, who if his disease do press him, will say, "O I would fain be healed": but yet for all that, when he comes to receiving of counsel at the Physician's hand, and that he should be appointed a diet: he will not yield to that. The Physician gives him good Counsel, and has helps ready to heal his disease: but yet notwithstanding, the patient excuses himself, saying, "O Sir, my heart will not serve me to do it." If a sick man will needs drink, and instead of heat take cold, and be so unruly as he cannot be bridled, but refuses all that is ministered to him for his health, and plays the mad Bedlam: he may well protest that he would fain be cured, but the flat contrary appears. Even so it is with them that resort unto God to pray him to govern them in such wise by his holy spirit, as they may be changed and forget all their lusts, and put them underfoot: and yet in the meantime will needs continue and welter in them still. Thus you see in effect what we have to bear in mind.

Nevertheless, it is certain that although we pray to God earnestly, and every of us strain himself to subdue his wicked affections: yet we shall not cease to have infirmities still however the world goes. I speak not of the hypocrites, I speak of the true children of God. For they that have profited most in all perfection, go still as it were limping unto Godward, neither do they what they would as Saint Paul will add anon after, and as he shows more at large in the seventh to the Romans. Nevertheless as soon as the faithful feel their disease, they seek the remedy of it in God, yea and they seek it earnestly and unfeignedly, and perceive that his succor surmounts all their own lewd affections. According hereto Saint Paul says, "you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." He says not, that of all our life long Satan shall not tempt us to do any evil, nor that we shall not have store of provocations, for our flesh shall always have his stings to stir us up unto naughtiness. Therefore we shall be tempted to all

vices: but yet shall we withstand them by God's grace. And not without cause is this added: for if we were not warranted that God accepts our service though it be faulty and we weak, and though we run not with such courage as were requisite: every of us should be as it were beaten down, and in the end we should fall into despair as it happens to divers, who upon the examining of their own lives, finding themselves so imperfect and still far off from God, think themselves not to have profited at all, and thereupon fall to chasing and fretting, and finally become stark mad. Truly we ought to go forward to the said perfection, and to labor continually for it: but yet however we fare, let us not cease to seek God though we cannot come at him by reason of the great number of lets and impediments, and though we now and then make false steps, and our wicked lusts hold us back, hinder us, and lie sore upon us (as I said): let us not forsake our way for all that, though we be shaken now and then.

Although then that by nature we cannot keep our way lustily to come unto our God: yet is it enough that we fulfill not the lusts of our flesh: for although we feel them, and although they be over strong in us: yet if we overcome them God accepts it, and forgives us all the whole default. According whereto Saint Paul exhorting the faithful not to cast down their hearts out of measure: says that the flesh does not reign in us. He says not that wicked lusts and sinful affections dwell not any more in us: for we shall never be rid of them till it please God to take us to himself. Then till such time as we be out of this world, there shall always be blemishes and spots in us, and we must be fain to stoop under the fardel of our sins and infirmities, and that is to the intent to humble us the more, and to show that our life is a continual battle.

Moreover, although sin dwells in us, yet it must not reign, but God's spirit must get the upper hand of it, and that shall be done when we

flee unto God with an earnest zeal, praying him to remedy the evil which surpasses our power to amend, and in such wise to increase the gifts of his spirit in us, as we may overcome all things that do as it were hold us down.

Thus you see what Saint Paul meant by that saying in this text. And he adds thereto, that the spirit lusts against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, so as we do not the thing that we fain would do. Here his meaning is to quicken us up to keep good watch, yea and to have our harness always upon our backs as they say, and to be in readiness against the enemy.

If we were clear from all vices, and that all men without gainsaying did follow the thing that God commands by his word: we should not need to strain ourselves much, no more than the Angels of heaven, who need not to fight, for they are ready to do all that is commanded them. Forasmuch then as there is no rebelliousness in the Angels: therefore also they have no striving when they should give themselves to the service of God: for they are wholly bent and inclined thereto.

But Saint Paul lets us know that we must not be slothful in serving God. And why? For our nature drags always back, and we should never love goodness, except we were enforced and compelled to it. Therefore men must enforce and constrain themselves, and maintain battle as against a deadly enemy, when they intend to go forward in goodness.

And who are our enemies? Truly the devil is the chief, and he gives us terrible assaults. But yet therewithal, all our own thoughts, all our own affections, all our desires, are all deadly enemies that labor to bring us to destruction. Now if they fight against God, it is certain that they are also against our salvation.

We see then how Saint Paul's meaning here, is as though he had cried out alarm, to show that if Christians be either sluggish or slothful, and think to serve God at their own ease: they beguile themselves, and that forasmuch as they have battle upon battle to endure without end or ceasing, and Satan tempts them day and night, walking about one while with wiles and treason, and another while setting upon them by open force to drive them out of the way: they must arm themselves thoroughly, and enter into the encounter, and hold it out to the end, and not look to have any peace or truce, till God takes them out of the world.

You see in effect what Saint Paul's doctrine imports. And this exhortation is more than necessary for us, because most men think it enough, if they have but some little devotion or willingness to serve God: and although they welter in much filthiness, all is one to them: and others repine when they see how hard a thing it is to rule their life well.

And how is that possible? God seems to press us out of measure, for he seeks not what may please us, but rather condemns it. But how shall we bring to pass that we may put ourselves to it? For our inclination goes clean contrary to his will. It seems then that he mocks us when he presses so upon us: and why does he not give us another manner of nature than that?

Lo how diverse men blaspheme God, in having an eye to their own sinfulness. However, to the end that none of us fall asleep, nor think himself to have performed all that God commands, when we shall have followed some path halfway, nor be utterly thrust out of the way altogether: Saint Paul says that the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

In saying that the flesh lusts, he does us to wit, that we shall never be able to serve God without disquieting, because we shall have many lets, and be continually tempted unto evil. Yea and when we be determinately bent to submit ourselves wholly unto God's word and righteousness: yet nevertheless the devil shall even then have his ropes to draw us one way or other.

Again, he will in such wise amaze us, as our fleshly desires shall still be a hindrance to us, and not only that: but also make us to draw back the clean contrary way, so that when God calls us on the one side, we shall be carried with a rage to the other side. Now seeing that the flesh lusts after that manner against the spirit: let us determine to fight manfully, and let it not grieve us so to do.

Although we ought to wish to be as Angels, so as there might be no striving in us, but that all our ability might be employed to the service of God, yet notwithstanding, whenever we be letted to do well, let us learn to strain ourselves, and to hold ourselves as prisoners: and although the same falls out greatly to our discontentment, yet nevertheless let us go on still further, that God may win the upper hand of us.

Let us learn to hate ourselves, to take displeasure against ourselves, and to be revenged of our own naughtiness, as Saint Paul says in the second to the Corinthians. For Repentance imports that men should condemn themselves, hate themselves, and take vengeance on themselves, when they see their whole life corrupted, and that they should use a holy anger against it.

Instead of desiring to be revenged of our enemies when they have done us any harm, we should be chafed and angry with ourselves, yea and punish ourselves for faults, when we cannot frame ourselves unto God's will.

But forasmuch as we might become desperate, and every man reply, "Alas, how should we fight after that fashion? Where is our strength? For there is nothing but weakness in us, and again we see that the devil is so mighty and strong an enemy, as we can never be able to subdue him, and our lusts are as mad beasts, without reason, without measure, without stay: by reason whereof we be as good as vanquished, even before any stroke be stricken."

Saint Paul says that the spirit also lusts against the flesh: that is to say, that whereas we be provoked to do evil of our own nature, and the devil thrusts us forward, it stands us in hand to fight so much the more valiantly against all the temptations wherewith we be pricked and spurred. And in so doing, we have a good help. For who shall gain the goal? Who shall have the upper hand and mastery? Shall the corruption that is in us? or shall the power of God have it? Therefore whenever God lists to utter the grace of his holy spirit, he shall always be the stronger and win the field, how great hardness soever there be in the matter.

So then let us do so much honor unto God, as to trust that he will uphold us, and make us to win the battle, and let us march on boldly under his banner, howbeit in calling upon him with reverence and wariness. For (as I have showed already) Saint Paul meant not to make it too hard a matter, because men are overmuch inclined to slothfulness. He meant not to rock men asleep: no, but he tells us, first that we must become enemies to ourselves, and fight against our own thoughts, and against all our affections, to serve God aright.

But now, because we might be astonished, and every of us might draw back because it is impossible for us to bring it about: he says, "Shall not God's spirit get the upper hand? Yes, but we have it not." And of whom is that long, but for that we resort not to him that is

ready to give it us, yea verily in such measure and portion as he knows to be for our behoof? Our Lord cries by the Prophet Isaiah, "All you that be athirst, come to the water, take both wine, water, and milk, without money or ware: for I am ready to give you bountifully as much as you need."

Lo how God speaks. Likewise our Lord Jesus Christ also tells us, that he is the true fountain whereout of it behooves us to draw, and that we shall be satisfied with his fullness, according as he says in the seventh of Saint John, that whosoever comes to him, shall drink his fill of water, yea and have such a well in himself, as Rivers shall gush out of it, so as he shall not only have enough to serve his own turn, but also the waters shall flow out of his belly, if he suffer Jesus Christ to pour out his spirit upon him, for he is pressed and ready to do it.

So then although God's spirit be a great way off from us: yet shall we receive enough of it, and God is ready to give it us, and he will do it because he has promised it, and forasmuch as he allures us so gently, we shall receive as much as shall stead our turn. Therefore like as we be warned here to fight, yea even with might and main: so on the other side it is showed us that our victory is most certain and infallible, so we seek succor at God's hand, acknowledging our own weakness, and confessing humbly that we can do nothing.

If we repair to our God, and desire him to be our Physician: his holy spirit shall not be so weak, but he shall overcome all the passions of our flesh, and give us the grace to go through with all the battles that shall be set against us. And now again Saint Paul says, that the faithful do not what they would: and that is to give them courage still, that we may learn to go onward, though we cannot bring all the things to pass thoroughly and perfectly which God shows unto us.

And this is needful as I said: for else we should be hypocrites, and bear ourselves in hand that nothing were amiss.

But such pride were intolerable: of which sort we see some mastiff dogs, in whom there is neither fear of God nor Religion, and yet they preach that the faithful ought to be perfect. And that is a devilish blasphemy, and such a one as we ought to abhor. There are others that despair when they see that they cannot discharge their duty towards God. To the end therefore that we may neither be hypocrites nor yet faint, Saint Paul says that we do not all that we would.

But however we fare, we must come back to that which he touched not long since: namely that we fulfill not the lusts of the flesh when we be governed by the Holy Ghost. So then, first let us understand that we be so given unto evil, that a man cannot wring out one drop of goodness out of our thoughts and affections, but they alienate us quite and clean from it. Mark that for one point.

Secondly let us trust in God, that notwithstanding our vices, yea, and rebellions, he will make us to walk in his obedience. For we shall be governed by his holy spirit, who will make us to feel such a working in us, as we shall not be held back nor hindered to go forward in our good race, but keep on still to the mark that we aim at.

Thirdly, if we see yet some resistance in ourselves, and that we had need to be enforced more and more, because that many thwart things do let us, insomuch that we do even fall, or else happen to run astray: let us not be discouraged for all that, but let us follow the holy calling of God, and still learn effectually to cut off our vices.

And to bring that to pass, let us be sorry for them, and confess them willingly before God. But however we fare, let us not think ourselves forsaken of him, though our life be never so imperfect.

Thus you see that the thing which we have to bear in mind, is that all the imperfections and infirmities that we feel as yet in ourselves, shall not restrain our endeavoring to submit ourselves to our God, and to frame ourselves more and more in his fear, and yet notwithstanding that in the meanwhile we shall not have any towel of flattery before our eyes to blind ourselves withal, but we shall be heartily sorry, confessing ourselves to be exceedingly indebted unto him and yet nevertheless aspiring still to the perfection whereto we must go onward all the time of our life, and therewithal acknowledging that we are all forlorn and damned, unless that he of his infinite goodness do bear with us for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake.

But now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us feel them more and more, so as we may not only confess them with our mouth, but also be touched with such true repentance and pure zeal, as we may endeavor to give ourselves wholly unto him, and to cut off all the superfluities that are in us, and as the same may cause us to frame ourselves to his holy will, and to serve him in such union and concord, that we may be given to magnify him with one heart, and with one mouth, thereby showing that we be rightly knit unto him in the adoption which he shows us by his Gospel, whereby he shows himself to be our father, as fain as we would be his true children. And therefore let us all say, "Almighty God our heavenly, &c."

The Thirty-Sixth Sermon,

which is the sixth upon the fifth Chapter.

19 The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, whoredom, uncleanness, lasciviousness:

20 Idolatry, poisoning enmity, strife, spiting, wrath, quarreling, sedition, etc.

21 Envy, murder, drunkenness, gluttony, and such like: of which I tell you beforehand, as I have told you heretofore, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness.

23 Meekness, temperance: against such things there is no law.

We have seen this morning that men are condemned before God, so as there cometh nothing of them but utter filthiness and infection. Now if God be the rule of all perfection, then of necessity all that is contrary to his nature and word must needs be stark naught. But it is certain that the flesh is at continual war against the spirit. Therefore therein it is declared that so long as men follow their own swing, they be deadly enemies to God all their life long. Seeing it is so, we must needs conclude that there is nothing in us but utter lewdness and sinfulness.

Now when we hear such sentence given of us, we ought to be utterly abashed. For it is the definitive sentence of the heavenly judge, against which there lieth no appeal, and again God's speaking is with effect. Therefore, seeing he hath pronounced that we be wicked and froward by nature, he will immediately do his office. So then we must come to account before him: but we see that men are so sotted either in their hypocrisy, or in their self-weening, that they pass not of provoking God's wrath against them. For every man flattereth and

fondleth himself in his vices, insomuch that we can never be drawn to a true acknowledgment of our sins, but by force.

And it is evident that our doing of it is with windlasses and bystarts, and which more is, we become so shameless that we seek fond shifts and excuses, as though they could help us before God. Therefore it is not enough for us to hear generally the sentence of condemnation upon us, but God must be fain to discover our lewdness, that we may be ashamed of it, and moreover to specify and point with his finger the vices that are apparent and notorious before men.

And that is the cause why S. Paul, having said this morning that men in all their thoughts and affections do fight against God, addeth this declaration which we have now presently heard, as though he brought forth the fruits, to the end that men might thereby judge what the tree is, because the root which is the chief thing lieth hid. Then like as the tree is known by his fruits, so also the sinfulness that reigneth in us, and in our nature is found out by the works that come of it.

And so we see why S. Paul addeth here, that the works of the flesh are manifest. As if he should say, men shut their eyes that they may not perceive their own naughtiness, and bear themselves in hand that there is nothing but virtue in them, when notwithstanding, their vices are so huge and excessive, as they be ready to burst with them: when they have pleaded their best, and sought all the starting holes that can be, when they have wrung their mouth awry, and turkined things never so much, yet must they in the end come to this point, that our life crieth out loud and shrill what we be. Therefore the works of the flesh are all manifest. So then this is enough to disprove such as would fain cloak themselves and use painting, as though they were not guilty before God.

Truth it is that S. Paul does not make here a full beadroll of all the vices that God condemns in his law: but only setteth forth some examples whereby a man may easily judge of all the rest. For he must have made a long process if he had intended to have made such a reckoning up of them: but this was enough, that such as wene to gain by their hypocrisy might be convicted here, as ye see they be.

And for the better understanding hereof, we have to mark briefly, which is the rule whereby to walk in obedience towards God, according to the 2nd of Titus, where it is said that God's grace appeared to the end we should lead a holy conversation here beneath in this world, in modesty and righteousness, waiting for the hope of the life that is promised us, and for the coming of the great Savior, which must gather us up to himself into the kingdom of heaven.

Ye see then that the thing wherein Christians must exercise themselves and whereto they must wholly apply themselves, is first to know that they have not their everlasting rest and heritage here, but that the world is but as a strange country wherethrough they must pass, and therefore that they must always have their eyes lifted up to heavenward. That is the chief point. But that cannot be done, but the faithful must needs therewithal call upon God, and resort wholly unto him.

And as touching their life, Saint Paul saith that it hath three things in it: namely, holiness, that we serve God soundly and substantially with a pure heart, utterly renouncing all the uncleanness of this world. That is the first point. The second is that we must not be wanton and unhonest, but that we must lead an honest life. The third is that we wrong no man, nor use any deceit or cruelty, but that we endeavor to do our neighbor good. Lo, what the life of Christians is.

But Saint Paul saith here that if men will not acknowledge themselves to be utter enemies to God, and full of all naughtiness and rebellion, let them but make a short inquiry, and look into their life, and they shall find that some of them be whoremongers, some drunkards, some given to all ribaldry, some murderers, some sorcerers, some seditious, some full of ambition, and others desirous to sow abroad darnel and troubles, and to bring up sects to pervert God's truth with their corruptions. Thus you see what is to be found in men if their lives be well searched.

But what shall they win by going to law with God, and by laboring to cover their lewdness with shifting? Nothing at all. Howbeit they confess not it with their mouth: it is their life that must speak it: their life together with all their works that are known in it, bear record of the things that I have said, and so there needeth no more disputing.

Furthermore, when as Saint Paul saith that the works of the flesh are manifest: he means not that all those whom God suffers to follow their natural swing, and whom he governs not by his holy spirit, are attainted with all the vices here named: but that there is not any man who is not so corrupted that he abandons himself sometime to one naughtiness and sometime to two or three at once, as occasion serves.

You shall see many heathen men and unbelievers, in whom there is no fear of God, nor any knowledge of his word, which have some outward show of virtue and honesty: yet is it no consequent that they be not corrupted, howbeit that the affection is hidden and settled inwardly, and there is an imposthume that rotteth all within.

However the case stand, there is neither rule nor measure in man's nature, but all is out of order and confounded there. You see then that the thing which we have to gather upon this strain is that we

must not be beguiled with our own hypocrisy, but every of us must have an eye to himself, and examine his own life thoroughly, and then shall we all have cause to cast down our eyes, and to shut our mouths, and therewith to acknowledge that we be wretched, and that there is nothing but damnation in us.

Truly although none of the things that Saint Paul rehearses here do appear in us, so as we be blameless before men, yea and seem to be little angels: yet cease we not to be wicked and untoward, till God have reformed us. Nevertheless, God gives every of us sufficient record in our lives, whereby to cast us quite down, and to make us give over our pleading of our own accord.

Thus you see in effect, that the mean to put this lesson in use, is that if we think ourselves to be anything worth, and perceive not the wants that are in us: we must sift our life, and compare our works with the things that God biddeth or forbiddeth: and then we shall have a fair looking glass, wherein to behold our lewdness and filthiness: and whereas it seemed erst that there was nothing but all pureness and perfection in us: God will show us to our faces, that we be full of wickedness.

And yet nevertheless when we shall have considered this diverse and many times: let us thereupon conclude that it is not the hundredth part of it. For we shall always be dim-sighted in finding out of our own wants. Although God constrain and reprove us in such wise as we cannot deny it: yet will he show in the end that for every point that we have known, there are a hundred that were hidden from us.

And verily when we see our works laid open before us: it is to make us go to the wellspring of them. Many men are so gross, that if they have not committed whoredom, if they have not played the drunkards openly, or if their filching and pilfering have been so

covertly and finely conveyed as no man could bewray them, they think themselves quite and clear. But Saint Paul's intent in saying that the works of the flesh are manifest is not to flatter men as though a sin were not to be condemned till it were openly seen in deed. For as I told you, we must proceed from the one to the other.

Then if whoredom, drunkenness, robbery, murder, treason, blasphemy against God, troublesome, and sedition, be detestable things in themselves: we must also conclude thereupon that the wickedness which lurketh within the heart (as ambition and pride when men esteem and like of themselves too much) is detestable likewise. Also covetousness when we have a mind to other men's goods, and all other like things are to be condemned likewise. To be short, our outward doings bear witness that we be full of infection before God.

And where is that infection to be found? In our desires, in our intents, in our thoughts, and in all our doings, we see there is even as it were a wellspring of all naughtiness. So then, let us be drawn to such an acknowledgment of our sins, as we may be heartily sorry for them before God. And we see that in the Law there is such a fashion of teaching. God in his Law forbiddeth not fornication, but adultery: yea and at the first sight he forbiddeth not fraud and filching: what forbiddeth he then? Theft or robbery. He forbiddeth not lying, but only false witness. Now then it should seem to them which know not the power of the law, that they have well discharged their duty when they have well eschewed those crimes. And that is the cause why Saint Paul said that for a time he thought himself to be thoroughly righteous, and that God could not have blamed him for anything. After the same manner do the hypocrites settle themselves in their own self-willing, and thereupon become mad if God find fault with them, because they think he does them great wrong. And why? For

they conceive not what the nature of the Law is. It is spiritual (says Saint Paul): that is to say, we must be wholly reformed to frame ourselves thereafter. But so long as we follow our own fleshly nature, all that we think, and all that we can say or do, shall be no better than sin before God.

So then, we must not look only at the bare words that are set down in the Law, but to the things that are meant and contained in them. God by setting down the particular kind of adultery, meant to make all kind of whoredom hateful: for if marriage continue not whole and sound without impeachment, it perverts all order and civil policy among men. God therefore under the word Adultery, has showed that all whoredom and unchasteness displeases him.

Again, he says, "Thou shalt not kill." Is it then lawful to beat a man? No, nor yet to hate him: for (as Saint John says) he that hates his neighbor secretly is a murderer before God, though he neither torments him nor touches him with his finger. So then, under the word Murder, God condemns all wrong that we do to our neighbors. Although then that we stir not a finger to do them harm: yet if we hate them or bear them ill will, we be condemned of murder before God.

In like case is it with Theft. For not only they that are whipped, hanged, or which have their ears cut off are thieves before God: but also even all those that bear the countenance of honest men and are in credit and estimation, are thieves too, if they deceive and beguile their neighbors. What countenance soever they carry to the worldward, though men be not able to accuse them of robbery: yet are they thieves before God. As much is to be said of all the rest.

Likewise in this text, when Saint Paul says that the deeds of the flesh are manifest: he gives us such an instruction as leads us from the

great to the small. And when we shall have been convicted of our wretchedness and vices, and our shamefulnesse is so discovered as we can no more reply to it: let us then enter into another trial, that is to wit, of examining all our lusts which tempt us unto evil: and whether it be theft, cruelty, guile, perjury, hatred, or enmity, all those things are to be condemned alike. For the Tree ceases not to be evil, though men see not the fruits of it at the first dash: but yet men judge of the nature of the tree by his fruit, howbeit that the tree keeps his own nature still. And this is to be marked well, because that (as I said before) although God drive men to condemn themselves, yet they do it but by halves, and for all that he can do to them, they would fain still that their faults which are not seen to the worldward, should be released them and never be spoken of. As for example, he that is condemned for doing some wicked act, will not excuse himself of it, for as much as he is enforced to confess it whether he will or no: But in the meanwhile, as for any entering into himself, to think upon God's Justice and his own desert, and to consider that he had many temptations before he came to the deed doing, and that he offended God a hundred times before his fault came to light: it is no part of his thought. So much the more therefore does it stand us in hand to mark well this warning which I have touched already.

And verily here we see the over gross doltishness of the chief teachers of Papistry, in that they say it is no sin to think evil or to be tempted, so we consent not to it. A man (say they) may be tempted to do his neighbor some wrong, he may have some heartburning and malice against him to be revenged of him that has displeased him, and if occasion were offered, he might incontinently be sharp set: but yet none of all this is sin (say they) so there be no full consent and resolute purpose to do it. They do but wring their mouth awry like harlots, or snuff up their snouts like swine that have wallowed in dirt and filth.

Though a man grudge and chafe against God, yea and doubt whether he have any care of him or no: and though he be tossed and turmoiled with much distrust so as he cannot by any means resort to God for refuge: all these things are no sin among the Papists. And I say not that only the common sort are thus abused: but it is the resolute doctrine and determination of all their Universities, that such things ought not to be counted sin. They can well enough say that before baptism all is sin: but when we be once baptized, then all is virtue: and although we doubt of God, although we have much heartburning against him, and although we be tempted with much impatience: yet notwithstanding, be we never so much provoked unto evil-doing, or be we never so much shaken to and fro; all is well. To be short, though we be inclined to all things that God condemns and disallows in his law, and which are not lawful for us to do: it makes no matter at all.

But they be well worthy to be cast into such blockishness. For like as they have set up idols and puppets to worship: so is it good reason that they should be sotted with their Gods, and make but a sport and play of righteousness and incorruptness, as if a man should play with a little child. No marvel then though such manner of folk be harried away after that fashion: for inasmuch they have defaced God's glory and brought it to nothing: they must needs become stark beasts.

But let us on our side mark what I have alleged already upon the other text of Saint Paul, namely that the Law is spiritual, and therefore that if our manifest deeds do prove us to be rebels against God: then surely as often as we be tickled with any wicked lusts inwardly, although the same be not known of men to make us faulty to the worldward: God will find an infinite number, yea even a whole sea of them. Therefore let us conclude that we be utterly drowned in cursedness to all respects, till God look mercifully upon us and draw

us out of it. Thus you see in effect how we must apply this saying of Saint Paul to our instruction: namely that for so much as we consider not by the vices that are hidden in us, that God comes to examine our life: therefore we must learn to humble ourselves.

And secondly that when we see our sins to be such as are known and manifest to all men and utterly inexcusable, yea even before children: we must be led further thereby: that is to wit, we must search ourselves to the bottom, and understand that all our lusts and all our thoughts are utter rebelliousness against God. Now if every man were diligent in examining himself after this fashion: surely we should all of us have cause to sigh and groan, all pride and loftiness would be laid down, yea and we would be ashamed of our whole life. But it is seen that every of us turns away as much as he can from the considering of his own sins: we cast them quite and clean behind our backs.

Yet notwithstanding God forgets them not: howbeit if we would that he should forget them, it would behoove us to remember them ourselves. And that is the thing whereunto Saint Paul encourages us in this text. Furthermore we see what fondness and ignorance, or rather beastliness has been in the Popish doctors, in that they have thought this word Flesh to betoken nothing else in man but fleshliness or sensuality as they term it. For thus do they part it. They be contented to grant that there is nothing but corruption in all our lusts which they term by the name of inferior or lower: but in the meantime (say they) we have our will free, yea even in such sort as there remains some sound reason and understanding in us.

You see then, that in the opinion of the Papists, man is then sensual, when he behaves not himself according to reason, but yields too much either to whoredom, or to drunkenness, or to gluttony, or to

such other like things. But Saint Paul musters Ambition or vainglory here in the same rank with them. For whereof comes it that men bear such spite one to another, and heave one at another to surmount each other, and to be counted wiser or wittier than other men? Is it not for that every man covets to be a jolly fellow to the worldward? And is that fault less to be condemned than whoredom or drunkenness? When a poor wretch that desires but to eat and drink, has well filled his belly, he goes his way as he was wont, he desires to be neither King nor great Lord, he passes away his time. Another that is given to play, goes to sport him with unthrifts like himself, and is not tempted with ambition or desire of honor.

Those then which seem most honorable, and make most of their painted sheath, are most fleshly says Saint Paul, according also as we have seen in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, where he blamed them as fleshly, because they were at variance one against another about the doctrine, and were so fond and curious to be seen and had in estimation of men, in respect whereof also he mentions sects and heresies. If a man trouble God's Church by false doctrine, whether it be in despite of some men, or to purchase himself reputation and renown: after the opinion of the Papists it is not to be said that it is fleshly dealing, it is to be said that it was but too subtle dealing.

Yet, Saint Paul says that heresy, vain glory, and strife or spiting, are works of the flesh. Now then we see the thing that we treated of this morning: to wit, that under the word Flesh is comprehended all that is a man's own, and that we must be changed and fashioned anew, or else we shall be given to all naughtiness. It is true (as I have touched already) that although God suffers the Pagans and Infidels to run upon the bridle, and have not begotten them again by his holy spirit: yet they may after a sort be counted virtuous, and a man shall find

some honesty in their lives, at leastwise all of them shall not be whoremongers, drunkards, or thieves.

How then does Saint Paul call them fleshly? Because man's heart (as says the Prophet Jeremiah) is a deep gulf of iniquity, whereof there is neither bank nor bottom to be found, and that does the Prophet well betray in saying, what a gulf is the heart of man, and who is able to sound it? None but God (says he). For we see how men flatter themselves, and are so festering in their naughtiness, and so hardened in their sins, that they heap mischief upon mischief, and sin upon sin, and bear themselves in hand that their vices are virtues, but yet their life shall have some fair show and gloss upon it.

But yet does it not therefore follow, that such as have not been taught are justified. For when Saint Paul in the first to the Romans says, that all the world is condemned of wickedness and unthankfulness, inasmuch as God had so showed himself to all men without exception, as suffices to take away all excuse from them: he adds, that because they honored not God as they ought to have done when they knew him, therefore he did cast them up into a lewd mind, and give them over to shameful and outrageous lusts: and thereupon he rehearses horrible things. Among which, he sets down whoredom, murder, and other wickedness and uncleanness, such as ought not to be once named among men.

After them, he sets down envy, lewd dealing in buying and selling, guilefulness, perjury, hatred, strife, and debate. Go to now, all this gear was not known among the unbelievers, and yet notwithstanding Saint Paul says that all of them from the greatest to the least, were thankless towards God, and had defrauded him of his due honor, and therefore were all traitors, for they had plucked from him the thing that was his own, and therefore he paid them their deserved wages,

namely because the seed of all sin is to be found in man's nature. All men then are fraught with as many vices as can be devised: but yet does God hold them short, so as he suffers not men to give over themselves to all naughtiness.

And for proof thereof, many Infidels which have not natural reason to govern themselves withal, are notwithstanding chaste and shamefast, they spoil not other men of their goods, they be sober and honest, and to be short, they have many virtues after the opinion of the world. And why then are they condemned as whore hunters, thieves, and drunkards? It is because they have not those virtues in obedience to God, neither is there any soundness in their heart: but they be restrained with fear of shame, or held in the way by some other means unknown to us.

But yet does God, by that means, spare mankind, to the end that things should not go to havoc, nor men become altogether brutish beasts. God then does so rule the unbelievers, as that their virtues (howsoever the world goes) cease not to be sinful still. And therefore, upon every light occasion, they give themselves to all naughtiness, whenever God gives them the bridle. If it be said that the faithful also do over-shoot themselves: I grant it: but yet has God promised to strengthen them, so as they shall hold out to the end.

Again, there is great diversity between God's children that are governed by his spirit, and the faithless that are still fleshly. For the intent and drift of God's children, is to dedicate themselves wholly unto him, that they may be made pure through his grace: but the other sort walk at rovers, and when they do any good, they scarcely have the skill to know why they do it. They may well have the word virtue in their mouths: but yet for all that, their going is not to Godward, but they keep still aloof from him.

This in effect is the thing that we have to gather upon this strain. Now on the other side, Saint Paul says, that the fruits of the spirit are joy, peace, meekness, gentleness, patience, and such other like. As if he should say, that considering our great frowardness and that there is nothing in us but corruption and naughtiness: we have enough wherewith to keep ourselves occupied, so as we shall not need to be idle all our life long, if we do nothing else but fight against our own vices: we shall find enough there, to busy ourselves with both day and night.

Again on the other side, since we are commanded to be meek and gentle, to live sober and chaste in all respects, to keep ourselves from all defiling, to offer ourselves as it were in sacrifice unto God, to forbear from all harm or annoyance, and instead of seeking our own profit to strain ourselves to the uttermost to succor and help such as have need of us: since we see that all this is commanded us: is it possible for us to bring it to pass? No: and yet the matter concerns our catching up into heaven, that we might be near unto God. For the holiness that is required in the law, and all the good works that God commands us, are as a knitting of him unto us, and of us unto him.

But where are now the wings that should carry us up so high? For we can be neither chaste, nor kindhearted, nor gentle, nor modest, nor sober: unless we be wholly and clean plucked from our own nature, by forsaking both the world and ourselves. But that surpasses all our ability. Then is there here wherewith to abash us.

But mark how Saint Paul for conclusion says, that there is no law against such things. That is to say, if we be once governed by God's spirit, then shall we no more be subject to the law. It is true that here he gives courage to all the faithful, because they shall always feel infirmity in themselves, till they be quite rid of this mortal body.

But however the case stands, seeing that God holds them up, and ceases not to accept their service though they be not thoroughly and perfectly reformed: therefore they may be able to hold out, whereas otherwise they should be cumbered and fall into despair.

Saint Paul then meant to exhort us here unto constancy, saying that if we be governed by God's spirit, we are no more subject to the law. But yet therewithal he did also give an indirect taunt to those against whom he disputes, as we have seen already this morning. For the things which they had for their virtues were but gewgaws.

Like as in these days in popery, if a man speak of their holiness and their serving of God: it is nothing else but a making of mops and mows, and a sort of Ceremonies that is to say, a deal of pelting trash. When a Papist mumbles up his matins, when he hails or greets a puppet, when he gads from altar to altar, when these hypocrites have lighted up their candles, when they have sprinkled themselves well with holy water, when they have well crossed and recrossed themselves both before and behind, when they have fasted Lent well, and to be short when they have over-labored themselves to redeem themselves either by Masses or by other abominations: that is their serving and honoring of God.

Besides this, if there be a fair Lamp in the Church, if the Organs pipe merrily, if there be store of gay copes and vestments, if the puppets be well gilded, if men perfume them thoroughly and seek their favor with many other such dotages: that is all the perfection of the Papists.

And yet is it but stark leasing, yea and very gewgaws, or rather utter abominations, however great virtues so ever they esteem them to be. But we on our side say that God's service is spiritual and that he regards not the things that are seen of men, but requires

incorruptness and soundness of heart, according as it is said in the fifth of Jeremiah.

Contrariwise men persuade themselves that they shall content God after their own fashion and after their own customs, and therefore they transform him, imagining him to be like themselves to follow their lusts and likings.

And no marvel though they do so. For although they profess themselves to be learned in the law: yet do they not set their minds upon it, neither wot they what it containeth. Therefore let us learn, that if we mind to give ourselves to the serving of God, we must not buzz about our own liking and good intents (as they term them) which are nothing else but illusions of Satan: but we must look what God commands us, and wherein he will have us to occupy ourselves, which are the true studies that will bring us to the yielding of obedience unto him.

And it stands us on hand to mark well the text that is set down here: which is, that if we weary ourselves never so much in our own inventions: we cannot say that God accepts any whit of it: for we continue still in our own nature, which is froward. Whereabouts then does God imply us? What is it that he requires of us? First that we should forsake all frowardness, hatred, rancor, dissension, guile, harmfulness, blasphemy, idolatry, cruelty, fierceness, treachery, spitefulness, and enmity. Thus you see how we may become good men of war, to give ourselves to the serving of God, namely by fighting against the works of the flesh, not against the works that are manifest, and which the world condemns or allows: but against the lusts that lurk in covert.

Let us first cleanse ourselves from the filthiness that lies festering within our hearts: and afterward apply our whole endeavor to the

other. Not that we can do it of ourselves: but let us be diligent in praying unto God, let every of us stir up himself early and late, morning and evening, and upon knowledge of our vices, let us be moved to soreness, and seek succor from whence it ought to come: that is to wit at God's hand who must remedy the sore that he has made.

Then if we endeavor ourselves to the uttermost to lead a blessed life, to be meek and mild, to be patient in adversities and to put up all wrongs and outrages without seeking vengeance: we shall have enough wherewith to occupy our wits, and to keep ourselves from idleness. And as for the Papists, let us let them alone seeing they dally so with God. For why do they trot up and down after that fashion? It is because they never knew how God will be served and honored: and therefore (to their seeming) all that God has ordained is nothing worth in comparison of their own foolish inventions.

As for example, if a man travel honestly for his living, although he have not his fill of brown bread, yet ceases he not to call upon God in the morning, and to yield him praise at night. And if he have children, he spares all that he can to feed them and clothe them withal. Again if God sends him afflictions in his house, he bears them patiently. If he be a handicraftsman, or have some other trade of occupying: he abstains from deceiving of his neighbors, and he had rather die than do any man wrong. Now when a man walks after such sort, so that he is first of honest conversation, and secondly there is no pride in him to advance himself above others out of measure, he is not given to looseness, but is sober in eating and drinking, and patient in all adversities: what is such a man among the Papists? He is (say they) a secular man: that is to say, a man of the world.

Thus you see what they esteem to be pureness in the service of God. But we know that the chief service which God requires, is that we should wholly draw to his lure, that we should glorify him both in weal and woe, that we should walk every man in his own calling, and that there be neither pride, vainglory, nor envy in us. Those are the things that God allows. But according to the Papists' definition, they that behave themselves so, are of the world.

And where are the popish Angels in this while? In some Cloister. When these shameless hypocrites have glutted themselves to the full, and made lusty cheer: they wot not whereabouts to occupy themselves, but either in gaming, or else in all manner of wickedness: for it is well known that all the Convents of the Papadom are stark brothelhouses. And would God they were not worse than brothelhouses! For there are committed so outrageous and beastly deeds, as would make a man's hair to stand up stiff upon his head to hear them spoken of.

To be short, that state of theirs is horrible. And yet for all that, they be Angels in respect of the poor souls that behave themselves after the manner aforesaid. And why? Because they sing matins very devoutly, & chant mass by note, and are separated from the rest of the world, so as they be not put to digging of the earth, nor meddle not with shoemaker's craft or tailor's craft, nor with any trade else: but give themselves (you may be sure) to a contemplative life, and to the state of perfection. Is it not apparent that the world hath been utterly sotted with them? But such people as have so transformed God into puppets, are well worthy to be plunged in so gross & unreasonable errors. But for our part let us assure ourselves that we have a God which is a spirit, & will be served spiritually as he shows us by his word. Therefore let us be afraid to be under the fond fancies wherewith those miserable wretches are bewitched: & let us consider

that God's communicating of himself unto us, is to the end that we should repair unto him in all holiness, righteousness, and faithfulness, and therewithal examine our lives by his law, & not by our own opinion, or by the opinion of the world.

Again let us also have an eye to that which he alloweth or forbiddeth, for it is he to whom we must yield up our account, and we shall have none other judge but him alone. Therefore let us look to all these things & exercise ourselves in them, knowing that we shall not lose our labor in being so occupied: and let us let the Papists alone, which break both their legs & their necks, & know not what they do, saving that they grieve God and provoke him more & more. To the end then that we travail not in vain, nor wander here & there after opinions, without having any certain mark to aim at. Let us exercise ourselves in the thing that S. Paul teacheth us in this text, & then shall we not be condemned for busying of our heads about things of nothing, which God blameth and misliketh, and also avoweth to be but trifles.

Now let us cast ourselves down before the Majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us so to feel them, as it may beat us ... that we being condemned in ourselves ... unto him, knowing that he is always ready to succor ... thirst after his grace and long for it unfeignedly: and that forasmuch as he hath given us to our Lord Jesus Christ, & Christ hath taken us into his keeping: it may please him to pour out the treasures and gifts of his holy spirit upon us, to make us partakers thereof, and to increase his grace more and more in us, that we may be so fenced with it, as we may obtain victory against all Satan's assaults, and against the world and our own flesh. That it may please him to grant this grace not only to us but also to all people. &c.

The Thirty-Seventh Sermon,

which is the seventh upon the fifth Chapter.

22 But the fruit of the spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance, against such things there is no law.

24 Now, they that are of Christ, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.

25 If we live after the spirit, let us also walk after the spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, and envying one another.

We have seen heretofore that if we be willing to serve God, we shall find enough wherewith to occupy ourselves in chastising our vices, if every of us considers to how much corruption and sinfulness he is subject. And Saint Paul has purposely set before us the sins that reign in us by nature, to the intent we might know whereupon to set our minds to frame ourselves aright to the obeying of God. For we see how men busy themselves about trifling things in showing themselves willing to serve God: they trudge in a measure. Howbeit, all is but vain and unprofitable labor, according to what we see in the Popedom, where men give the name of God's service to a sort of toys that they have devised of their own brain. And yet in all those things though they like never so well of them, and glory in them never so

much, there is nought else but vanity, and in the meanwhile they never pass of coming to the principal: for the world does always seek windlasses. But God sets the right way before us in His law: and if we intend to go forward to the true perfection unfeignedly, we must begin at the forsaking of ourselves, because there is no wisdom in us that is not cursed, no thought that is not wicked, nor no desire that is not froward and corrupted.

For this cause Saint Paul told us before that if men be minded to order their life well, first they shall find enough to occupy themselves withal, if every man considers what a number of entangled and wicked lusts he has in him to be cut up: which thing will not be done out of hand. And also Saint Paul spoke these words purposely to such as busied themselves about the Ceremonies of the law. For although they said generally that the things which God had commanded were to be fulfilled: yet the chief things that they made account of, were Circumcision and the Ceremonies. Now hereupon Saint Paul tells us that God will have us occupied about greater matters: that is to wit, he will have us to fight manfully against the great number of things that turn us aside from the right way.

And now he adds on the contrary part, that the fruits of the spirit are lovingness, meekness, gentleness, meekness, steadiness, and such other like things, and that when all things are thus well ruled, the law has no more power over us, for we are set free from it, because our Lord Jesus Christ who has exempted us from it, governs us. To be short, the mark that he shoots at, is that Christians should be free from the bondage of the law. Not all those which have the name of Christianity in their mouth, or which make their brags of it: but such as show by their deeds that they be members of our Lord Jesus Christ, inasmuch as they are begotten again by his holy spirit. For men's lives must be answerable thereto, or else all their protestations

are nothing worth, yea and they shall be proved liars, unless it appears by their works that they speak truly and unfeignedly.

Besides this, whereas Saint Paul extols all goodness, and all commendable things as fruits of the spirit: thereby he confirms the thing that I told you heretofore: which is, that if there be any one drop of goodness in us, the same is not of our own growing, neither can we challenge the praise of it without doing wrong and injury unto God. For they are all of them fruits of his grace, and he is fain to put them into us by his holy spirit. You see then that here again we are humbled, to the end that none of us should deceive himself in thinking that he has any virtue or steadiness, or lovingness, or any other like thing of his own.

For until such time as God has shaped us anew again, we are like a piece of ground that is barren, yea and stark naught. For we not only bear not any good thing: but also bring forth exceeding much evil, till our Lord has rid us of it: like a naughty ground, which not only is unprofitable to the owner in that it yields him neither corn, wine, nor other necessary things: but also brings forth thistles, thorns, and wicked weeds. Even at the same point are we.

And now we have to mark, (according also as Saint Paul has declared heretofore) that love is the sum and substance of the law: which he has set down here in the foremost rank, not to make us forget the calling upon God, nor the affiance which we ought to have in all his promises, and the whole service that is contained in the first table of the law. Saint Paul holds not scorn of those things, neither would he have them rejected: but the matter that he treats of, is how men may give sure proof to the worldward, whether they be rightly minded to the obeying of God or no. And I have told you already, that such proof is seen by our loving of our neighbors, when we be not given

every man to his own profit, but labor in common to nourish good peace and unity, and put to our helping hand also so far as God gives us ability and means wherewith to do them good to whom we be bound by his word.

Thus you see why Saint Paul sets down the word Love in the first place. It is not to the intent we should so love our neighbors, that God should be thrust back behind us: but because that in having mutual love and friendship one with another, we show ourselves to be rightly given and dedicated to God: which thing cannot be with trust in him, nor without resorting unto him by prayer and supplication.

Furthermore, seeing that all the things which bear the name of virtue, and are justly commended among men, are called the fruits of the spirit: surely it is much more likely that when we should come unto God, and be armed against all temptations, and be earnest in praying by means of faith: we be not ready for it if the Holy Ghost works not in us. Then of natural inclination there is not anything in us whereby we take hold of the doctrine of the Gospel: neither are we so lightsome as to mount up unto God, to talk familiarly with him by prayer and supplication, but the Holy Ghost must dispose us to it, by enlightening our hearts with his grace, and by moving our hearts to call upon him. Lo what we have to remember here.

Now whereas Saint Paul matches joy with love, it is not only to do us to understand that we shall be quiet to Godward, and have cheerful hearts, when he shall have received us to mercy and showed himself to favor us: but he speaks of another kind of joy, which is that there be no heartburning among us to make us lower one at another, nor spite to withdraw us from our neighbors: but that we be gentle and fellowlike, yea and that we be glad when we can aid and succor them

that have need of us. In the 14th to the Romans Saint Paul says, that the kingdom of heaven is joy of spirit: howbeit he takes that word in another meaning. For we may rejoice in God when he witnesses unto us that he receives us for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and without that, we must needs be vexed and turmoiled with such unrest, as we shall live in continual trouble.

It is true that the despisers of God do sport themselves as much as may be in their jollity: but yet have they never any rest or joy: for they be fain to suffer much heartburning inwardly, and God does so sting them with sundry heartbitings, as they be always in heaviness and vexation: in so much that when they would be merry, they be fain to play the brute beasts, and to shake off all understanding, so as the discerning of good and evil is quite and clean daunted in them. Now it is a cursed joy when men stray away after that fashion from God, and forget what they be.

But (as I have told you already) Saint Paul speaks here of the joy that we have in being conversant with our neighbors. And after the same manner also is the word faith, which means faithfulness and soundness of heart. It is a faith that respects God, and that is the sure belief which we have of his promises, according whereunto it is said that we be justified by faith, because it appears that God abolishes and mortifies in us whatsoever is of our own nature.

Therefore [in that faith] we must be grounded upon God's only mercy which is showed us in our Lord Jesus Christ. But how come we to the possessing of so great a benefit? By trusting unto God's promises, and by receiving them with all obedientness, acknowledging ourselves to be damned and forlorn, and resting only upon him. You see then that our faith which respects God, is an assurance which we conceive of his goodness and love towards us, to

the end we may press unto him, not doubting but that he hears us. And for that cause also Saint Paul says, that those who have such faith, do trust boldly in God, and therewithal do also freely and boldly pray unto him.

But in this present text, Saint Paul takes faith for the faithfulness which we perform one to another when we walk uprightly, so as we go not about to deceive our neighbor through lewdness or subtlety, nor use any double dealing, nor any dissimulation to wind about the simple, but do the same to other folk which we would have done to ourselves. Thus you see how Saint Paul means that faith is a fruit of the spirit.

Now he adds Meekness and gentleness, because that without them it were impossible that there should be any unity or concord among us. For if every man should be terrible and void of gentleness, it were much better for us that we were wild beasts. Therefore we must show a willingness to communicate with those to whom God has linked us. To be short, Love is maintained by this meekness, goodness, and gentleness whereof Saint Paul speaks here.

And now immediately he adds, Temperance [or stayedness], which is not only an abstaining from other men's goods, but also a sober behavior, and a keeping of ourselves from all looseness, excess, and outrage. To be short, Saint Paul has set down these virtues which he rehearses, for Christians, as if he should say, that if we be governed by the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, it may well appear by our life, for as much as we shall be so held in awe, that we shall not run at rovers as these loose livers do, but we shall be charitable and kindhearted one to another, so as there shall be no wrangling, no guile, nor no extortion in us, but every of us shall content himself with his own, and endeavor to serve one another's turn.

But yet notwithstanding we see that all good comes of God's spirit. Nevertheless we see also that our Lord Jesus Christ is the fountain out of which we must draw. And that if we be his, and belong unto him as members of his body, he will show in all our whole life, that his receiving of us, and his avowing of us to be his children, is not in vain.

Hereupon Saint Paul concludes, that against such virtues, (or against the men that are endued with them) the law has no power nor force at all. And therefore he says in the first to Timothy, that the Law is not given to the righteous, but to the unrighteous, and to such as rush out into offenses and misdealings.

Then if the deceivers that troubled the Church at that time, had known well what is the end of the Law and the Gospel: they would not have presumed to bring the faithful in bondage after that fashion. And therefore Saint Paul, scorning their hypocrisy which was matched with shamelessness, shows that they pretended great zeal of the Law, and yet betrayed all manner of wickedness and contempt of God in their life: like as nowadays the Hypocrites in the Papadom cry out loud against us, that we overthrow all good works, and intend to bring in a licentiousness of all evil, and to thrust out all desire of serving God. And why so? Because we uncase men out of all their fond presumption and self-estimation, and show them that there is none other means to trust in God, than by resting upon his mere goodness in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We say flatly that all that ever is termed by the name of merit or desert, is stark abomination before God. For so much as they bear themselves in hand that they be their own Saviors. You see then that all loftiness of man is pulled down by our doctrine. But yet does not that import that every man should take leave to do lewdly, and have

no more care of serving God, nor of standing in awe of him. But contrariwise we say that Jesus Christ is given unto us, not only to obtain forgiveness of our sins at God's hand by his means: but also to the end that being regenerated by his holy spirit, we should walk in newness of life.

And now in sooth what manner of men are they that maintain the deserts of good works so stoutly? We see there is nothing but all kinds of cursed filthiness in their whole life. For if a man would seek for scoffers that are altogether unholy, and never have so much as any one feeling that ever they shall come to account, but are utterly doted by Satan: surely those are even they.

Again, when as they magnify good works: what are the things that they would have men to give themselves unto? To babble much, to go to matins and evensong, to trot from altar to altar, to worship puppets, to deck themselves trim, to buy store of pardons, to gad on pilgrimage, and (to be short) to mock God to his face, as though all the service of God were but a play of young children. True it is that they dare not say but it is a good and commendable thing to be discrete, chaste, sober, and so forth: but yet they can easily forbear all those things, so a man keeps their superstitions. To be short, all God's commandments are thrust underfoot, and as it were trodden upon, and to their seeming it is no devotion nor holiness, except a man do all their gay gewgaws and things of nothing.

Thus you see how the contention that Saint Paul had in his time, endures still at this day. And for that cause he says, that if his adversaries against whom he disputes, will maintain God's Law, they must consider well to whom it speaks, and they must begin at themselves: and that if they intend to make good scholars, they must teach them soberness, meekness, chastity, patience, and such other

things, and moreover to renounce all their own wicked lusts. These (says Saint Paul) are the true exercises wherein it behooves us to employ all our endeavor. And in the meantime let us not shut the gate against God's children, in bereaving them of the privilege that God has given them. For when he governs them by his holy spirit, he will not have them subject any more to the yoke of the Law.

Now thereupon Saint Paul adds, that all they which are in Jesus Christ, have crucified their flesh, with the lusts thereof. Here he shows that he requires not to have a fleshly liberty, and such a one as the despisers of God imagine that he chiefly requires, that such as talk of Christian liberty, should show in deed that they have crucified all their lusts and concupiscences, to the intent thereby to prove themselves the true members of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this is needful for us: to the end we may hold to the lawful order and mark which God points us to, when we would know what true liberty is.

Nowadays there are many Christians from the teeth outward, as far as comes to the eating of flesh upon Fridays and in Lent: they can well enough mock at the pelting toys of papistry: they can well enough say, that if any restraint be made of one thing or other under pain of deadly sin, it is but an abuse and mockery: and they say truth, so they build upon a good and sure foundation. But what? They that are so great talkers, know no whit of our Lord Jesus Christ's office and power: they know not why he came down into the world, nor what grace he imparts unto us by his Gospel: they know not, neither what faith, nor what prayer is: and yet for all that, they will needs have leave to do what they list, and that folks should lay the bridle loose in their neck. Of these wild Christians there are too many nowadays. In the meantime, the doctrine of God is blamed by their means. For the enemies of the truth upbraid us with all such as are

loose livers nowadays, and say that the same springs of our preaching.

For this cause Saint Paul has answered his adversaries, and also armed and fenced us to answer them, to the end to stop the mouths of all railers, and of all such as do falsely slander the doctrine of the Gospel. First of all therefore when the wicked sort say, that we give an inordinate liberty to all such as seek nothing but to do lewdly: Let us look back to Saint Paul, who tells them that the liberty which we speak of, serves for none but such as are a law to themselves, namely through the working of the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But yet notwithstanding this ought to serve for a warning to all such as imagine a liberty after their own liking. Therefore let them understand, that first of all it behooves them to become members of our Lord Jesus Christ. Will we then eat quietly without making any trouble? Will we be exempted from all restraints which do nowadays vex the simple and ignorant sort in the Papacy? Let us understand what Jesus Christ is, and let us be thoroughly his. Let him govern us, and let his death and passion show their power and effectiveness in our whole life.

Thus you see what we have to bear in mind in this text. And here Saint Paul shows again, that the true perfection of God's children consists in abasing themselves, so as they follow not the rule of their own brain and affections: for we are utterly corrupted. Then can we not but be rebels against God all the time of our life, till we have killed all the sinfulness of our own nature. Mark this for one point, that our life shall never be framed to the will of God, except we be utterly changed, both in our thoughts, and in our affections.

Secondly, Saint Paul shows that that cannot be done, but by communicating with our Lord Jesus Christ: for it is not without cause that he uses this word "Crucified." For thereby he declares, that so long as we be separated from our Lord Jesus Christ, and cast off from him, and not knit unto him by faith, our nature will always bring forth her own fruits, that is to say, nothing but all manner of naughtiness and vice. Thus you see that first of all Freewill is beaten down. Secondly, it is shown to us that we cannot be partakers of any of God's gifts, nor of his holy spirit, but by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ, according as I have told you already, that we must all draw of his fullness, for he is the only fountain that is able to suffice us. And if we seek never so far about elsewhere, we shall find nothing but dryness, and we shall continue athirst still: and if we think to fill ourselves, it will be but windiness and misweening, wherewith we shall burst, and yet not gather any good nourishment or substance.

Now hereupon Saint Paul concludes, that if we live after the spirit, we should also walk after the spirit. And it is a more easy declaration of the thing that I have touched already. It had been enough to have avouched that we cannot be set free, but by crucifying all our wicked lusts: howbeit for as great as Hypocrisy is so great, that they do always find cloaking holes, and every man would be esteemed as an Angel, though his life be out of order: therefore Saint Paul intended for a confirmation to add this saying, that if we live after the spirit, we must therewithal walk after the spirit. As if he should say, that it is not enough for men to protest themselves to have God's spirit dwelling in their heart: but they must show that he is there: for he is not idle.

Therefore if a man will discern whether God's spirit dwell in us or not, he must come to our works and to our life: and according as our conversation is, so may he see what we be, and what is within us, and

give judgment by our outward works that are apparent. As for example, if one would bear me in hand that a block were a living a man to see to: It stirs neither head nor foot: thrust at it, and shove at it, and yet there appears no life in it: and shall he then make me believe that a piece of stone removes from place to place, or has any power in it, or is a creature that has a soul? Even so it is with those that boast themselves to be spiritual.

For although the unbelievers and enemies of God be alive as in respect of the body: yet are they dead in respect of the heavenly life, because their soul is utterly corrupted: but we live toward God through the grace of his holy spirit. And if this grace be in us, it cannot be idle, as I said before. And that is the cause why Saint Paul says, that our conversation will show whether we live in the spirit or no.

The word "walk" is very rife in the holy scripture, when the whole ordering of our life is mentioned: nevertheless here is not only walking. The word that Saint Paul uses imports more: that is to wit, to walk orderly, as if he should say, that we must frame ourselves to the thing that is conformable to the will of God, and of his holy spirit, and that our life must be so well ruled, as it may be known that God governs us in deed, and that our Lord Jesus Christ holds us to himself as the members of his body, and that he has truly witnessed that he dwells in us by his holy spirit. Therefore at a word, this thing must needs be known.

Now to be short, Saint Paul meant here to bewray the hypocrisy of all such as make fair protestation with their mouth, and would have men to believe wondrous well of their zeal: and yet in all their whole life do show no will at all to come near God, nor any taste of his word. All such folk then are here condemned of lying and

unfaithfulness. And therefore that we may discern which are God's children, let us come to the examining of our lives.

True it is (as I have touched heretofore) that sometimes the ignorant wretches and such as never had any instruction in the Law shall have some appearance of virtue. But if a man sound them thoroughly, he shall find it is but a shadow, and that they are not well bent, either to love their neighbors, or to walk according to God's will. To be short, the examining of our life cannot lie. And herewithal Saint Paul meant also to confirm the thing that he spoke before: that is to wit, that if our life be to be governed by God's spirit, then must we travel earnestly that way, and not in trifling things that are neither here nor there before God: according as I have declared already, that such as will needs be most devout, have neither end nor measure of their superstitions: and when evening comes they think God to be greatly beholden to them for their traveling to and fro, and yet notwithstanding all is but lost labor. And therefore Saint Paul tells us, that since we know that our life is spiritual (as truth is) and that God also is a spirit: we must understand also that he will be served faithfully, and that men must not occupy themselves about small trifles which are but as children's baubles: but that he will have us to use faithfulness, love, peace, and concord one with another, so as there be no deceit, no malice, nor no ravening among us.

Then if we know that the life which God allows, and whereby we are joined unto him, is a spiritual life: Let us forthwith (says he) walk in the spirit, that is to say, let us assure ourselves that God allows not anything but that which is agreeable to his Lawe (which for the same cause is called spiritual by Saint Paul in the seventh to the Romanes) and let the proof of the same doctrine show itself in our conversation. So now whereas other folks run on pilgrimage: let us occupy ourselves in the serving of God, and our neighbors. Whereas

these wretched hypocrites waste all their substance in Idolatry: let us consider that the true sacrifices and holy offerings which [are] that we should be dedicated unto him both in body and soul, [and secondly] that we should so dispose the goods that he hath given us and put into our hands as we might show by

So the same may serve to the glorifying of God's majesty, and [to the enlarging of] the dominion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let all look at him, let all stick to him, and let all know that it is he from whom all goodness proceeds. Lo whereunto Saint Paul meant to bring us. Now to the intent to make us the more to abhor all vainglory and pride against God, and the said desire of having credit among men: he says that we must not seek to bite one another, neither must we malice one another. It is as much as if he had said that ambition or vaingloriousness cannot reign in us, but incontinently there will be heartburning, and every man will provoke his neighbor. For if we be given after that fashion to vainglory, every of us will covet to be greatest, and it will seem to himself that he hath not his right, till he sees his neighbor brought in contempt.

Thus you see what pride brings. It tends not only to the advancing of a man's self against God: but also to the defacing of such as we ought to honor, at leastwise if they be our inferiors. For when we have looked well to all, it is certain that even the least sort ought to be honorable in our eyes. Therefore if we be led with ambition (as I said afore) every of us will be climbing to get higher and higher. Now hereof must needs spring strife and debate, heartburning, quarreling and contention, and finally deadly enmity. To be short, so long as ambition has its full scope, and is let alone unbridled, we must needs be at war, as experience shows too much, and would God that we might be fain to seek a great way off for examples of it. But so soon as men will needs set out themselves, ambition must needs carry them

so away, as to show themselves enemies to their neighbors. And thereof also proceeds envy. For it is said that charity is glad of other folks' welfare. Have not we cause to rejoice, when we see God pour out of his gracious gifts upon our neighbors? Yes: or else we pray not unfeignedly for all such as have need of them. For if it grieve us to see that God grants them to live commodiously and at their ease: do we not therein betray that there was nothing but hypocrisy and feigned ? Also if God give any man the gracious gift of his holy spirit, it is for the common welfare and edifying of his Church. So then, in all respects

there is cause for us to rejoice, and if we be rightly qualified according to God's will, we shall also therewithal love the profit and advancement of our neighbors. Contrariwise when every man is given to himself, and we be driven with this wicked ambition and pride: we can never look but askew at the advantage and profit of our neighbors. There will always be repining and spiting in our hearts, when God shows himself bountiful towards those whom we would keep under feet.

Thus you see that the thing which we have to remember in effect in this strain, is that we must learn what it is to belong to our Lord Jesus Christ, to the end that we take not his name in vain, nor be reproved of falsehood and leasing before God and his Angels, for glorifying ourselves so foolishly before men. For to the intent we may be our Lord Jesus Christ's, we must mortify our lusts and affections, knowing that of ourselves we are inordinately given to all evil, and our nature wholly inclined thereto. Therefore it stands us in hand to turn a new lease. And of a truth that cannot be done of our own power: but the Son of God is Priest and ready to help us. What lets us to be made partakers of the gifts of God's holy Ghost, that we might prove by our life that we have a true belief in him? It is our flattering

of ourselves in our own wretchedness. Then seeing there is nothing but corruption in us, let us learn to lament, and let us yield ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ, that he may kill all wicked lusts and disordinate affections in us by the power of his death and passion.

And therewithal let us consider the grace that God grants us in that he will have us to serve him freely, so as we should no more be under the yoke of the Law to be pressed down by it to the uttermost (for that would be an intolerable burden to us), but be governed by his holy spirit, knowing that he allows of our life, and accepts our service when it is so framed according to his word, although our zeal be not so great nor so substantial as were we know this: and therewithal let us walk in such as our feet, hands, and all other our members and senses may show by effect, that as we have been

trained in the school of our Lord Jesus Christ so we have also borne away his doctrine, and that the same has taken root in us, not to lie hid still, but to yield forth fruit in such wise as God's name may be honored, and we show that we are not idle and unprofitable servants, but that we have been quickened by the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that it is he that governs us, by reason whereof the fruit of it redounds immediately to our neighbors, in so much that when God's name is so glorified by us, and we have yielded true proof of our Christianity, men know that whereas we were taught, it was to the end that all others should reap profit by it. For God has a respect to the whole body of his Church, and like as he makes his son to shine both upon good and bad: so will he have the faithful to do good to such as are not worthy of it. Therefore let us acquaint ourselves with it, and moreover acknowledge that we are nothing, and that all the goodness which we have is none of our own, but that we have it of God's mere grace. And forasmuch as we are not yet come to the perfection that were requisite, let us not surmise ourselves to be in

God's favor for any other respect, than that he bears with us till we be come into his kingdom, where we shall have the fullness of all holiness.

Now let us cast ourselves down before the Majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us so to feel them, as we may be sorry for them before him, yea even with a true repentance, and desire to be rid more and more of them, and practice the doctrine that we have heard, that whereas the blind and ignorant wretches do nowadays martyr and tire themselves too much in excess of their fond devotions: we may learn to hold ourselves to the pure simplicity of his word, knowing that there is none other rule but that, and that the same is it wherein he will have us to exercise ourselves, and whereunto it behooves us to apply all our study: and thereby show that that is the means whereby our Lord Jesus Christ will have us fashioned like to himself: and therefore let us go forward and travel unto him till we be thoroughly knit unto him, and in the end be come such time as he shall appear to our full, and deliver us not only from this earthly pilgrimage, but also from all corruptions and all other things which hinder us from the full enjoying of the heavenly heritage. That it may please him to grant this grace not only to us, but also to all people, etc.

The Thirty-Eighth Sermon,

which is the first upon the sixth Chapter.

1 Brethren, if any man be overtaken with a fault, you that are spiritual help to amend him with the spirit of meekness: and consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

2 Bear ye one another's burden, and so fulfill the Law of Christ.

I have declared heretofore that there is not a more deadly plague than Ambition, when every man is given to himself and will needs exalt himself to the contempt of his neighbors: for then is neither indifference nor measure kept.

Here is now another vice very near of kin to the other: namely when we snatch at such as have done amiss, to the intent to advance ourselves in comparison of them, which we see to be a common vice in the world. For to our seeming, other men's virtues are a hindrance to us, that we cannot be in such reputation as we vainly would. This is the cause that every of us pries and peers at his fellow, to the intent to disgrace him in such wise as he alone may not bear away the bell, and by that means have chief praise and commendation.

And although that be not: yet will it often come to pass, that we shall be over rigorous under pretense of zeal. For this cause Saint Paul does here exhort the faithful, to do their endeavor to reform a man with all gentleness, when he has done amiss. And he does purposely state before us here. For it ought to move us to compassion, to consider the common frailty that is in us all, as he will touch the same point more at large hereafter.

Nevertheless his putting of us in mind of our infirmity by nature, is to the end that none of us should climb too high. And furthermore he adds the word overtaken, meaning thereby that it always deserves gentleness at our hands when we see a man surprised by the wiliness of Satan. For S. Paul spoke not here of such as have rooted malice in

their heart, which are utter despisers of God, which are altogether heathenish, & which are so full of poison throughout, that they cannot allege for themselves that they fall by oversight: for why, they are mad beasts, rushing willfully against God, according as we shall see many that manifestly despise all order, and would have all the world put to confusion.

Such manner of men are not comprised in the number of those whom Saint Paul speaks of here. But although a man fear God and be willing to give himself to his service: yet notwithstanding Satan has his snares ready laid, and catches us oftentimes ere we think of it. And so you see how we be overtaken or surprised. Now S. Paul tells us, that yet in such faults we must be pitiful still, and bear with such a man through the spirit of meekness.

However, we must mark well all the words that are set down here: and thereby we shall gather the meaning of the Apostle. For in very deed here is nothing superfluous, but every word has its weight. For in saying that we must endeavor to amend him again that is fallen: he shows that the gentleness which many men use in flattering such as have done amiss, savors nothing at all of Christianity. Therefore men's vices must be rebuked, and we must labor to bring back the party into the right way, which is strayed out of it.

For if a man uphold him in his naughtiness, and flatter him in it: he betrays him, because he rocks him asleep, and by that means sinks him the deeper in destruction. You see then that the mean which Saint Paul has appointed, is that if a man have done amiss, he should be amended, howbeit that the same must be done with the spirit of gentleness and meekness.

He could well enough have used the word Meekness without the word Spirit: but he has chosen to do us to wit that we must have a

hearty desire to procure the welfare & salvation of such as have need to be warned and exhorted when they have committed a fault: and therewithal he meant also to express that the same proceeds of God. For like as he is the fountain of all goodness: so also does he give his children some meekness, to the intent they should follow him and frame themselves after his example.

We know that the manner of the holy Scripture is to term the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the spirit of truth, the spirit of the fear of God, the spirit of wisdom, and such other like, because the fullness of all goodness is in him. You see then that the sum of that which S. Paul teaches here, is that we must not only love virtue and like well of such as walk in all perfection, and in whom we can find no blame: but furthermore we must be gentle, in bearing with the faults of such as are not yet so well confirmed in the fear of God as were requisite, to the end we may bring them back again into the right way, that are turned aside or thrust out of it.

For if there should be no meekness nor gentleness in us: as soon as a man had committed any fault, we should as it were plunge him in despair, and this is seen too much, for that cause therefore Saint Paul tells us that the meekness or mildness of God's children must try itself by relieving such as are fallen through weakness, yes and that in such sort, as it may be known that their salvation is procured. Now I have told you that there are two extremities or two vices whereof we must beware. The one is, that we wink when any of our friends have offended God, in so much that even when he has given some cause of stumbling, we let it slip because we be loth to purchase his displeasure by rebuking him.

And nowadays you see that the common way of maintaining friendship in the world, as to give leave and license of all misdoing,

through devilish dissimulation. For no man can abide to have his galled back rubbed, neither do any men take warnings in good worth, saving they whom God has touched, and to whom he has given the spirit of obedience to yield themselves teachable. Therefore such manner of men as these, will say with David, that they had lever to be rebuked and with all sharpness, than to have the ointments of the flatterer which serve but to rock men asleep in their vices.

Nevertheless you shall commonly see, that all men covet to be borne withal, and to have no word spoken to them whatsoever they do, nor to have their heads troubled with their vices and misdoings. Every man verifies this, in so much that God is forgotten, and (as the Prophet Isaiah says) there is no defender anywhere that maintains the truth, for there is as great confusion and disorder as may be, and yet men do let all slip. True it is that if wrong be done to any man, he will not stick to say that such licentiousness ought to be redressed: but he says not so for any zeal he has to maintain the honor of God, it is but only for his own peculiar advantage, and for the regard that he has to himself.

Thus you see that God has not any proctors or Advocates to plead his case, but every man is for himself. Therefore when we see any man do amiss, let us learn that it is no love nor charity to cloak his evil doings, so as we should dissemble them and make no countenance at all of them: but that if we have a care of him that is so fallen, we must turn him away. If a man be in the mire, we will reach him our hand to help him out: and if we pass by him and will not seem to see him, shall he not say it is too shameful an unkindness?

Even so is it when we suffer a man to fall asleep in his sins: for by that means he is sunk down to the bottom of perdition. Then is it too great a traitorousness, if we do wittingly suffer a man to undo

himself utterly: and therewithal we show also that there is no zeal of God in us. For if he be our father, ought it not at leastwise to grieve us and make us sorry, when we see wrong and injury offered unto him?

So then, if the souls which our Lord Jesus Christ has bought so dearly be precious unto us, or if we set so much by God's honor as it deserves: it is certain that we will not so bear with men's faults, but that we will endeavor to amend them. Mark that for one point. But there is also a contrary vice: namely over great rigorousness. For this is a property of the Hypocrites, that if they spy a mote in their neighbor's eye, they cry out alarm upon him, and they must needs follow him with hue and cry, whereas in the meanwhile a great beam is in their own eyes, as our Lord Jesus speaks of them.

For even therefore as there are many that widen their consciences to swallow up a whole Ox [in their own cases,] and in the mean season can strain at a gnat when it touches other men: therefore we must beware that we be not too rough and sharp in rebuking of our brother. Besides this, there are also that have an unadvised zeal, so as they are too sour and bitter, and they are of opinion that they discharge not themselves, except they proclaim men's faults aloud, as it were by the sound of a trumpet. And how many warnings are made nowadays with an upright carefulness?

If a man see any of his neighbors fall to naughtiness, he ought (if he can have access and entrance to him) to tell him his fault: but we will none of that. For (as I said) every man under-prices other, and lies in wait for him like a spy, to see if he can find anything amiss in him, and then uses sternness to the uttermost. True it is that such as are handled over roughly after that fashion, cannot complain of it. For whereof comes the naughtiness that is to rise nowadays among men,

that no man is warned secretly to the end he might be brought back unto God, but that the vices which were done in covert are blazed abroad, yes even to the defaming of the party?

It is for that every of us shuts the gate, because our ears are too itching, and we cannot abide to be told the truth, but will needs keep the possession of all naughtiness, as though God were deposed from his authority, and had no prerogative of judgment over us. Forasmuch then as every man would exempt himself from correction: therefore all are worthy to be handled hardly after that fashion, and to be dealt with like enemies, and not like brethren. For there can be no brotherhood among us, unless correction takes place, so as every man be subject to it, yes even willingly.

And because we will not in any wise be rebuked, therefore we deserve well to be handled with such excessive rigor. For this cause Saint Paul sets down the mean, which is that we must have a care one of another, so that if any man stumble, he may be helped up again. And how? By good warnings. For that is the remedy which God has established for us by his word, Howbeit that in the meanwhile ... so eager in rebuking other men's faults, as to forget to put ... that is to say, to use the said spirit of meekness.

For it were to small purpose to have Sugar in our mouth, as many men have, and in the meantime to bear poison in our heart. And therefore Saint Paul speaks not here only of the tongue, nor says that we must have enticing words: but that in rebuking men's faults we must always be led and moved thereto by an earnest desire to our neighbor's salvation. For it is certain that if we covet the soul health of such as do amiss, we will behave ourselves soberly, and that soberness will bring with it the moderation that Saint Paul speaks of, so as we shall not be overeager, nor depart from the fountain, which

is to beware that we be not too hasty in finding fault we wot not why, nor to what end, but that we have a care to fetch him back again that is in an evil trade, and be desirous to bring him with us unto God.

To be short, we must covet to have him our brother, that God may be served of us all and maintained in his state. If we be so minded, surely the rest will follow after. But under the word Spirit we be warned moreover (as I said even now) that we must be fashioned like unto God, forasmuch as he has vouchsafed to choose us for his children, accordingly as our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, saying: Be you like unto your heavenly father, who has pity even on them that are unworthy of it.

Wherefore if we desire to be held and avowed for God's children: let us have an eye to the nature of him which calls us to the likeness of his own Image, which is that we be meek and gentle. Now God in his gentleness flatters not such as have done amiss. For he hates iniquity, and must needs always show himself an enemy to it. But we see the thing that is said, namely that God does in such wise correct his children, that the chastisements which he uses begin at his own house, and at his own household folk. Yet for all that, he thunders not against poor sinners, but waits for them patiently, encouraging them, drawing them, bearing with them, setting his grace before them, and showing them that he is ready to receive them, and has his arms stretched out to embrace them, if they will come unto him.

You see then that the first thing which we have to consider, is that we must fashion our ... example of our God, so as we oppress ... the first dash in whom we see any infirmity, but rather labor to win them, because they be as lost souls. And hereupon we may also gather, that such as nowadays would have vices cloaked, yes and borne out under

pretense that God is patient and gentle, do falsely corrupt the holy scripture.

For nowadays, if never so detestable crimes be committed, by and by they allege mercy, oh they must be pitied: yes, but such folks blaspheme God in that they would have us to be more merciful than he is. Surely we know him to be the wellspring of all goodness, and it is enough for us if we can follow him a great way off, and it were a thing to be greatly desired that we could come nearer and nearer unto him. But when we have strained ourselves to the uttermost, it is very much if we can have in us but some little spark of the mercy which is infinite in God.

Nevertheless God promises not his grace, but to such as return unto him. True it is that he touches them with his holy spirit, and changes their minds: but yet must repentance always be matched with forgiveness of sins. Now after what manner is it that men would be pitiful? It is that they might mock God to his face, that men should wink at their lewdness, yes and soothe them up in it, that God should be rejected, and that such as are ready to do still worse and worse, should be borne withal and borne out. But I have told you that it is too cursed a blasphemy, when men transform good into evil after that fashion.

Then according to Saint Paul's exhortation, let us learn to bring a meekness that may be of God's spirit, not to allow of the evil, or to deface the good, but to amend things modestly with discretion. Therewithal let us learn also to pray God to govern us when the case requires that we should correct our neighbors, assuring ourselves that of our own nature we shall never be able to do it.

We know that to serve God, and to employ ourselves faithfully in that behalf, we must first receive of him the things that we want. Now

then, let a man strain himself as far as he list, and he shall not find himself able to bring one drop of goodness of his own.

But when we come to correcting, there we reprove ... God: and if I mind to tell a man his fault, I come not to him in ... private name as his superior: but in the name of God.

Now then, seeing it is so that we execute God's office in rebuking such as have done amiss: how shall we be fit for that purpose, except he guide and direct us thereunto? Therefore let us learn to desire him to guide and rule us by his holy spirit, when any admonition is to be made, to bring such back again as are gone out of the right way. And herewithal we must mark also (as I have said afore) that Saint Paul speaks not here of such as are steeped in wickedness, in contempt of God and in rebelliousness, but of such as are overtaken, so as they have some good will to do well, and yet notwithstanding do fall through infirmity.

Therefore this matter must be handled very skillfully and discretely. For if we will deal alike with all men, it is certain that we shall oftentimes do wrong to such as have need to be borne with, and in the meanwhile do nothing but inflame the despisers of God, and make them more malapert than they were before. Then (as I said) we must put a difference between the one and the other.

For when the Prophet Ezekiel speaks of the good shepherd: he says that he must bear with the sheep that are weak, and if any of them be infected, he must heal them by good medicines. But if he should keep one manner of usage without putting a difference between one and another, how should he show himself to be a shepherd in so doing? In like case it is with all such as deal with the rebuking of their neighbors that have done amiss.

As for example, if there be a shameless naughtypack, that daily runneth headlong into all naughtiness, which makes none account of God's word, nor does anything but mar others like a scabbed Ram that spreads his infection through the whole flock: or if there be a varlet that is given over to all wickedness: such a one is not overtaken with sin. And why? For he hath already given over the service of God, he hath utterly shaken off his yoke, and (as I said before) is become a mad beast that pusheth with his horns against heaven.

Such manner of men deserve not to be borne with by gentleness: and in this text Saint Paul does quite cut them off and shut them out of doors. But when ... overthrown by infirmity, and that the ... has caught him unawares, and yet that the good seed of the fear of God which he had is not utterly waterslain in him: it becomes us to have pity and compassion on him.

And forasmuch as we may slide every hour, let us learn to call yet earnestly upon God, that he may govern us, yea and let us also bear well in mind how Saint Paul adds, look to thyself that thou also be not tempted. Here he changeth the number. He had said, Brethren if any man be overtaken, help ye to amend him. And now he turneth his tale to every man particularly, saying: Look to thyself: and that is to the end that this warning should be the more vehement, and touch us the nearer.

For we see that when one speaketh in general terms, every man thinketh it to be spoken to other men, and there is none of us all but he would shift out himself as much as is possible. Then if it be said, behold, all are inclined to this or that? very well, he speaketh to the whole company, but in the meanwhile no man is touched with it as he should be. Saint Paul therefore doth expressly change the number here, and he thinketh it not enough to warn all the faithful and the

body of the whole Church in common: but he draweth every man aside and saith, look to thyself, and examine what is in thee: for thou also mayest be tempted.

Truly there is not any reason that ought sooner to persuade us to be gentle towards such as have done amiss, than when we know that we ourselves also have need to be borne with. And even the very heathen men have alleged the same. For they have said, that it is a great cruelty in a man if he cannot find in his heart to bear with the infirmities of his companions, seeing there is not any man which is not weak himself.

It were impossible that any two men should live together in the world, if they be not patient to bear one with another. Then were two men enough to set all the whole world on a broil, if they would not bear one with another. And even they that think themselves to be most perfect, shall find that they themselves had need to be borne withal.

For surely if we be not utterly blockish, we will hate the evil that is in ourselves. And we need not any man to trouble and vex us: every … in himself by being grieved at his own imperfections. And it is so: what remains but that the same should induce us to deal mildly and gently with such as are fallen through infirmity?

Thus ye see what we have to mark well here. And soothly if we search well the cause why many are inflamed with such inordinate zeal, and storm so extremely against small faults: it is that they think not upon themselves. Now then the order that we must keep in this behalf, is first to condemn the evil whatsoever it is: mark that for one point. For if we condemn the evil but in this man or that man, & overslip it in others: it is a token that we be not led with a right meaning mind to the end that God should be served & honored, but that there is

some secret root of malice in us,* according as Solomon says, that enmity bewrays vices, and every man finds fault with him to whom he bears any grudge. Ye see then that the first rule which we must keep, is to condemn the evil wheresoever it be found, even because it is contrary to God's will. That is one point. The second is, that every of us must examine himself. For surely the nearer that any evil is to ourselves, so much the more must we have it. If I see a despiser of God, it will grieve me more than if he were ten leagues off from me, and that I knew not his faults. Now then it stands us on hand to have an eye to ourselves. For let us take this similitude, the nearer neighbors that we be, and the more familiarity that there is among men, the more must we put the thing in ure which I have spoken of: that is to wit, the more must every of us show other his faults when he has offended. For God has knit us together with condition that if I have a friend, I must reform him rather than a stranger.

But now when evil is to be condemned, who is nearer to me than myself? Yee see then wherein a man shall know whether we seek the honor of God and the cleansing away of vice or no: namely, if we be rough and sharp in bridling of ourselves, and that when we rebuke others, we first condemn all our own vices, and show that we mislike them, and that we seek to amend them as much as we can. Ye see then that the way for us to judge of our neighbors, is first of all to condemn ourselves. And this warning serves not only for the things past, but also for the things to come. S. Paul therefore says not, ... has offended heretofore: but he says ... that thou ... tempted hereafter. And truly we ought to walk continually in fear and carefulness, not that we should not always rest upon God's grace and favor, but that we must not be reckless.

For faith imports not that we should be careless of all things: but rather (as Saint Paul shows us in the second to the Philippians) that

forasmuch as we be not able to do anything of ourselves: God must be fain to guide us by his spirit, and when he has given us will, he must also give us power to perform it. Forasmuch therefore as we hold all of God: it behooves us to walk in fear and carefulness. And so when we consider our faults past, and look well upon our present state, we have continual cause to cast down our eyes.

Indeed when God vouchsafes us the courage to maintain goodness, and to condemn naughtiness, he grants us great grace in making us judges, notwithstanding that we deserve to have our mouths stopped. Yet nevertheless it behooves us to learn to be lowly minded in rebuking the faults [in other men] which we have already condemned in ourselves, seeing that we ourselves may daily and hourly, yea and every minute of an hour fall. Then since the case stands so: let us pity such as offend, for they be all of them mirrors of our own frailty, because we see there what we ourselves are further forth than God holds us up by the grace of his holy spirit. Moreover, in admonishing such as have done amiss, we may yet (as I told you before) offend God in being too hasty, too rigorous, and too unkind.

Although then that it be a commendable virtue to admonish our neighbors: yet if we be too lavish, all will turn into vice, except our Lord do so restrain us, as we keep an even hand and swerve not aside to any of the two vices that I have touched afore. Thus ye see what we have to remember concerning this saying of Saint Paul. Now he says expressly, you that be spiritual: meaning to do us to wit, that we be the more bound to bear with the weaklings, when God has strengthened us by his power, according also as is declared in the fourteenth to the Romans. And indeed if God distributes his grace more to one man than to another: it is not ... or that man with all, but rather to hold up such as are not able ... go: like as if two men do go a journey together, and the one feels himself weary, so as he is not able

to ... draw his legs after him: it is certain that he who is strong and lusty will not run before him as it were to spite him, but will restrain himself to his companion, yea and he will toll him forward, saying, Go to man, pluck up a good heart, and let me help thee myself. To be short, he will do all that he can to cheer up his fellow that is so faint.

After the same manner also must we bear one with another, since we see that God has called us all in common, and chosen us with the condition that we should go all together with one accord, and every man reach out his hand to his neighbor (as the prophet Isaiah speaks of it) and say, "Go we, let us go up to the hill of the Lord." It is no reason then that such as have received a larger measure of God's gifts, should go about to oppress others: but rather that they should bear with their infirmities, and be touched with the meekness that we have spoken of. Thus ye see how Saint Paul says expressly, that the more that our Lord has set us forward, the more ought we to draw others after us. And hereupon he adds for a conclusion, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." When as he says that we must bear the burdens [of our neighbors:] he does yet better express the thing that I have told you heretofore: that is to wit, that he speaks not here of the despisers of God, which run into all licentiousness and are steeped in malice and stubbornness: but of such as travail and go forward in all goodness, and have an earnest good will to attain to it, and which do even groan under their sins, as under a burden that is too heavy for them. For the better understanding hereof, we will set down a similitude contrary to that which is set down here by Saint Paul. He says that such as are overtaken with their sins, are made as it were to stoop under the burden. And why? Because they are angry with themselves. Not that they fret or chafe against God through pride and disdain: but because they are not able to withstand Satan so steadfastly and stoutly as they fain would. But as for these roisters that are given to all evil, they are

so far off from stooping under their burden, that they rather ride ... triumphing and vaunting themselves, as though they would utterly defy God. Thus see ye the diversity that is between them which

are to be borne with, and those against whom all rigour may be used. For the one sort is bowed with the weight of the burden which does in manner weigh them down: and these are the same whom our Lord Jesus Christ calls to him, saying: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you, and you shall find rest for your souls." Our Lord Jesus calls not all men without exception unto him, but gives a mark to such as may have access to obtain favor, namely that they be overloaded: that is to say, they welter not in their sins, neither take pleasure in them, neither do they boast of them as folk past shame: but they would fain have ease, and can find none in themselves. Therefore he says he is ready to deal gently with them. And for the same cause also does Saint Paul in the seventh to the Romans say, that he does not the good which he would, but the evil which he would not. Now Saint Paul speaks there of himself: in so much that although he were as an Angel of God in respect of his conversation in this world, and as a mirror of all holiness: yet does he mourn still, and say he is accursed. And why so? Because he was held as a captive in prison, in so much as he was not at liberty to give himself fully unto God: for he was hindered by his own sinfulness. Now if Saint Paul were in that taking: how shall we do? By the way we see how this word Burden is to be understood, where it is said that we must bear one another's burdens. Herein Saint Paul exhorts us to hold up one another: and if any man miss of his duty, we must not therefore give him over, but be inclined to pitifulness still, and use the forementioned meekness. To be short, he says that we be knit together with such condition, that if any of us be overloaded or wax faint, the rest must supply his default and weakness (as I said) even

as inclined thereto by nature, without being encouraged by the word of God.

If we are going on a journey in a company together, and see any of the ... every of us will help to hearten him: and for the ... doing thereof, ... unlade him, and every man take a piece of his burden. In like wise let us consider that the sins which we commit through infirmity, are burdens, and that in such cases it behooves us to put under our shoulders, to ease such as are well-nigh weighed down with them. Not that we should use any flattery, as I have said before: but that we should help to amend them. And for proof hereof, if a man offend God, and I overpass it, so as he continues in his naughtiness: the burden increases in such wise, as it is enough to break his neck. For whereas he had but one burden: behold now are many more added, to bear him down to the ground, even for want of warning. In so much that if he had been admonished at the first, he had been eased of his lode: whereas now by cloaking of his vices, we be the cause that the poor wretch can never be relieved. And therefore it behooves us to use the aforesaid mean: which is, that in bearing with the weaklings, we must not fail to touch them to the quick, that they may be made to acknowledge their faults, to the end to amend them.

Now for a conclusion Saint Paul says, that we must by that mean fulfill the law of Christ. It is not to be doubted but that Saint Paul meant here after a covert manner to nip those against whom he disputed heretofore. For we have seen how that in those days there were many that would have had men to keep the Ceremonies of the Law: for that was all their holiness and perfection. Therefore because they ever had the word Law in their mouth, and bore men in hand that they should discharge themselves to Godward by ceremonies: Saint Paul says unto them, "Go to, we have the Law of Jesus Christ,

who is a faithful declarer of the will of God his father." Then if we will have a true interpretation of the Law: we must not seek it elsewhere than in Jesus Christ, who is the everlasting wisdom of God, and was sent to bring us all perfection of wisdom. Seeing it is so: let us above all things look what he commands us, and consider what yoke he lays upon our backs or necks: which is, that we should love one another, as it is said in the 13th of Saint John, "I give you now a commandment that is both new and old:" which is, that you love one another ... unt... we must apply all our whole mind, namely to bear with such as have need, and to reach out our hand to such as are overladen, to relieve them. By what means then we shall fulfill Christ's Law: and when we have so fulfilled it, we may defy all such as condemn us. Those therefore which fulfill the Law of Christ, shall be no more subject to the ceremonial Law as they term it. It is true that we shall never fulfill the Law of our Lord Jesus Christ, neither in this respect, nor in [any] other. But Saint Paul shows us the mark that we must labor to come at. Although then that we be continually on our way so long as we be conversant in this world: yet must we not run at adventure, without knowing whither we go. For we have our mark set up before us, and thither must we enforce ourselves. So then, that we may serve God according to his own will, let us learn to give ourselves wholly unto him: and to the intent it may be known that his will is to hold us in such unity one with another: like as he has knit us together in an inseparable bond, so let us seek to draw our neighbors unto him, and therewithal let us be patient and meek when aught is to be corrected: and yet not be willing that vice should be nourished through flattery & dissimulation.

Now let us kneel down before the majesty of our good God, with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him to make us feel them more and more, so as it may make us to mourn before him with true repentance, and to ask him forgiveness of them, and to labor always

to be knit unto him, and to be rid of all the corruptions of our flesh, and to be clothed with his righteousness: and that in the meanwhile he will bear with our feebleness, till he have fully delivered us. And so let us all say, Almighty God heavenly father. &c.

The Thirty-Ninth Sermon,

which is the second upon the sixth Chapter.

2 Bear ye one another's burden, and so fulfill the Law...

3 For if any man esteem himself to be somewhat, whereas in deed he is nothing: he deceives himself.

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4 But let every man try his own work, and then shall he have glory in himself only, & not in another.

5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

We have seen this morning that we must bear with men's infirmities where we see there is any fear of God or any good seed, and that they are not utterly willful in wickedness. And so, you see in what cases we ought to be pitiful.

But when we see men so proud that they despise God with stubborn outrage, it is not for us to use any mildness or gentleness in that case, but for as much as they are seen to prance so in their braveries, that loftiness of theirs must be plucked down when they exalt themselves after that fashion against God.

Also, I told you therewithal that to keep a good mean in rebuking such as have done amiss, every man had need to bethink himself: for

we must first of all condemn ourselves; that is the point which we must begin at. And when we see what we ourselves are, and that we have great store of vices in us worthy to be rebuked, then have we there, on the other side, wherewith to humble ourselves, and to restrain us from using too great or excessive rigor towards such as have need to be succored, and to be borne with.

Saint Paul therefore continues still the same matter, saying that he who weens himself to be anything is nothing but deceives himself: For every man shuts his eyes when he should think upon his own sins. Of a truth, there cannot be so much as one drop of virtue in us, but by and by we magnify it: but if our vices are apparent to the whole world, in so much that even little children can laugh us to scorn, yet we cannot ourselves see them.

Now Saint Paul, intending to correct this vice, says that men are loath to be deceived, and yet nevertheless every man beguiles himself willingly and wittingly, even through his own overweening. By this means he brings us to the very wellspring (as I said this morning), which is that if men were not vainglorious and desirous of estimation, surely there would be another manner of modesty and soberness than is to be seen.

But for as much as every man is puffed up with pride, therefore, we covet superiority above all men, and seek occasion to tread them underfoot, or else to overcountenance them in such wise as they may seem our underlings. Therefore, it is impossible to redress this outrage of coveting after that sort to carp and bite men: except we be first rid of this fond desire to be had in estimation, and to be as it were advanced above others.

No doubt but men can talk well enough of humility: but there are very few that understand what the word means and imports.

Nevertheless, Saint Paul shows us here which is the true humility: that is to wit, that men should utterly abase themselves and consider that they are nothing worth, for then shall they be rightly humbled.

When humility or lowliness is talked of in common speech, it is taken to be but a device. For every man can well enough say by his honesty that he is nothing: but in the meantime, they cease not to swell like toads with the poison of pride.

But Saint Paul teaches us here a far other lesson: which is that we must put away all opinion of our own wisdom and of all the virtues that we can imagine ourselves to have. For it is said here in one word that we must think ourselves to be nothing.

And in very deed, the saying that is set down here must be laid forth thus: Seeing that men are nothing at all, they that presume upon their own virtues and glory of them beguile themselves willingly. Therefore let us take this part, namely that we be nothing.

It is true that God has left still some marks in us whereby it may be perceived that he has exalted us in worthiness and excellency above the brute beasts, in as much as it was his will to create us after his own image. Then if we have respect to the thing that God did put into us, the same ought to be esteemed still; but yet for all that, in respect of our own persons we are nothing.

For we are wholly bound unto him... that we have received, have we received it for our own worthiness sake? Is it given men to make them own estimation and praise of it? No, but rather to increase our shame, because that all the understanding, judgment, and discretion that is in us is corrupted and marred by our own naughtiness.

To be short, we are like a stinking and rotten vessel, and God's gifts are as good wine that is put into the vessel: and so by that means all is marred. Even so it is with us. We are vessels.

And what manner of vessels? Vessels infected with the corruption of sin. God puts of his gifts into us, to the end he might be glorified by it. Now, may we deserve to have any praise thereby before men? No, but rather blame, because that we by our sinfulness do mar the good things that God has put into us.

Moreover, whereas it is said that we are nothing: it is because we cannot but apply all our understanding and reason unto evil, and because we will need to be counted wise, when as notwithstanding God avouches that there is nothing but naughtiness in us, and that all our thoughts are but vanities, leasings, illusions, and deceits.

Again, whereas to our seeming we have a will whereby we choose both good and evil: the same will is a bondslave to sin, so as we do nothing else but fight against God. As much is to be said of all our affections. And if we have anything else that seems commendable, God distributes it to every man as it pleases himself, and moreover he is fain to continue the thing that he has begun, as we see by experience.

What cause then has he to boast, which has a sharp and subtle wit, seeing it is not he that has made himself to excel, as though he had been his own maker? Therefore we must hold all things of God and do him homage for them.

Again, we see that even they who take themselves to be jolliest fellows, even they that are most honored in the world, who must not be replied against when they have once spoken the word, I say we shall see even them made brutish when it pleases God.

So then, let us conclude that Saint Paul justly abolishes here all the power that men presume to have, to the end that they may be rightly humbled, that is to wit, to know ourselves to be aught worth. Mark one point.

Now, hereupon he mocks the fond vaingloriousness which ravishes their wits because there is not any man that would willingly be beguiled. And in very deed, it is a grief to us when we see any man go about to wind us in by wiliness and dissimulation, and we can by no means brook it: and yet for all that we shall find no greater deceivers in the world to us than ourselves.

Every man deceives himself, every man overthrows himself, yea, and that in a manner willingly: and what a folly is that? Now then, we see Saint Paul's drift, and also the lesson that we have to gather of that sentence. For as much as every of us will needs advance himself by abasing his fellows: therefore, Saint Paul tells us, that if we make a good and right trial of the things that are in us: there will not be found so much as one drop of virtue that deserves praise, at leastwise in respect of our own persons.

For we are nothing, and there needed but one blast to make clean dispatch of us. Therefore it is but a foolish overweening that lets us to walk in simplicity. And so let us understand first of all, that we cannot challenge anything to ourselves without treason to God, because it is a robbing of him of the right that belongs to him, and which ought to be reserved unto him, and that is to our own destruction.

For in good faith, what shall we gain by it when we shall have abused men, and when we shall have been taken for other than we be? To be short, when we shall have been as idols, what will be the end of it but our own decay and confusion?

Then seeing it is so: let us learn to be cast down and laid flat upon the ground, that we may be thoroughly grounded in our God. And to bring that to pass, let us learn to magnify him only. And in the meantime, if it pleases him to exalt us, let us not cease to keep ourselves in continual awe with soberness and modesty, knowing that we have nothing of our own, and that whatever God has given unto us, he must be fain to preserve it in us from time to time, and that we must so hold all things of him, as to make a willing sacrifice and oblation of them unto him, endeavoring to employ ourselves in the service... the measure of grace which we have received of him, and yielding the praise thereof to him to whom it belongs.

This is in effect the thing that we have to remember upon this strain. Truly it is hard to bring us to this reasonableness. And in good truth, we see the great contentions that are nowadays about Freewill and men's own virtues, as though men were able to advance themselves, and to take the grace of God, and by that means to deserve well.

But all this proceeds of this, that men are forepossessed with such devilish pride, as they will evermore needs be somewhat of themselves. And therefore it stands us so much the more on hand to put this doctrine in practice. Certainly we cannot profit at all in God's school, nor in the holy Scripture, till we have known that we are nothing at all, to the end we may come to draw out of the fullness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But that can we not do, except we be first utterly dried up in ourselves; and confess with David that we are as the earth that is scorched and cleft with heat, and have no whit of wetting or moisture, other than it may receive from heaven. Hereupon Saint Paul adds, Therefore let every man try his own work, and then shall

he have praise in himself, and not of other men: that is to say, not by comparing of himself with other men.

Here Saint Paul remedies yet one other vice which is too common, and yet notwithstanding we will all of us grant it to be deadly of itself, and that all of us are tainted with it: namely that we esteem ourselves as little angels when other men are worse than we, or at leastwise when we find them not better. And that is the very thing that rocks so many wretched souls asleep nowadays, making them forget themselves, so as they make no reckoning neither of God nor of their own salvation. It is because they see that the whole world tag and rag does go that trace.

If we take a whole town, and ask them from one to another how they behave themselves, surely every man will have his excuse and they will all pretend this for a buckler, "Tush we must do as other men do." As much will they say in cities and countries. To be short, we will needs be like colliers' sacks (as the Proverb says), one of us makes another black. And again, we bear ourselves in hand that we be quite and clear before God: "It is as bad as I, we see that the world is no better, it is apparent that all men do so."

However, besides that these shifts cannot purge us, they are an occasion to harden us in all naughtiness, and to make us rebelliously despise God's justice, as though we should never come to account of our doings. So have we a very good and profitable exhortation in this text, when Saint Paul says that every man must try his own work. True it is that the word which he uses might be taken for to approve or allow: but it agrees not with the matter: for he speaks here of the trial or examination that every man ought to make of himself, without comparing himself with others; according as we see how in

the second to the Corinthians, he taunts such as had measured themselves by others men's yards.

For Saint Paul said unto them, "Every one of you consider what he has done, and when you have well laid all your parcels together, what will you show? Therefore every one of you must come and as it were lay himself upon the rack, that it may be seen what manner of man he is, and what he has done: and then may judgment be given of him." Even so is it said in this text, that every man must try his own work. As if he should say, we will needs be advanced one above another, but if it be cast in any of our teeth that we have done amiss, by and by his cloak shall be, that he has a great sort of fellows: but that shall never go for payment before God (says Saint Paul): every man must show out himself, and set himself alone aside from the rest, and understand that he shall be acquitted or condemned before God, not thereafter as another man shall be found to be better or worse than he, but after the rule of the judge, that is to say, after his word.

For God has on the one side his own word, and on the other side our life. Therefore the true balance whereunto we must come is not to set down the multitude [for our excuse] and to say, such men or such have misled me, I have followed that which I saw, it was the common fashion, I was fain to do so whether I would or no: for I was carried away, because I was not able to stand against a multitude. No, none of these things will go for payment before God, it will not serve our turn to say that we have many fellows.

But (as I have said already), the true counterpoise, and to consider that although the whole world draws us unto evil, yet we shall not be excused if we prefer not God and his word before all men's doings. And here first of all, in following the matter that Saint Paul lays

forth, when account is to be entered into, we must call ourselves home to examine our own lives thoroughly. For a man shall never be touched with true repentance, nor ever acknowledge his sins without hypocrisy, till he have shut his eyes against all the doings of other men, and fall to considering thus with himself: "Go to, what is it that my God commands me? After what manner may I appear before his judgment seat? How will he judge me? According to his word."

Behold here in effect how we may be touched with the true fear of God: behold also how we may dislike of our sins, and finally be humbled: namely, not by looking upon this man or that man, but by examining truly what we ourselves are, and thereupon by resolving ourselves fully, that only God's word shall bear sway with us, and that it is not for us to give judgment by the things that are seen in the world. Let that serve for one point. And thereupon also we may gather a general lesson: namely that it is too gross an oversight, to think to bury our faults and to escape unspied, by having a great number guilty as well as ourselves.

And yet nevertheless it is the common excuse nowadays, as I have touched already: but yet for all that it is but a trifling excuse. If a man asks why the Papists are so dull, and why they give no ear to any reason, tell them what you can, but account it as nothing: it is because they judge by comparison, saying: "All the world does thus." To be short, God seems unto them to be barred of all liberty, when the world behaves itself otherwise than he has commanded by his word.

But it is to no purpose for them to set down and object such examples: for they cannot prejudice God, that he should not always condemn such as have done amiss. Though there were a thousand worlds, yet should they all go to wreck before him, especially if men

came with such stateliness, as to say, "Thus and thus do we." And who are you? Thus you see in effect whereunto this text ought to serve us that we may take profit by it, to have every man to try his own works. And it is purposely said his own work, to bring us to the consideration of our whole life.

For he means not that we should take a piece of it and let the rest alone: but that like as God has written all in his records, so we on our side should search thoroughly by parcel meal wherein we may have offended, and what vices and infirmities there are in us. That is what Saint Paul meant by the word work. For it may happen now and then, that in some one point we shall have served God faithfully, but yet however it be done, there is still some infirmity in it. Again we are faulty of so many imperfections, as it abashes us to see it, and we cannot but even loathe ourselves.

Therefore let us learn to examine our own lives well before we judge of other men's. For seeing that God does us the honor to make every of us his own judge: we do but increase our own damnation before him when we are so rough and severe towards those that have offended, and forget our own sins. Now whereas Saint Paul says that every man shall have praise in himself only: it is not meant when men examine themselves, they shall find cause in them wherefore to be praised: but that the true praise is that which has some substantialness in itself: which is, that every man knows what he himself is, and judges of himself without comparing with others.

As for example: it is always said that a purblind person is clear-sighted, among them that are stark blind. And among the black Moors, he that is tawny will seem white. If judgment be given of a white man when he is among a dozen Moors, there will be no whiteness unto his. But if he be brought again among his own

countrymen, he will be found to be far other than he was taken to be. If it be said, "Lo here a man that is clear-sighted, and yet he is but purblind": his clear-sightedness shall be but in comparison of them that are stark blind: for his eyesight is not clear and sound indeed. Even so, to judge by comparison is a very fond thing. Thus you see in effect what Saint Paul meant to say. He meant not that when we have examined our life, we have wherefore to commend and esteem ourselves: but that all the praise men challenge to themselves, are but wind and smoke, and stark lies, because their gazing is at themselves, as if a man should be in love with his own image.

Mark me a little child when one shows him a glass, he knows not whether it be himself or another, whom he sees there, and yet is he altogether fond of it. Even so is it with all such as believe themselves to be wondrous fellows. And why so? Whereupon do they ground themselves, or what reason moves them, but that they seem to themselves to be of more value than they that were able to show them the way? For see here what they will allege. "Oh," say they, "such a man is well esteemed, but yet he has such a fault and such a fault in him." So that when a man's vices are searched out, if they be condemned, you see it is but a sport of little children. Therefore not without cause does Saint Paul say, that to make a good trial, that we may have a well-grounded praise and such a one as may stand before God, we must try ourselves. If a man says, "Yes: but may a man praise himself?" It is so certain that we must be void of all glory, to put in use that which we have seen in another text, where it is said that we must glory in God.

The question then is not whether men may be praised or not: but Saint Paul has said conditionally, that if any man will be praised of God, he must withdraw himself as it were into his secret chamber, and consider what manner of one he is: and then will he be no more

so foolish as to commend himself or to say, "Tush, I am worth as much as such a one, I am as good a man as he." When this greed is pulled down: then shall a man see whether he ought to be praised or no. Now of a truth, it is certain that there is not one spark of praise in us, at leastwise that we may challenge as our own. Nevertheless, we shall not fail to have praise in our God: which is much better than if we were hoisted above the clouds. For when men deceive themselves with a vain opinion, or that the whole world laughs upon them: it seems to them that they fly in the air: but it is the next way to make them tumble down and break their necks. Lo whereunto all this presumption that blinds us serves us. But when we once know what it is to seek praise in God: then are we in the way to be rightly knit unto him, and so shall we stand upon a good and sure foundation and esteemed. According whereunto we see how Saint Paul glories in his good conscience and in his uprightness. He says that they whom he has won unto Jesus Christ by the Gospel are his crown or garland. And all God's servants may say as much.

Nevertheless, it is not meant that they must part stakes with God, as they do which allege their own virtues and deservings, who out of all doubt do make as it were idols of themselves: But that the faithful, having confessed themselves to be nothing at all but by God's free goodness, rejoice in the things that he has given them, always reserving to him his due. Therefore when we desire not to have anything to ourselves alone from God, but depend upon him and upon his mere grace: then shall we have praise, however in ourselves (says Saint Paul) and not in other folk.

Now whereas it is said "But in ourselves": it is not meant that the praise springs in ourselves, and that we be not sinners: but he has an eye to that which I have told you already: which is, that so long as men stand upon comparing themselves with other folks, they do but

deceive themselves. For it will seem that we be little Angels: and yet for all that, we shall be never a whit better than Devils. And why? For we liken ourselves but to such as are stark naught and utterly corrupted.

Now if ever this warning were necessary, it is most necessary nowadays. For although there have been much corruption even ever from Saint Paul's time hitherto: yet at this day it is come to the full height of it. And in very deed it seems that all states and degrees have conspired against God. We see then that the world rushes forth as it were into a furious rage, to make war against all equity and uprightness: and yet we cease not to sleep still in such confusion. And why? Because every man does so. And by that means God is as it were driven back. Think we that we by our iniquities shall thrust him out of his seat, or bereave him of his authority of judging the whole world? No: For all of us without exception must appear before him, and there we cannot shock ourselves together to say, "Sirs let us stick to our tackling, for we be too great a multitude." God with one blast of his mouth is able to sink us. So, let us put the thing in practice which is spoken here by Saint Paul, and let every man keep good watch over himself.

And when we see blasphemy, whoredom, wantonness, looseness, drunkenness, gluttony, pilling and polling, perjury, treason, envy, and such other like things have their full scope: Let us be sorry for it, and yet let us not think that because the thorns among which we walk do scratch us, therefore we be discharged: nor that it may avail us when we can allege, that other men have been the cause of our starting out into lewd behavior, or of that we have been carried away indeed as it were with a whirlwind. I say let us not think that that can avail us: but let us follow God's word when it is preached unto us: Let that be all our wisdom. Let that be all our counsel, according as it is

said in the hundred and nineteenth Psalm, that God's commandments are the counsellers of a faithful man.

When a young man that is ready to fall to thriftiness has a governor to hold him in awe, he will be restrained for a time. Now truly Satan has great store of allurements, and infinite means and occasions to break our necks withal: But God of his grace gives us counsel, he sets his word before us.

Therefore, it is good reason he should win so much at our hands as to be heard of us, and that we should frame ourselves to him: for what shall it advantage us to have alleged a hundred thousand times that we have done as other men did? It is all one as if we should say, "Tush sir, we pass not so much for God as for men, we have preferred the world, which led us to unthriftiness, and withdrawn ourselves from all goodness." Is this a reasonable excuse? No: Is it not all one as if we should spit in his face, and bid him back and get him hence, that men may have full sway among us, for we must do as they do and frame ourselves to the bent of their bow? Thus you see in few words to what use we ought nowadays to put this doctrine of Saint Paul's. And for the same cause also he adds, that every man shall bear his own burden. As if he had said, every man shall be combered enough for himself, without helping. This sentence may be applied to many uses, yea even without turning of the words from Saint Paul's own meaning.

For if this reason that every man shall bear his own burden before God, be alleged as a general matter: then uses he the word Burthen, to cut off all excuses, to the end that men should think that all their shifts and starting holes cannot avail them: and that is well worthy to be marked. For we see what malapertness is in us: we would be ashamed to stand in contention with creatures as we do with our

God, and for proof thereof, if God press us, we will never leave our replying and murmuring, till we be more than convicted. You see then that Saint Paul's setting down of this word Burthen, is as if he should say that we cannot accuse God, nor win anything by standing in contention with him. For why? Whence comes the condemnation that presses us? Is it that God stretches out his arm to make us feel his power in overwhelming us? No, but every man shall bear his own burden.

Now it is very true that God's wrath is likened to a burning fire which consumes all: but in the meanwhile, whence comes the wood of the fire that consumes us? What kindles it? What maintains it? It is we ourselves: Our sins are (as you would say) the wood, and our wicked lusts have kindled the fire. Even so is it as in respect of the word Burthen. It is true that it is God's hand which presses the wicked: but yet notwithstanding if they look upon the very cause, they shall find it to be their own sins. Thus much concerning the word Burthen. Now after that Saint Paul has stopped all mouths, and showed that we must quietly receive the judgment that God shall give upon us: he tells us that every man shall bear his own burden. And thereupon we have to gather the thing which I have touched already, namely that every man shall be combered enough with himself. And Saint Paul does purposely say so, because that when I refer myself to custom, and say, the fashion or guise is so, and every man does so: it is all one as if I would unburden myself. But now I must consider whether they whom I allege for my warrant be strong enough, and whether their shoulders be able to bear my burden.

Behold, God calleth me, and I must be fain to yield up an account of my life: and I shall go seek warrants to answer for me. And who be they? Every man shall be combered enough in answering for himself: there is not that man who hath not faults enough of his own already.

And how then could they bear my burden if I should cast it upon them, seeing they be so sore laden already with themselves, as is able to weigh them down a hundred times? Is it not then a great folly for me to bring such warrants before God? I am guilty of a hundred thousand faults, I shall be put there into the throng among the rest, and if I examine myself rightly, I shall find myself worse than guilty as I said, and yet for all this, I will satisfy God with saying, I have followed the common trace. While I go about to discharge myself after this fashion upon others, a thousand persons or twain shall fall upon me, and by that means my burden which was too heavy already shall be increased and be made much heavier: and so you see we shall still abide in confusion.

Now therefore we see what folly it is to allege men, as though they could defend us against God, or that we could be exempted from our deserved condemnation by making a number of bucklers after that sort, to shield ourselves against God: as who should say, the matter were doubtful who should get the upper hand, whether God's word which must endure forever and cannot be impeached, or else our lusts which are fleshly. For whereof comes custom, and fashion, and all that men term lawfulness, and antiquity or prescription and such other things? Of nothing else but that men will needs be wise in despite of God: and moreover are carried away with their own wicked lusts, and every man would have the bridle slaked, to take leave to do all manner of lewdness. You see then that we cannot bring any warrants to set against God, but we make open war against him. To be short, if every of us consider that he is overloaded with his own faults, he shall have cause to humble himself. For there is not any man who is not beaten down to the ground if God list to enter into and execute rigour towards him, and even the most righteous men of all, shall have somewhat continually in them that is worthy of blame, so as they shall be confounded. Let us acknowledge this, and

yield God the whole praise, suffering ourselves to be governed by him.

And let us go back again to that which Saint Paul told us heretofore: that is to wit, to beware that we deceive not ourselves wilfully, when we would show ourselves hardy and bold in correcting, rebuking, and amending one man or other. Let us not be so foolish as to justify ourselves by comparison, as who should say that God ought to hold himself contented with our rebuking of others after that manner, and for that there is some show of virtue in us. Let us not stay upon any of these things, as is told us here, but let us mark also by the way, that whereas it is said that every man shall bear his own burden, we have right great need of our Lord Jesus Christ's help, and that he should take all our burdens upon him, according as in very deed he hath borne all our sins upon the cross, as saith Saint Peter in his first Epistle. True it is that the matter which Saint Paul handleth here, is none other than the same that I have declared already: that is to wit, that we must not imagine that men are able to warrant us, for the righteous man alive is combered enough with himself. And furthermore, that if our Lord had not regard to hold us up, we should be oppressed under our burden.

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himself contented with our rebuking of others after that manner, and for that there is some show of virtue in us. Let us not stay upon any of these things, as is told us here, but let us mark also by the way, that whereas it is said that every man shall bear his own burden, we have right great need of our Lord Jesus Christ's help, and that he should take all our burdens upon him, according as in very deed he has borne all our sins upon the cross, as says Saint Peter in his first Epistle. True it is that the matter which Saint Paul handles here, is none other than the same that I have declared already: that is to wit, that we must not imagine that men are able to warrant us, for the righteous man alive is combered enough with himself. And furthermore, that if our Lord had not regard to hold us up, we should be oppressed under our burden.

Yet notwithstanding every man must answer for himself, and God's word must have the mastery as I said before. Thus you see what Saint Paul intended to tell us. But yet further, let us think a little upon ourselves. If every man should be fain to bear his own burden, who were able to endure it? We should needs be borne down. For if a man had but some one sin in him, behold, hell were ready to swallow him up. Surely the weight of one sin is heavier than a stone that were able to crush all our limbs and bones to pieces. Now it is no talking of any one, nor of a hundred: the multitude of them is infinite. How then shall we stand in judgment before God when he brings us to account? Who can say that he comes frank and free? To be short, we see that if there were not a remedy in the matter that Saint Paul tells us here: we should utterly perish: we must repair to our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is he that has borne all our burdens, as I have alleged already. Truly the redeeming of us did cost him dear, and if we seek heaven and earth throughout for the price of a ransom, we shall not find any other than him, that is able to pacify God. Then had we never been sanctified, except the Son of God had given himself for us. And in

very deed the prophet Isaiah shows how he bore our burdens. Namely that he felt the pains of death, and that the Father was fain to wreak himself upon him, as though he had been an offender and guilty of all the sins of the world.

Now therefore we must resort unto him, according also as he allures us to him. And by the way, if any man allege that here seems to be some contrariety, considering how Saint Paul says that every man shall bear his own burden: the answer thereto is easy. When the Scripture speaks to us of God's justice: it says that every man shall be recompensed according to his own works. After which manner Saint Paul speaks in the fourteenth to the Romans. According as every man shall have walked in his conversation in this world (says he) and according as he shall have wrought in his body: so must he receive his reward. That is the order which the scripture keeps in speaking of God's justice. Yea, but in the meanwhile it excludes not the remedy that is given us in our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby men are succored. Lo how God succors his elect, and such as he has reserved to salvation: that is to wit, after he has chastised them, he reaches them his hand, and lifts them up again when he has cast them down. And truly we should not know of what value the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is, neither could we taste of it, neither could we ever be partakers of it, unless we were utterly confounded in ourselves. Therefore let us learn to feel our burden in such wise, as to bow under it, (as has been declared this morning) and let the same lead us to true humility.

And afterwards, when we have felt the burden more than we are able to bear: let us repair to our Lord Jesus Christ, who promises to ease us, so we seek our whole rest in him. So then, we see that God's grace is not excluded when his justice is spoken of. For it stands us in good stead always to his mercy. Whereas it is said that he who shall have

been a cruel and merciless person, shall have justice without mercy: thereby Saint James does us to understand, that our Lord has his judgment against the wicked and the reprobates, to recompense them according to their misdeeds: and again that he measures his own otherwise, that is to wit, that after he has condemned them in themselves, and made them to feel their diseases thereby to bring them to true lowliness: then he sets them up again. Then must we first be stricken down with God's hand, and afterwards be lifted up again by his gracious promises, in that he tells us that in our Lord Jesus Christ we shall find all that we want. Thus you see in sum, after what manner we must practice this text: namely that in admonishing our neighbors with a gentle and meek spirit, and being also humble and make ourselves, without presuming anything upon ourselves, we must examine well our own lives, so as we may daily bewail our sins and be sorry for them, to the end that we be no more deceived with hypocrisy, but labor to withdraw ourselves from the world, to the intent we surmise not that we shall escape God's judgment by our shifts.

So then, let us bear all these things in mind, that we may submit ourselves to the pure word of God. And whatever men do to turn us away from it, let us not suffer ourselves to be seduced. And for the bringing hereof to pass, let us flee to our Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that how desirous soever we be to give ourselves wholly to the serving of God, yet we are so overloaded with sins and imperfections, that they were able to sink us down to the bottom of hell, if we had not one to hold us back, that is to wit, our Lord Jesus Christ, who has borne all our sins, and set us utterly free from them, to the intent we might hereafter come before God with our faces upright.

Now let us acknowledge our sins with such humility, as every of us may confess, yea even unfeignedly, that we are all forlorn and past

hope, except this our good God have pity upon us: praying him nevertheless, to make the fruit and virtue of the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ available, not only in hiding which we have committed already, and in burying them out of remembrance: but also in cleansing us daily by his holy spirit: and in holding us up continually, till we be come to the perfection whereunto he calls us, and be delivered from the prison of sin, wherewith we are yet inclosed. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people. &c.

The Fortieth Sermon,

which is the third upon the sixth Chapter.

> 6 Let him that is taught in the word, make him that teacheth him partaker of all good things.
>
> 7 Deceive not yourselves: God cannot be mocked. For look what a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
>
> 8 For he that soweth in the flesh, shall also of the flesh reap corruption. But he that soweth in the spirit, shall of the spirit reap everlasting life.

We see well enough that wherever St. Paul was known, he could not be suspected to be a man much given to his own profit. For although it were lawful for him to have his finding, because he bore abroad God's word: yet notwithstanding (as we see) he forbore that liberty,

to the end to prevent all occasions of stumbling. And he protests that he was fain to labor day and night with his hands to earn his living. But yet was he so much the better able without suspicion to call upon the negligent sort to do their duty, as we see in this text. He commands men to find their teachers, and not to suffer them to want anything. Now if Saint Paul (as I said) had been a covetous man in scraping to himself other men's goods, or if he had been desirous to set out himself in pomp and superfluity: he should have had his own rebuke, and it would have been told him that he spoke for himself, and that it had been no giving of himself to the service of God. But forasmuch as he had showed sufficiently by experience, that forgetting himself and having no regard of his own person, he sought nothing else but to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to edify his Church: therefore he might rebuke the unthankfulness of such as behaved themselves amiss towards their shepherds, in abridging them of sustenance for their bodies, whereas by their means they had food and sustenance for their souls.

Now it is a very unkind dealing, when a man considers not that he who brings him the doctrine of salvation, is as a foster father sent unto him of God, and at least wise finds not in his heart to give him bodily food. Therefore when men are so reckless in that behalf, they betray a contempt of God's word. For nature ought to teach us, that when we be in any man's debt, we should strain ourselves to the uttermost to requite him the like: and if we be not able to do it: then at least wise to show that it is not for want of goodwill. But in this case, like cannot be requited for like. For God's word finds not anything in the world that may be laid in balance against it. Yet notwithstanding, such as are taught, ought at leastwise not to spare their temporal goods, for the finding of those at whose hand they receive the inestimable treasure of the Gospel.

And verily we see how it has always been the policy of Satan, to spoil God's Church of good Shepherds and ministers, by after a sort starving of them. Satan's upholders shall always have enough to cram themselves with all: according as we see how that in the Papacy, these idle bellies which do nothing else but bark out their Masses and Mattins, are crammed to the full. Though all the world should hunger and thirst for it, those kinds of people shall never feel penury: yea and they shall have good store of provision though all the world starve in the meantime. But clean contrariwise, when such as serve God shall have showed the singular zeal and care which they have for the health of men's souls: men let them alone, and think them greatly bound unto them that they give them the hearing. Well (say they) we have heard him, and heard him well, he has done his duty. And how many are there nowadays that give contribution when they come to hear a Sermon? They could find in their hearts that God should never be spoken of, because it is a melancholic matter to them.

Whereby we see that the Devil has, by that means, given a push to rid away all teaching, and to bring to pass that there might be none but idols, nor any man care how he behaved himself. Then was it not without cause that Saint Paul was desirous to remedy such inconvenience, saying, that he who teaches ought at leastwise to be nourished and maintained, and that he who receives the doctrine of salvation is bound at leastwise to give of his goods and substance to him that has ministered spiritual food unto him. And Saint Paul speaks here expressly of God's word. For whereas human sciences have always been so highly esteemed, that such as have professed them, have been maintained: the word of God, which surpasses all other things, is as it were cast down.

Therefore Saint Paul blames men's naughtiness, saying: See what a worthy thing it is to have God's word brought unto you: See what fruit redounds unto you by it. For we are all miserable and cursed, saving that God calls us to him by means of his word: for that is the power which he spreads over us to gather us into his kingdom. Since it is so then: how can you be niggardly of the transitory goods of this world, that such as travel for your welfare and edifying, should not at leastwise be so maintained, as they might give themselves wholly unto that, and not be drawn away by cares that might stop them and hinder them of doing their duties?

The word that Saint Paul uses here is Catechize, which signifies to teach, train, or instruct, and thereof comes our word Catechism, which signifies a Teaching, Training, or Instruction. Then he that catechizes, says he: that is to say, he that is a faithful Teacher to edify the people in God's word, let him be maintained by such as are Catechized, that is to say, by such as are taught, or as are brought as scholars unto God. Now we see Saint Paul's meaning: and thereupon we have to gather, first of all that we must not take any nowadays for Ministers and Herdsmen of God's Church, but such as bring his word. Mark that for one admonition for our behoof so to do. For the Papists boast that they have the Church on their side. But it is certain that it cannot be verified of God's children, that they should be a flock without a guide. Then what are the marks of the Church? That there be a flock gathered together, and that therewithal there be a shepherd to lead the sheep to our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in good sooth the Papists allege also that they have a Hierarchy, that is to say, a holy and sacred Sovereignty, but in the meanwhile the mark that Saint Paul sets down here, is not to be found among them. For we see that all the horned Prelates, and all the route of the Popish Clergy, have no more but the bare title. For where is the said

word of God? They think that that were a stain to their state: it is enough for them to do their Ceremonies and gewgaws, and they bear themselves in hand that they have very well discharged their duty, when they have so played an interlude: and so those Hypocrites do nothing else but fill the world full of their abuses and Illusions.

Therefore let us learn to discern God's true Church, from all the Synagogues that Satan has built in the world, and wherewith he dazzles our eyes nowadays. That is to wit, when God's word is preached faithfully, let us conclude that God also does both know and acknowledge the flock that is assembled there. And here you see how they ought to dispose the goods of the Church, as Saint Paul shows. Furthermore, whereas he says, Let those that are taught impart all good things: it is not meant that they should bestow such abundance upon the preachers of the doctrine of salvation, that they should be ready to burst with it. For the superfluity of riches has been a deadly plague, when a number of men were moved, and driven by fond devotion, to give their substance to such as they thought worthy to possess the greatest part of the world, whereby they brought all to horrible confusion.

And therefore we must not think that Saint Paul meant to enrich the Ministers of God's word in such wise, as they might have wherewith to riot with all excess, or as they might have wherewith to maintain a dissolute life in pomp and bravery: Saint Paul meant not to open a gap for luxury: but only meant to do men to understand, that they ought to succor them in all their needs, so as they should not be driven to extreme penury.

And it behooves us to bear in mind how that in another place he says, if we have wherewith to feed and clothe ourselves, let us be contented. Also we know that God has a care of all creatures: and

therefore much more of his faithful ones. So then let us live soberly, as if we had but a day to live, and let us not make a hoard of the transitory goods of this world. When the ministers of God's word bear this lesson in mind, namely to live soberly and thriftily, and not to have a care so full of unbelief as should torment them and burn them, and provoke them to heap up unmeasurably: then will they content themselves with a little, and yet notwithstanding, men will be bountiful and liberal to them without their craving of it, so they shall always have wherewith to be fed and clothed.

And in good faith, besides this that has been said, we see that Saint Paul did not only practice this doctrine himself, but also exhorted his brothers and companions to the same. For in the twentieth of the Acts he alleges principally, that he had traveled and taken pains with his hands to get part of his living: howbeit that it is much better to give than to take: for (says he) the thing that we ought to have learned in the school of our Lord Jesus Christ, is that we should be better apaid when we have occasion to do good, and to give to the relief of others: than when we receive to become rich ourselves. For it cannot agree with God's servants, that they should covet to hoard up. To be short, now we see whereat Saint Paul aimed: namely that he meant not to give bridle to the preachers of God's word, to have a delicate and dainty table, or to be brave to the worldward: but that they should have wherewith to find themselves soberly according to their degree. And therewithal also he blames the unkindness of the world, for that they who are bound to their Shepherds show themselves so niggardly, that it seems to be as it were a plucking out of the guts out of their bellies, when they be spoken to for the relief of the need of those to whom they be bound beyond measure.

Now forasmuch as that vice has reigned at all times in the world, and the devil (as I said) has by that policy given courage the ministers,

that there might be no more teaching and instruction: let us learn that Saint Paul has not without cause set down this rule, that they which take pains in preaching of God's word, must have wherewith to find and maintain them. And we see nowadays a greater churlishness in the world, than that which S. Paul blames and condemns. For they that are at no charges at all with them, will not fail to grunt and grudge when the ministers of God's word be talked of. O (say they) these fellows must be nourished in idleness: verily as who should say it were idleness to serve God and the whole Church.

Again, the Apostles (say they) did neither so nor so. No, but it is apparent that the Apostles were fetched afar off: and every man did strain himself for the same, not only in his goods, but also in his own person. If any Apostle were to be accompanied, it appears that the rich and wealthy men passed the sea with them. And nowadays there shall be nothing but murmuring and grudging at God's servants, though they be entertained niggardly. But this discovers and shows the wickedness of those repiners, and betrays them to be Heathenish folk, that could find in their hearts to live in barbarousness and beastly conversation, without having any doctrine of salvation, and that all were thrust underfoot, that every man might live after his own lusts.

So then, let us bear in mind the thing that S. Paul tells us here, to the end that such as are called to the state and office of preaching God's word, may know that whereas they be found and maintained, it is because they should take pain, and profit the whole people with their service, and be thereby the more provoked to do their duty warily and carefully, and finally be quickened up to become so much the more diligent. And let not men envy them nor grudge against them when they have convenient finding and entertainment, seeing that

God has so ordained: and we ourselves also do see reason why it should be so.

Now hereupon S. Paul adds, Be not deceived, for God is not mocked, and look what a man soweth, that shall he reap. S. Paul, in willing men not to be deceived, shows sufficiently that men have at all times had store of shifts, and that when they intended to do or say evil, they have ever pretended some cloak. But here he cites them to God's judgment, as if he should tell them that they might well enough content men and stop their mouths: but yet for all that they must be fain to come to account before the heavenly judge.

And therefore all your shifts (says he) will stand you in no stead. It is true that these excuses will easily be admitted among men, and (as I have touched already) many men will hold their ministers at the staff's end, and there shall be nothing but quarreling with them. For their ears are so itching, that a man shall hardly find one of a hundred who will not be glad to hear such matters, and to add some scoff besides, or else to make the sauce sharper. This is too common a case. Nevertheless, Saint Paul's doctrine extends generally to all the excuses that we be wont to make when we would justify our evil-doing, or make men believe that the Crow is white.

First of all, therefore, let us have an eye to the ground that Saint Paul treats of here. Now the case concerns the finding of the ministers of God's word. He wills men that they should not beguile themselves. And why so? For it is a fond thing to say, why should not the Ministers of God's word labor for their living, seeing they ought to give example unto others? When they come out of the pulpit, can they not spend the rest of the time in some labor, that they might not burden the Church? This will easily be received of such as gabble after that fashion, thinking themselves to have a good case, and to be

very zealous of the common welfare and of the order of the Church. But such men deceive themselves. For there is nothing in them but malice, and Satan thrusts them forth thereunto, to the end to make the world to loathe the doctrine of salvation, or at leastwise to set light by it and to scorn it. That is the very welspring, thither must we go, and there must we hold us.

So then, it is not without cause that S. Paul warns the Galatians, to beware that they beguile not themselves in using these fair colors. And secondly, we must also apply this warning of Saint Paul's generally to all the covers which we take in going about to disguise things, for we will always have wherewith to clear ourselves, if men will believe us: And there is not so very a naughty pack but he will still have some shift to conceal his own shame before men. Even if we were a hundred times convicted, yet the Devil would ever put some device in our mind, to set a good face upon a foul matter. And because we are inclined thereto by nature, and hardened therein by custom: it stands us the more in hand to mark the thing that Saint Paul tells us here: which is, to beware that no man beguile himself, and that we err not willfully.

For it is certain that hypocrisy shall never deceive men, till they beguile themselves willingly and wittingly. The hypocrites shall now and then be deceived, and yet notwithstanding, be convicted therewithal, and they shall have such heart-bitings, that they shall be the first that shall condemn themselves, though all men else did acquit them. But there are that fall asleep, and bear themselves in hand that nothing is amiss in them. Yet cease they not therefore to have some pricking within them: and although they be blind, yet does God make them unexcusable, because he quickens them up, and they seek shifts still to entangle themselves in, so as they

themselves perceive not the mischief, that they might repent them of it.

You see then that the worst kind of Hypocrisy that can be, is when men deceive themselves by fond flattery in alleging this and that, and in seeking to shift off the matter, not only before men, but also before God. Now S. Paul says here, that God will not be mocked. And if he should say, that such as beguile themselves after that fashion with their fond excuses, are mockers, yea and very mockers of God. For if we bear such reverence to God as we ought to do: it is certain that when we be cited before his majesty, we would sound ourselves to the hard bottom of our thoughts and affections, so as there should not be anything that were not examined to the quick.

All they then which make so light a matter of coming before God, as though he were but some little babe and might play with him at their pleasure, do thereby show themselves to be full of ungodliness. Now, therefore, we see how profitable this text is for us, where Saint Paul having warned men that they should not beguile themselves, adds that God cannot be mocked. This should seem not to make to the purpose. For what though we be deceivers? Does it therefore follow that we be mockers of God? Yea, says Saint Paul. And for proof thereof, you seek vain shifts to your selves. But if you looked rightly upon the deed, and were not wrapped in your own maliciousness: surely you should have a righter judgment than you have.

What causes you then to fall asleep in your so fond excuses? It is because you consider not that we must all of us appear at God's judgment seat, and that it is He who searches men's thoughts, and from whom nothing is hidden. But you take Him to be but an Idol; you would bear Him in hand that He ought to be contented with your

fools' baubles: and when you have beguiled men and laughed them to scorn, you think that God is of the same stamp, and use yet greater boldness towards Him. Therefore it is certain that all such as flatter themselves and seek starting holes, are Infidels, and the thing itself shows them to be plain mockers of God.

Now although this saying be short: yet ought it to make us quake, for as much as we hear so great a thunder, or see such a lightning coming upon us from above. And I pray you, is it a fault to be pardoned, when men that are but stark rottenness, do so vaunt themselves against God, yea even to mock at Him? Surely we know it is the greatest reproach and spite that can be done unto a man, to laugh him to scorn after that fashion. If it be intolerable among us that are nothing: will God suffer Himself to be mocked? Saint Paul therefore has well given us occasion here to look narrowly to ourselves, and to walk plainly, and not to use our scoffing tricks, as though we thought to mend our market by it, for as much as God is provoked by it, as though we defied Him, or as though we intended to dispossess Him of His right, and to make Him believe that a man might pluck Him by the nose, and do all manner of villainy to Him and He not perceive it. Were this saying well marked, we would walk in another manner of awe than we do: but we see how men become Heathenish, yea even willfully, and wax so hard-hearted, that they regard neither shame nor honesty when good or evil comes in question, but you shall see them corrupt and pervert all doctrine with full mouth, and cast out blasphemies against God.

You shall see then nowadays that all Tables, all houses, and all streets are full of mockers of God. And whereof comes that? It is true that there are many Hypocrites and self-soothers: Howbeit, the Devil has so possessed some, that they spit openly , that is to say, they defy God without any remorse of conscience, and thereby it appears that

they be given up to a reprobate mind, and spirit of madness. And whence proceeds such malapertness of advancing men's selves so against God? As I told you before, it comes of the said hypocrisy, when we think to disguise things in such wise by our subtle sleights and fair replies, that there is no more difference betwixt white and black.

So much therefore does it behoove us to bear well in mind this warning of Saint Paul's. Now hereupon he proceeds with the matter that he had touched, in so much that he extends it yet further, in saying that look as we sow, so shall we reap: He that sows in the spirit shall of the spirit reap everlasting life, and he that sows in the flesh, shall reap corruption.

In short, here Saint Paul likens all the study, care, and pains that we take, unto seed which husbandmen sow. For wherefore do men busy themselves about this or that, or wherefore do they travel and take pains, but for some end which they have purposed to themselves? I say, even because they hope for fruit to their commodity: that is the very cause why they be not weary of their labor. As for example: he that intends to get much, will suffer hunger and thirst, cold and heat, and nothing will appall him. And why? For his covetousness carries him on still, so as he forgets all things else, and torments himself more than if he were in his enemy's hands: nay, his enemies would not torment him so much.

So then, when a man takes great pains to gather goods, it is like the sowing of a husbandman: and he hopes that harvest will come, and that he shall gather it up again in the end. He that would advance himself to the worldward, dares not sleep half his fill: and what seeks he by his watching? To come to some honor or worship, and to win credit. Well then, Ambition is the harvest of them that covet worldly

honor. Their desire is to gather. And what? The thing that their own nature likes and longs for. Even so is it in all other things. Like as an unthrift will labor to satisfy his appetite, and he will not stick the rather to do some lewd prank, as to play the bawd; or some other like thing. And to what end? To the end he may eat his fill and fare delicately or else play the drunkard. And othersome fall to robbery and murder that in fine they become arrant Thieves. Lo whereunto men's lusts bring them. For they purpose with themselves to make a harvest: that is to say, to have the thing that they lust for though it be to their ruin and confusion. But however the world goes, if you consider why men give themselves to one thing or other: you shall find that they always hope for a harvest. So then, the things which they do, are the seeds of the labor which they hope to gather fruit of. Here Saint Paul says, that after as we sow, so shall we reap. And afterward he opens himself in saying, that the one sort sows to the spirit, and the other sort to the flesh.

Now to sow to the spirit, is to withdraw a man's self from the world and from this transitory life, and to know that we are created not to tarry here beneath, but to pass forth on till we be come to our inheritance: and that our life is not to be here but for a little while, and to walk away (as has been said in the Psalm that has been sung and shall be sung again),* so as our being here, is not to abide here forever, nor as though we had an everlasting dwelling place: but God gives us as it were a short walk, and causes us to make but a turn or twain, and straightways after says unto us, "Come away Sirs and return into dust," as Moses also speaks in his song.

Seeing it is so, if we bethink ourselves well to renounce all our own lusts, then shall we sow to the spirit, that is to say, we shall see that it behooves us to apply all our study to the heavenly life whereunto we are called. You see then how the one sort, of whom the number is

very small and scant, do sow to the spirit, because they start not out into worldly cares to be tied to them, but consider that God calls them higher, and therefore prepare and endeavor themselves to come thither. The other sort do sow to the flesh: that is to say, they are so wholly possessed with a beastly affection, that to their seeming there is nothing to be compared to this life. And truly if you mark at what mark men shoot, you shall find that the world holds them back well nigh all. You shall scarce find one among a thousand that goes any further, to consider that this world is but a shadow that vanishes away, and to bend themselves earnestly and rightly to the heavenly life.

Therefore all men well-nigh do sow to the flesh. True that their respects differ. For one is a whorehunter, another a drunkard, the third a niggardly pinchpenny, and another a spendthrift. Then if you look upon the humors of the men, they are diverse and as it were repugnant, so as the one hates the other. And wherefore? Because (says he) he is not of my nature, he and I cannot agree. But however the world goes, if a man sift them, he shall find that all of them sow to the flesh. Therefore there are many sorts of sowing: but yet notwithstanding all of them stick fast here beneath, so as they cannot consider whereto God calls them, and whereto they ought to apply themselves. For some would be rich, some would have honor and credit, some would live at their ease, and take their pleasure, some would have this, and some that: but in the meanwhile all of them pore upon this transitory life, and cannot lift themselves up. Now Saint Paul says, it is good reason that we should reap according to our sowing. They then which do so give themselves to the world and sow to the flesh, shall (says he) reap corruption: that is to say, in the end they shall perceive that all the things which they esteemed so highly, were but smoke. True it is that this word Corruption might be taken for everlasting death: but that is not Saint Paul's meaning. For

he intends to say that men are destitute of wit and discretion, when they will needs entangle themselves in their blockish and gross cares.

For why? if a man ask them: "Go to, what is the world?" They will say, it is a shadow that slips away. And what is our life? It is nothing. And what are the goods of this world? They be but a dream. All of them will say thus much, and yet nevertheless they be so ravished, as a man cannot tell how to pluck them from it, and the Devil holds them as it were bewitched, so that God cries out at their ears, "Wretched men where are you," and yet they go on still to plunge themselves deeper in the quagmire. And although they know well enough that all their lusts are nothing, and that this life slips swiftly from them: yet will they needs be wedded to it still. Although then that God does cry to these unadvised folk to bring them into the right way: yet are they so dulled that they cannot obey either the Counsel nor the warnings which they hear. Thus you see why Saint Paul says, that such as have sown after that manner, shall of the flesh reap corruption.

But they (says he) which sow to the spirit, (that is to say, which know that there is a much preciouser life than this wherein we be, and set their whole affection and mind thereupon) shall reap of the spirit everlasting life. That is to say, because they have been governed by God's spirit, and have labored to come unto him and to be knit to him: therefore is their reward also ready for them.

Now here first of all we are warned, to think better upon all our thoughts, doings, attempts, wishes, and endeavors, and to consider well to what end they tend. For this similitude shall always be found true, that we do then sow, when we apply our labor or travail to anything. Therefore let us look well to ourselves, and consider that although God will have us to gather Corn and wine in this world for

the sustenance of our bodies: yet notwithstanding he calls us yet higher, and will not have us to be held still here. Wherefore let us learn to seek first that God may reign, and bear rule, so as we may yield ourselves wholly to him and his righteousness, and that the care of this transitory life dull us not, as I have said before: but that it may be as an income to the principal whereunto we must go, that is to say, to the kingdom of God.

To be short, let us consider that God has put us into this world to sow, that is to say, not to be idle nor unoccupied. And how? Truly the Ministers of God's word ought to sow, to the end to gather in such a harvest, as they may offer up to God as a holy offering. And their sowing is to teach faithfully, to the end that God's word may bring forth fruit, and his name be glorified and blessed, accordingly as our Lord Jesus Christ said to his Apostles,* "I have chosen you to the end you should go and bring forth abundance of fruit, and such fruit as shall last forever." The ministers then have this peculiar to themselves: howbeit all of us in common must sow to eternal life, that is to say, we must pass through this world as strangers, lifting up our minds to the heritage where we should rest, and whereunto also it behooves us to apply all our endeavor.

And even when we travail for the sustenance of our bodies, let it be always with tending to the said mark, according as it is said that we must not live to eat but eat and drink to the end to be conveyed to another life: and that our living in this world is not to settle here, but to attain to a higher thing, that is to say, to the heavenly life. Since it is so, whenever any man busies himself to get his living, whether it be by tillage, or by some handicraft, or by trade of merchandise, or howsoever it be, in all the cares that we take for ourselves or for our households, let us always shoot at a higher mark. For surely it is a naughty thing, if a man busies himself but only about the getting of

his living, and have no regard of God's service. For in the getting of his living he ought to consider thus with himself: "How will God allow of my doing? How will he accept my service?" Truly that will he do if I walk not after my own lusts, if I look that I do no man wrong, and if I busy myself faithfully about the thing that I am bound to do. This (I say) is the way for us to sow: that is to wit, that we be not wedded to the world, nor held down here beneath, but that we may always mount upward to the life of heaven.

Now then let us look well upon the means of sowing after that sort: that is to wit, of sowing to the spirit, says Saint Paul. Wherefore let us consider that we be not as Asses and Oxen that toil and labor, and afterward do eat and drink, and are fed as reason and good right require: but that God has adopted us to come to the life of heaven. Therefore let us sow to the spirit; and cut off all that may hinder our mounting upward, let us shake them off as hurtful things, and assure ourselves that all such as labor to get reputation in this world, shall in the end find themselves disappointed. Why so? For they shall see plainly that it is but corruption. When he that shall have gathered great abundance of goods comes unto death, he has so much the more grief, because he made this world his paradise.

Therefore he then gnashes his teeth at God, and he storms and torments himself much more than if he had not taken so much pains to gather. Thus you see that such as have sowed in the flesh, perceive [at length] that they have sowed to corruption because they gather nothing else but corruption: but it is all too late, and therefore let us bethink ourselves. And although we, men beguile themselves, and to make their reckoning that it is a happy life to have all things that they wish, as commonly every man is ruled by his own liking: although we see men storm after that fashion: let us learn to do otherwise and consider that God calls us to an everlasting life, which he sets

continually before us by his Gospel. Let us set our whole minds upon that, and let all our intents and desires tend thitherward, and let us endeavor to profit more and more in the doctrine of salvation, that he may lift us up and draw us hence from beneath, according also as Saint Paul says when he tells us what the weapons of Christians are, making the doctrine of the Gospel to be our shoes. For it stands us on hand to be armed from top to toe, or else we should soon be wounded with the assaults that are given unto us in this world. After he has declared this (say I) he says that the Gospel must lift us up, and draw us from the corruptions wherein we be plunged, so as we may attain to the kingdom of God whereunto he calls us. You see then what we have to bear in mind.

Now as touching that Saint Paul says, that they which have sowed in the spirit shall reap everlasting life: he means not that we in so doing deserve so worthy and excellent a thing as the kingdom of heaven is: but he shows that the faithful having known their own calling, shall never find themselves deceived, though they seem wretched to the worldward. We know that God adopts us of his own free goodness: that is the groundwork of our salvation. He forgives us our sins: and that is our righteousness. For if he should consider us in our own nature, he could not but cast us away as loathsome and accursed: So can we find no grace at his hand except he admit us of his own free goodness. And we know also that our works are evermore imperfect and blemished with some vice, so as they cannot be accepted of God. We are sure that when we should go about to serve him and to do good, oftentimes we go clean backward, so that we are evermore in his danger. But however the world goes, when God has once adopted us to be his children, buried all our sins, and showed that he likes well of our service though it be imperfect: then declares he further and adds as an overplus, that we shall not be deceived in dedicating our lives unto him, and in laboring for the heavenly life. It is true that

men will laugh us to scorn. "Behold these fondlings," say they: "see how they martyr themselves? And wherefore? for the kingdom of heaven. And who has brought them tidings of that? It is I wot not what a kind of Religion that beguiles these folk, and in the meantime they be poor outcasts, in whom there is neither courage nor anything else." According whereunto we see nowadays, that such as stand upon their reputation, do rail upon us saying: as for these wretched silly souls what think they to do? Lo how we be scoffed at, because we covet not to advance ourselves nor to be in reputation of the world. Although then that we be so scorned, let us give ear to the promise that is made us here: which is that if we follow our vocation simply, we shall perceive that God who has begun is faithful, and that his intent of winning us unto him is our sovereign welfare, and that he not only seeks our profit in all respects: but also will through his infinite goodness show himself a father and Savior towards us.

Therefore let us strain ourselves to the utmost to come unto him, let us dedicate ourselves wholly to him, and let us give over all worldly things that may hinder our coming unto him, I say let us give them all quite and clean over, seeking continually the things that may guide us upward, and let us continue in them to the end. And if we do so: surely our Lord Jesus Christ will show that there is a harvest prepared for us, not of these worldly riches which are subject to corruption (for the costliest and richest apparel and deckings of this world shall be eaten with moths and worms: and there is neither gold nor silver nor anything else, but it perishes in the end. And moreover when men will needs take of them unmeasurably: they shall burst with the goods which they have heaped together, and they shall not only become unprofitable to them, but also they shall turn to their utter destruction. In stead of this then, we shall find that we have hoarded up a good treasure, which shall be laid up safe for us in the hand of God, to receive the fruit of it when we shall have finished our

course in this world, and continued the sowing of our seed, that is to say, when we shall have proceeded in the ways of our God without weariness, looking always up to heavenward, and withdrawing ourselves from the world as much as is possible for us.

And now let us cast ourselves down before the Majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our sins, praying him to make us so to feel them, as it may bring us to true repentance, and yet notwithstanding we not cease to comfort and cheer up ourselves with his goodness, not doubting but that he receives us to mercy, at leastwise if we repair to him to be reformed by his holy spirit, till he have rid us quite and clean of all the imperfections and vices of our flesh, and renewed us after his own image, to bring us to the perfect righteousness whereunto we travel. And so let us all say, Almighty God heavenly father. &c.

The Forty-First Sermon,

which is the fourth upon the sixth Chapter.

9 Let us not be weary of well-doing: for in convenient season we shall reap without weariness.

10 Therefore while we have time let us do good to all men, but chiefly to them that are of the household of faith.

11 You see how large a letter I have written to you with mine own hand.

We have seen the similitude whereby Saint Paul exhorted us to do good, so long as God gives us time in this world. For while we are here, we ought to apply all God's gifts to the service of Him and of all His, yea and generally of all men. For after as God bestows any ability or gift upon any of us, He binds him to such as have need of him and as he is able to help. Therefore we must be fully resolved of this, that none of us must be idle or unprofitable, but have an eye to the means that God has given us, to the end that every of us may make as it were a sacrifice of it unto Him.

And thereupon, to give us the better courage, Saint Paul says that in so doing we do sow: and God will not suffer us to be disappointed when we shall have endeavored to occupy ourselves about the things that he commands. We are of opinion that all is lost if every man seeks not his own profit and is given wholly to himself. But it is clean contrary. For although he who succors his neighbor forgo the thing that he bestows upon him: yet he puts it in good keeping, as he does who lays his seed into the ground, that is, to reap fruit of it in convenient season. Contrariwise there is a way for all to perish: namely if we be too gripple of the riches of this world, so as we have no care nor regard but of our own profit: we shall gather corruption, that is to say, all shall perish, as in very deed the world and the fashion thereof must needs pass and vanish away.

Thus you see what all the treasure is which they can scrape together, that endeavor to make their hand in this world. For as their life is flightful and transitory, so are all the goods that they shall have hoarded up, and all shall go to destruction. But if we can discharge ourselves of earthly cares, and look up to the kingdom of God,

although we seem to be diminished and made poor by doing good: yet shall not our treasure perish, but shall be well kept in God's hand till the last day.

However, as the Devil offers us many occasions to cool us, or to make us turn head back again, Saint Paul adds a very needful encouragement, which is, that we should not be weary of well doing. And afterward he adds that we must be patient, in waiting for the seasonable time of gathering.

Therefore where he says that we must not be weary, it is because such as have any good will or desire to do good, shall be plucked back by Satan's assaults, and by a number of comberances and let's which he will cast in their way. If a man walks abroad for his own pleasure, he needs not to be warned that he weary not himself. And why? For he chooses some fair beaten path, he keeps a measurable pace, and he goes at his ease: for he is not stinted to go thus many leagues in a day, but returns again as soon as his journey is not to his mind.

This warning therefore is for such as have long journeys to go, and not only one or two, but continual travelings. They shall perchance have hard passages, they shall have stony and shrubby ways, or ways that are miry and dirty, they shall have hills and dales. Such have need to be quickened forward, that they may be cheered and pluck up a good heart, that they tire not nor quail not in the midst of their journey. Even so is it with us when God touches us with his holy spirit, so as we be disposed to serve him and to do good to such as seek succor at our hand.

But on the one side we be plucked back by unbelief, because we be afraid that the earth will fail us: and if any man be to be relieved, we cast with ourselves that the like want and penury may befall ourselves. Thus you see we be plucked back, we be snarled in that

overcarefulness, and are insatiable in our lusts, and think we shall never have enough.

Hereupon also we be tempted to seek excuses. For we will allege [on the one side] that we cannot tell whether the party that complains have such need as he speaks of, or whether he be so greatly to be pitied: and on the other side that the world is so wicked and ungracious, that a man cannot tell to whom to do good, and that oftentimes the good turn is lost, and there is such unthankfulness, that it were better to let those complainants to endure hunger and thirst, than to give them occasion to offend God, in beguiling men after that sort and in laughing them to scorn for their labor.

There will always be found excuses and shifts enough to escape from well-doing, as experience shows too much, specially considering that we be so lazy and faint by nature. So much the more therefore does it stand us in hand to remember this lesson which Saint Paul sets down here, which is, to hold still without being weary, yea verily in doing good.

This matter concerns the enlarging of our hearts, and of the employing of our goods (if we have any) to the relief of our needy neighbors. And we know that Saint Paul has begun at the ministers of God's word. Nevertheless he exhorts us all generally, for so much as God has knit us all together, and set us in the world with condition that every of us should consider wherein he may be able to help such as have need of him.

Let us apply our life thereto, that we pervert not the order of nature. Furthermore for as much as we be so lither and cold, and shall also find many occasions to hinder and break off the zeal that we have to discharge our duty. Let us overleap all encumbrances, and pluck up a good heart that we quail not.

And the more that the world is nowadays come to the top of iniquity, unthankfulness, and malice, the more does it stand us in hand to tread down such temptations, rather having an eye unto GOD, than to the unworthiness of the persons that are to be succored. For how much lewdness soever there be throughout the whole world: yet will God continue always unchangeable in his purpose: that is to wit, he will have every of us to consider his own ability, and the measure that is given unto him, and that we be not born to ourselves, (for God hath not created us to that intent) but he will have every of us to thrust forth and as it were to constrain himself to help such as desire succor of him: and although they crave it not, yet if we see them in necessity, he will have us to relieve them by such means as he offers.

The very heathen men had skill enough to speak such language. Therefore it is double shame to us if we know not wherefore God hath created us, and wherefore he shows himself so bountiful towards us. Truly he could well have disposed the world in such wise, as no man should have wanted, and every man might have forborne other. But he offers us matter of pity and compassion, to show whether there be any kindheartedness in us or no. Now we must also mark well the promise that Saint Paul adds: which is, that we shall reap or gather in seasonable time. True it is that we were not to be excused, though there were no reward at all, but that God should say simply that he will have it so: for it is sufficient that he has set us in the world, and fed us with his bounteousness, and it requires at leastwise that we should be wholly at his commandment: however, for as much as he sees our feebleness and slowness, he adds this furthermore to make us pluck up a better heart, saying, that none of all our doings shall be lost.

For he does as it were take them into his keeping, and will deliver us them again, yea even with a greater profit than we could have hoped

or wished for in the world. He that has money in his pouch, and sees a commodity offered him, will lay it out on all sides: for he presupposes that he shall lose nothing by it, but that besides the return of the principal, he shall be much increased by the profit that will rise to him of it. Truly if a man be about to lend money, or to put it to some traffic, he will look twice or thrice to it that it may be sure: but finally if he spy a rich man that is able to pay and of good credit: he concludes by and by that he may well trust him.

But though God assures us as much as may be that whatever we put into his hands shall return safe unto us, and that we shall have greater gain of it, than of all the things that we can do in the world: he has not so much credit among us that we will trust to his word: no, we be deaf on that side. First of all therefore, to the end we should not be thrust out of the way by meanness unkindness: our Lord says, whatever you do to the least, or to the most despised of these, I accept it and acknowledge it as done to myself. To be short I receive it as of my own hand. Lo how God speaks as in respect of the word profit.

Also he adds a promise, that there is no usury nor gain so great, as the profit that is to be hoped for at his hand, so we shut our eyes against worldly things, that they hold us not back, but bestow the things that he has put into our hands, and which he has committed to our charge, as he appoints by his word. But whereas God speaks after that manner, not once or twice but many times, so as if there were but one drop of trust in us, surely we should be fully resolved of it: yet notwithstanding we persuade we be still fastened here below, and cannot believe nor persuade ourselves, that God speaks in good earnest.

Therefore it is not without cause that Saint Paul sets down the promise, that we shall gather or reap, as if he had said, you wretched men, you stand upon thorns when any profit is showed you, and although the issue be uncertain, yet your covetousness drives you to it, and every of you is willing to disburse your money. Lo here, God which is true and cannot lie, assures us oftentimes, yea and warrants us that whatever we put into his hand shall yield us inestimable gain: and yet we cannot find in our hearts to believe him for all his promises which he makes unto us. And can we do him a greater wrong? He for his own part owes us nothing: whatever he promises us, is of his own good will without being in any wise bound unto us, and yet can not anything induce us to serve him.

Therefore, mark well what Saint Paul tells us, to the end that every one of us may endeavor to amend this cursed root of covetousness, which is so deeply settled in our hearts that we must be fain to enforce ourselves when we should follow wherever God calls us, and especially when we should play the faithful stewards in dealing forth the goods which he has put us in trust with. However, let us mark the words which he adds, "in convenient season," says he. And this serves to confirm and strengthen us in patience. For we would have God to show us today or tomorrow, or rather out of hand, what the profit is that he speaks of.

The husbandman will hold himself quiet when he has laid his seed in the ground. Afterward, he sees frost and snow, wind and rain, heat and cold; and yet, nevertheless, he waits still for the coming of harvest. They that occupy the trade of merchandise, put forth their money, yea and their own persons also in great danger: and in the meantime, their silver goes and runs, and is shifted too and fro: and yet notwithstanding because they are accustomed to buying and selling, they know well enough that they shall not receive any profit

at the first day, but must be fain to wait till the time comes. However, there is hoping or looking for present gain when we have to do with God, and yet notwithstanding, we must think ourselves out of all doubt of it, in so much that the time ought not to seem too long, if we look up to the everlastingness of the kingdom of heaven.

And yet for all this, no man is patient. We will be quiet enough so long as we hazard and adventure our goods. And is it not a very pitiful case, that when as God tells us that he will be a faithful keeper of the things that are to be spent [in his service], we fall into sorrow and unquietness, and bear ourselves in hand that all is lost, if we see not the thing performed out of hand? You see then that the thing which we have to mark upon this saying, is that we must bridle ourselves till the convenient time be come. For it is not for us to appoint the certain day: that must remain in the hand of God.

Therefore, let us be contented that he exercises our patience, and the time shall not be prolonged further than is for our profit. Furthermore, Saint Paul meant also to draw us from the world, for we desire temporal profit. No doubt but we will be well contented that God should give us it: but yet therein we show ourselves to be altogether earthly. For if a man do any alms-deeds, although his intent be to serve God: yet could he find in his heart to receive by and by for every penny a shilling, or rather a crown, and under color of doing some small alms-deeds, he would seek to rake into himself on every side.

For as much then as we would chaffer so with God: Saint Paul to correct such vice, says that we must look whether God calls us, that is to wit, to the great day, at which every man shall have his wages. So then although all seem to be lost as in respect of this world, and of this present life, yet let us not cease to trust still in God, who is a

faithful keeper of our pawns and gages, and will do much more for us than we can hope for, so that we on our side have patience. Hereupon he concludes, that while we have time and leisure, we must do good to all men, and especially to the household of faith.

Now, in saying that we must labor to do good while we have leisure: he sets before us the shortness of our life. And we see an ungracious malady still in us in that behalf: for every day seems as a year to us. Will there never be an end, say we? Must we still continue in this plight? Will we ever be new to begin? Lo how every one of us thinks the time to be overlong that is spent in well-doing. And thereupon, "O," say we, "I shall come soon enough: for if I spend myself today, and one come to crave of me tomorrow, I shall want wherewith, and therefore I were better to spare myself. Now these delays are such as a man shall never find time to do good. For every man would prefer his fellow before him, not of purpose to follow him in doing good, but to hold himself still at a stay."

But contrariwise Saint Paul tells us, that if we consider the matter advisedly as it is indeed, we shall find ourselves to have no great leisure of all the time of our life. For although we did never cease, but every man enforced himself as much as were possible, to spend himself in the serving of his neighbors: yet were it never a whit too much. We see that as long as we be in this world, we must still be in charge. We see we must be fed and clothed while we be children, at which time we cannot earn the value of a pin, and other folks must be fain to travail for us.

Very well: are we come to years of discretion? Yet have we need to be oftentimes helped and succored, I mean even the richest sort of us. For there will come some sickness, or other adversity, that shall pull down them which think themselves to be lustiest and strongest.

Again, we shall have need of so many things and be so combered for ourselves, as we shall scarcely be able to impart the hundredth part of our duty to those whom we owe it to by God's appointment. They (I say) which are rich and have store of goods, even they having also a good will, (do what they can, and travail they never so much without ceasing) shall hardly or never be able to discharge the hundredth part of their duty towards those whom they be bound unto.

Therefore when all is well considered, we shall find that we have no great leisure to do good to our neighbors. For when we come to old age, it is a returning again to a second childhood, so as we serve to no more purpose than little babes, saving that we be more chargeable, because we be wayward and uneasy to content: everybody must be combered with doing service to us, and when all is done, we be utterly unprofitable.

Hereby then we see that we have no great leisure to do well: and therefore it behooveth us to strain ourselves so much the more, while God gives us convenient time. When a husbandman sees fair weather, "Ply it sirs, ply it" (says he), "we cannot tell whether it will rain or no: we must go dig our vines, we must go till our ground, we must sow our seed, we must do one thing or another while the weather serves, for we cannot tell how long it will last." Likewise doth the merchantman when he has a voyage to make, and likewise do all other men.

And now comes that travail or labor in question which God calls us to. The case concerns sowing, yea even to the spirit, and to the incorruptible life: and yet for all that we say we be none of the hastings: we may well delay it yet a year hence, yea two or three years

hence, that is to say, from henceforth forevermore: such is our negligence and coldness.

Therefore let us learn to practice this warning that is given us here by the Holy Ghost: namely to do well while we have leisure, for we shall not have it ever. And it is a special favor that God grants us when he puts into our hands wherewith to succor our neighbors. And in so doing he gives us some token beforehand that he avows us for his children, and if we can find in our hearts to impart his gifts to such as have need of them, it is a mark of his image that he puts into us.

Now then if we be willing to serve their turns which crave our help, when we have means wherewith, and opportunity to do it: surely God does us great honor in it. And we wot not whether that leisure shall last with us still or no: For we see how he plucks away his goods from these Cormorants, and from such as are like Seagulls: we see how he strips them miserably, so as they be driven to seek succor themselves, and are not regarded, because they have been so full of cruelty, that they had no compassion upon such as sought their relief.

Seeing it is so then: Let us mark that our life is but short, and passes away swiftly, and that occasions of well-doing slip away quickly. And therefore let us ply it according as our Lord gives us leisure, yea even towards all men (says Saint Paul) but chiefly towards the household of faith.

Now when he says to all men, it is to show us that although men discourage us to do them good, yet we must not cease to do still as God commands us. For (as I have touched already) we must not look what every man is, nor what he deserves: but we must mount up higher and consider that God has set us in this world to the end we should be united and knit together: and that for as much as he has

imprinted his image in us, and we have all one common nature: the same ought to move us to succor one another.

For he that will exempt himself from relieving his neighbors, must get himself a new shape, and show that he intends to be no more a man: for so long as we be of mankind, we cannot but behold our own face as it were in a glass, in the person that is poor and despised, which is not able to hold out any longer, but lies groaning under his burden, yea though he were the furthest stranger in the world. Let a Moor or a Barbarian come among us, and yet in as much as he is a man, he brings with him a looking glass, wherein we may see that he is our brother and neighbor.

For we cannot abolish the order of nature, which God has set to be inviolable. So then we are bound to all men without difference, because we are all one flesh, as the Prophet Isaiah avows, saying: "Thou shalt not despise thine own flesh." As if he should say, they that are niggardly and pinching, and shrink away when they should do good, do not only despise God, and reject his word: but also are ugly monsters, because they consider not that there ought to be a community among all men.

Thus you see why Saint Paul says expressly, that we must endeavor to do good to all men, yea even to such as are unworthy, even though they were our deadly enemies. Truly this is hard, and contrary to our inclination: but yet therein God tries us so much the better.

For if we do good to such as deserve it, or to such as are able to recompense it: it is no declaration or proof that we be willing to serve God: for it may be that we had respect to our own profit. And as our Lord Jesus Christ tells us, the Heathen men, and the worst men in the world do as much as that comes to. How so? They consider with themselves, I have need of help, I must win me some friend. Then if

we single out such as are worthy to have good done unto them, and such as are able to requite like for like: it is no right proof nor certain trial that we be willing to employ ourselves as God commands us. But when we wink at men's unthankfulness, and are inclined to pity, only in respect of their poverty and misery: then do we surely serve God.

And if we be once at that point, certainly (as I told you before) we shall endeavor to do good to all men, so as we cannot find in our hearts to break the indissoluble bond whereby God has knit and united us together. Therefore the furthest strangers in the world are neighbors near enough unto us, though they be neither our parents, our kinsfolk, nor our acquaintance. And why? For we are all of one flesh, and we bear all one mark, which ought to persuade us to do what we can possible one for another.

But however the case stands, Saint Paul commends unto us chiefly the household folk of faith. And he uses the word Household folk, to touch us more to the quick by that similitude. For although nature teaches us that we ought to succor such as are in necessity: yet notwithstanding they that are of one household are more inclined and willing to do good one to another.

You see here what degrees are among men, how all know that there is a certain mutual bond, so as if they forsake even the furthest strangers of the world, therein they forget themselves: yet notwithstanding forasmuch as it is hard for a man to reach out himself so far and wide: therefore men are not so much inclined to do good to unknown persons, except it be in extreme necessity. For then how hard hearted so ever we be, every of us is moved to put to his helping hand to succor a man, when we see him in imminent danger.

Yes and this pitifulness is so ingrained in us, that it will extend itself even to the brute beasts: and therefore much more reason it is that it should extend to those that are created after God's image as well as ourselves. But as I said, if a man be in extreme necessity, then are we more earnest to help in need. And when we be of one country and language, then we see ourselves somewhat nearer one another, and that increases the affection which otherwise in general would be but cold.

But when there befalls any friendliness and familiarity of neighborhood, that is yet more: according as we see that they which be of one Country will say, "Seeing that God has brought us thus near together, let us at leastwise endeavor to serve one another's turn." Again, we see that the neighbors which dwell in one self-same street, and communicate familiarly together, are as kinsfolk and near of alliance. Now then it is much more reason that they which are all of one house, and are gathered as it were into one little corporation or body, should be held as it were fast linked together by God: and that he should embrace them as if a father should hold all his children about him.

For as much then as we ought to be so much the more moved to employ ourselves with the better courage, seeing that God has so knit us together, and brought us so familiarly near one another: Saint Paul says that all the faithful, and all those that profess the same Gospel which we do, are as household folk of one self-same house. And in very deed the Church is called God's house, and he sits over in the midst of us. When the Scripture speaks so, it means not that our uniting together must be in such a material Church or Temple as this is: but that although every man be at home in his own house, yet God has in such wise gathered us together to himself, that we be as it were household fellows one with another, and we be not only Countrymen

of one Realm or kingdom, but there is yet a certain nearer alliance, which ought to hold us more close together.

To be short, when as it is said that such as intend to be God's children must dwell all together in one house: it is to show that there is as it were one common brotherhood among us. And although earthly brethren go asunder one from another, and every man gets away by himself: yet must we always continue in the unity which God has set among us. Since we hear this, must we not be worse than beasts, and crueler than the brute and wild beasts, if we be not moved to bestow God's gifts to the relief of our neighbors, I mean of the faithful?

Now then we see that Saint Paul's meaning in effect is, that seeing God has bound us to do good to all men, because they are our own flesh: no malice ought to hinder any of us from endeavoring to discharge himself generally towards all such as God offers to him, and in whom it is his will to try our kindness. And yet notwithstanding that for as much as he has gathered us into his flock, and knit us together in his name, and we call upon him as our father with one mouth: it behooves us of duty to be as brothers one to another.

So that if we mind that he should allow us for his children, we must so advance the adoption whereby he has chosen us, as we may declare unfeignedly by our doings, that we mind to show that we take them for our brothers, whom God has so gathered into his house and Church. Thus you see what we have to remember upon this Text. Wherefore let us no more use these fond excuses to say, "I wot not who he is, I know him not." But he is not known of God? yes: and yet notwithstanding thou disdainest to open thine eyes to look upon him

that is thine own image, yea and whom God takes for one of his children.

Thou knowest not him, and yet behold how God vouchsafes to cast his eye upon us which are most miserable, yea even he who has so high and terrible a majesty, that the very Angels of heaven do tremble before him with all humility. You see then that God our sovereign Lord looks down upon us that are but wretched worms of the earth and filthiness: yea and he not only vouchsafes to say, "I know you:" but also protests, "I have adopted you for my children, you are my workmanship, you are mine heirs, you are after a sort my members."

God vouchsafes to speak after that fashion: and we be so full of pride and stateliness, that we despise such as are as good as ourselves, and most commonly much better. So then who can bear with such pride? To be short, they that are so strange in withdrawing themselves from their brethren, and will not in any wise communicate with them, deserve well to be wiped out of the book of life, so as God should blot and scrape them quite out, and deliver them into the possession of the Devil who is their sire, for he was a murderer and full of cruelty from the beginning.

Thus ye see in effect what we have to bear in mind, and how it behooves us to practice this lesson, wherein the household folk of faith are chiefly commended unto us. And so, seeing that God has vouchsafed to call us to him, let us show ourselves to set more by that grace and honor, than by all the goods in the world. And in proof thereof, let us also show that we have a brotherly affection to do good to such as have need of us, according to such opportunity as God shall give us, and according to the measure of our ability.

Now hereupon Saint Paul says, that the Galatians ought to consider, that he has written them a large letter with his own hand. And this serves to make them the more attentive, when they see what care he has of their salvation. For his commending of the largeness of his letter, was not to be paid for it by the pound (as they say) but to the end that the Galatians might know, that he meant to open his heart unto them, and that forasmuch as he saw them thrust out of the way into a wrong trade, and was loathe that they should perish, therefore he had not only warned them in a word or twain, but also confirmed his doctrine, so as they might perceive themselves to have been misled before.

Lo in effect whereat Saint Paul aimed. And by this text we ought all to take warning, to confirm ourselves the more, according to the means and helps which our Lord gives us to come to him withal. If God had but inclined his mind unto us in one word, yet had there been no excuse for us if we could not believe him, to submit ourselves with such obedience as becomes us. But when we see that besides his giving of the Law, he has also added an exposition of it, and moreover sent his Prophets to the end that the doctrine should always be of the more authority, and the things be made clear which else would have been darksome: and after his Prophets, sent his only Son who has brought us the full perfection of all wisdom: and finally his Apostles: so that he thought it not enough to give the Law, but also willed the Gospel to be published, and that the same should continue to the end, and stirs fit men still to instruct us: since (I say) that God does so much for us, and that he has such a care of our welfare, quickening us up continually without end or ceasing: must we not needs be so much the more blameworthy, if we be negligent and all this stand us in no stead?

Therefore let us not look at Saint Paul here, how the Galatians had little regard of him: but let us consider that God had raised him up, and meant to show how dear we are unto him, and how great store he sets by our souls, in that he would have his doctrine so confirmed. True it is that there are not past a six or seven leaves in this Epistle, and at the first, it should not seem to be so great a letter. But if we mark the substance and contents of it, surely we shall find here wherewith to confound the Devil, and all the wiles that he can bring with him, so as God's truth (which is our salvation) shall have the upper hand. Inasmuch that if we had no more but this Epistle, we might be sufficiently fenced and armed, to fight against all the lies, deceits & abuses which the Devil can allege to blear our eyes with.

But we have not this Epistle alone: but we have also so many other of God's testimonies, as are sufficient (as ye would say) to put out our eyes, if we list not to look upon them. And therewithal we have so many confirmations to help us: that although we were the stubbornest & wildest creatures in the world, yet might we be drawn to some knowledge, seeing that God tries so many ways to win us to him. To be short, he makes us to come unto him though we would not come by our good will. And if we go back whereas we should come forward: must not the rebelliousness that is in us be too intolerable?

So then, whenever and as often as we read this text, although it seems not to touch us, but to have been spoken only to the Galatians: yet let us understand that God casts us in the teeth, that his labor should be lost as unavailing among us, except we were furthered continually by the doctrine more and more confirmed. Howbeit he had much lever that we came with a cheerful courage. For he intends not to blame us nor to go to law with us, conditionally that we be so well advised as to say, Go to, I see now that my God deserves well

that I should hie me to him, if he did but beckon to me afar off. But he calls me wondrous familiarly, and is not contented with opening his mouth once for all and away: but he has also sent Moses and all the Prophets, he has sent teachers without number, he has sent his Apostles, yea & his own only son which is his everlasting wisdom & word.

Seeing then that God is so friendly to me, yea and advanceth me to excellent dignity, & seeing that by all means possible he showeth me his wisdom, whereby he seeketh to win me to himself, & continueth in the same without end or ceasing, early and late: should I lie still as asleep, without any more understanding or feeling than if I were a block? So much the more then doth it stand us on hand to take a better taste of God's word, & to apply all our endeavor thereunto.

And seeing there is nothing superfluous in it, and that we have need to be provoked to give ourselves to it: Let every of us be moved to apply ourselves thereto, & not say that the repeating of one selfsame thing is needless: but let us understand, that although men bring us no novelty, yet must we continually beat upon the selfsame lesson: namely that inasmuch as God hath sent Moses, the Prophets & Apostles, & overmore vouchsafed to have his doctrine put in writing: all this was done for our instruction: and that when our Lord Jesus Christ was sent at the full time, he uttered all that is requisite for our salvation, and moreover raised up men to be the instruments of his spirit, to show us his will and to bring us the tidings of salvation, (as he doth still at this day) who are witnesses to us of the things which otherwise should have been unknown to us.

Forasmuch therefore as it is so: let every of us agree thereto, and whether we read it every man alone by himself, or whether we be taught it publicly: let us be established in the word which it hath

pleased God to bestow upon us. Thus ye see in effect what we have to bear in mind, to the end we may have so much the greater good will to give ourselves wholly to this holy word, and that it may be received with the greater reverence, according also as it is well worthy to be.

But now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God and father, acknowledging him as our judge except he bury our faults through his infinite mercy, and let us pray him to take us to mercy for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and in the meantime to grant us the grace to walk in such wise, as we may render a true proof that we are his children, and that his calling of us has not been in vain: and also to cause the same grace to avail in such wise in our hearts, that we may grow in it, and be strengthened more and more to serve and worship him all our life long, in true obedience to his holy word. And so let us all say, Almighty God heavenly father &c.

The Forty-Second Sermon,

which is the fifth upon the sixth Chapter.

12 As many as desire with outward appearance to please in the flesh, constrain you to be circumcised, only to the end they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

13 For even they themselves which are circumcised keep not the Law, but would have you circumcised that they might glory in your flesh.

It is not for naught that God hath so often warned the Preachers of his word, not to seek the well-liking and favour of men, but as it were to shut their eyes against all worldly respects, to the end that they gaze not here and there, nor be hindered to do their duty rightly. For we see it is impossible for us to discharge ourselves aright, unless we look up unto God, and turn away our look from men, because we shall be easily corrupted when we be so led, whereas nothing ought to bow us one way or another.

However, this constancy is chiefly requisite in such as should bear abroad God's word, namely that they be not led neither by ambition nor by covetousness to speak in favour of men, or to please them, and that they be not abashed at any threatening or peril. For experience shows that so soon as a man is afraid of his sin, or has respect of his own profit: he will be changed in the turning of a hand. True it is that such as covet men's favour after that fashion, will not at the first dash show themselves to be wicked and enemies of the truth according as our Lord Jesus Christ also puts a difference between the hirelings and the wolves.

After he has spoken of the good and faithful shepherds which seek the common welfare of the flock: he says, there are also ravening wolves or thieves which seek nothing else but to put all to spoil, ruin, and confusion. And these are they which fight openly against God, laboring and endeavoring to overthrow the pure doctrine of the Gospel. Nevertheless there are also which row between two streams, who do make a countenance to serve God. And truly some men build, however not for any zeal: for there is no soundness of heart in them.

Notwithstanding, so long as it is not to their cost, they set a good face upon the matter, so that the world is oftentimes deceived by them, and takes them to be the ministers of Jesus Christ: but yet their

seeking is but for wages, they are wholly given to their bellies. For proof whereof, if you do but threaten them, by and by they are dismayed, and they will turn the cat in the pan, so that whereas yesterday they seemed to maintain God's word, today they bend crooked and across. And why? For they see it is the way to please the world, and to profit themselves.

And for the same cause does Saint Paul now warn the Galatians to mark well, that such as had troubled them and thrust them out of the right way, were men given to their own profit, and by that means had brought their doctrine in suspicion. Heretofore he has already sufficiently discussed and showed by reason, that if we put our whole trust in Jesus Christ, the Ceremonies of the Law are henceforth superfluous: for they served but for a time, to show that it is not for us, to mingle any merit of their own, or any fond opinion of purchasing righteousness before God, if we be well settled upon the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Saint Paul then has handled and laid forth that matter as much as needed. And now to the end that the simple sort may be the more moved: he turns his tale to the persons themselves, saying: Consider what is the intent that these men against whom I strive here, make such a mingling of the Ceremonies of the law with our Lord Jesus Christ. Is it zeal that moves them thereunto? or is it for that they are desirous to serve God? No: it is rather for that they are loath to put themselves in danger of persecution.

Seeing then that fear causes them to misfashion God's word: you need not to make any long inquiry to know what manner of men they be, and whether they are to be credited or not: for you see that their changing and transforming of themselves after that fashion, is because they would fain shun the battle. Now then seeing that they

be such traitors unto God through their cowardliness, deserve they to be believed, or to have any reverence yielded to their sayings? Thus you see Saint Paul's meaning.

But here all Ministers of God's word are taught to have such constancy and steadfastness, as they may not pass whether the doctrine that they bring be hated or beloved of the world, but go on still in their race, and not strike sail at every wind, nor be shaken like wavering reeds that bow to and fro: but always hold on in serving of God, what turnings and changes so ever happen, and what troubles and disorders so ever befall.

To be short, we must practice the thing that we have seen before: which is, that if we will please men's fancies, we must give over the service of the Son of God. Mark that for one point. And herewith all the faithful may receive a good and profitable lesson in this text: that is to wit, that they must look well upon such as seek their own profit and advantage, and are desirous to win favor with the world, and would fain be praised: for a man shall never have any hold of such folks.

They will not show themselves to be such at the first brunt (as I said before): for there are those who play the Pope-holy hypocrites, inasmuch that it seems that but for them the word of God would grow odious: and so long as it is well liked, they cast out fire at their mouths, and yet in the meantime you shall see them change their mind from day to day. If any peril happens, and they see that they must witness with our Lord Jesus Christ in good earnest: then show they their cowardliness, and in the end turn quite away, and change their coats as it is said in the Proverb. But however they fare, let us stand upon our guard continually, that we may believe such as walk uprightly, and start not out when they see the world confederate

themselves against them, no though there happen such rage as it may oftentimes seem that they shall be swallowed up, but which even when they see the perils present, do nevertheless continue in upright constancy: let us mark such men as God's servants.

But as for such as be variable and counterfeiting, which say now one thing and now another to eschew men's hatred, or for fear of persecution: let us beware of them, that we be not deceived and beguiled by them, for they be deadly plagues. And it is certain that we shall never be firm and well settled, except we have that discretion and wariness with us, according as Saint Paul shows us in this text. And this is very needful nowadays.

For what causes so many hypocrites to gabble against God's word, and to play the shameless brothels in maintaining the outrageous abuses that are to be seen in the Papadom, as their superstitions, idolatries, and errors: but for that they know well enough, that if they make not the pot to boil apace, they are like to starve, and should they not therefore hold fast the possession of their things? Again on the other side they consider also the danger of persecution for maintaining such doctrine: for you see it is condemned of the Princes and great men of this world, and therefore it is good sleeping in a whole skin.

See I pray you how an infinite number do nowadays disguise and falsify God's truth, and maintain all corruptions, because they are loath to suffer for Jesus Christ's sake. True it is that they are not rank Papists to blaspheme God's word openly: but yet they would fain have a mean, yea of their own devising. For they blame us of overmuch rigour and extremity, in that we condemn such as go to Mass, and bear themselves in hand that they worship not idols.

O (say they), how should that be, so a man think it not in his heart? Should men be driven so near hand as to make it a stumbling block, and a matter of life and death? To what purpose were that? God sets great store by our life, and although we should do amiss, yet will he have pity of our frailty. Surely they that speak after this fashion, have none other reason to move them, but that they see plainly that all the world is so sore inflamed against us, and it seems that we should perish and be quite confounded every day.

Thus you see that they flee back and labor to embattle themselves alone from the rest, when they see any danger appearing. But when we see these liver-hearted folks shun persecution after that sort, and loth to come to any hand strokes for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and winding and transforming themselves after that manner, only to have peace in this world: it stands us so much the more in hand to mark this warning of Saint Paul's, and to discern which are the true servants of Jesus Christ: that is to wit, they which regard not their own profit, nor would have men to fawn upon them, nor seek the belly cheer and honor of the world: but do simply content themselves with the doing of their duty, and pass not what wind do blow, whether it be tempestuous and stormy, or whether it be fair and calm: but to profit their hearers, and to maintain in all pureness the doctrine committed unto them.

If we follow the thing that is showed us here, surely our faith shall never stagger as many do nowadays, which know not what to do, and yet notwithstanding will say, I fear the troubles and diversities of opinions, and the bickerings that are in this world. Some can well enough say, it were meet that I should give myself wholly to our Lord Jesus Christ: but there are another sort which take a much pleasanter way, and would have a reformation but only in half.

And which of these shall I believe [say they]? Open thine eyes: for all they that allege any such excuses, seek not to follow the truth, but are well apaid if they can get some shrouding sheet to hide their shame, and would fain be flattered: but in the meantime, what gain they by it? For Satan leads them to destruction, and they are willing to follow him. Because they are afraid of their lives, they love the covert, and because they are given to pleasure, they seek their own ease.

Therefore, they must have such payment as they deserve. But however the world goes, Saint Paul declares that such as willfully become brutish are so overtaken by Satan and cast in such perplexity, as they wot not what to do: because they consider not that such as do simply bear abroad the truth of the Gospel, are no wavering persons, but such as keep on in pace, and pass not whether the world likes of their doctrine or not: but forasmuch as God has commanded them to speak, they do so.

Contrariwise, as for the nicelings who say it is good to beware, and not to cast themselves out of the Saddle, and would have men to counterfeit, and to bear two faces in one hood: it is certain that such manner of men are not led with any zeal or affection to serve God, nor have any regard of edification or of the welfare of the Church: nor (to be short) have any other care or respect, than to eschew all persecution, and to live at their ease, so as no man might fasten upon them. Now then, seeing that this is manifest enough: it is certain that all such as nowadays keep themselves so in their nest, do offend God, and are utterly without excuse. Why so? For Saint Paul gives us here an infallible mark, which shows us who are the true servants of God, and who are the hirelings whom we must eschew, that is to wit, such as seek but to feed their bellies, and to have their commodities in this world.

Hereupon he adds, to the end they might not suffer persecution for the Cross of Christ. No doubt but that under the word Cross, Saint Paul comprehends the whole doctrine, howbeit with a consideration, that it is right hard for a man to preach simply and plainly the things that are contained in God's word, but that he shall have many encounters. For although God spare us (us I mean who preach his word) and will not always put us to so hard trial, that our enemies shall have their swords drawn upon us: yet the world does never receive the Gospel so obediently, but that there is still some murmuring and speaking against it, as is to be seen yet still at this day, and must be yet hereafter. For our Lord intends to try the constancy of his faithful ones, and therewithal to show the invincible power of his word, in overcoming all the lets that Satan stirs up against it: according to this saying of Jeremiah, "They shall fight against thee, but thou shalt get the upper hand of them." Thus you see that God is glorified when the world and Satan straining themselves to the uttermost, are not able to let the truth of his course.

For this cause Saint Paul says, that they who be so variable, and do disguise God's word or falsify it; do shun the Cross, that is to say, the true preaching of the Gospel, even to eschew persecution. Now here again we have a very profitable counsel. For if we desire to serve God and his Church: we must always be ready to receive alarms. And although the fire be not yet kindled, or the enemies not yet armed to make so cruel persecution as they would, or finally our Lord do bridle all those that are weary of his word, and would fain shake off his yoke: yet must we be scorned at many men's hands, we must be defamed, there must be murmuring and railing against us, and we must put it up and harden ourselves against it. Yea and we shall see a thousand backbitings against such as employ themselves faithfully, even where the Gospel is preached. Some shall be arraigned as

felons, and some shall be indicted of this and that, and yet all shall be but stark slanders.

To be short, all such as mind to go through with their race, must prepare themselves to endure many temptations that might make them reel, if they were not settled in this point, that God must be obeyed in spite of the whole world. Mark that for one point. And here withal we have also to mark that this extends to the whole Church in general. Therefore when we hear the message of peace that is brought us in the name of God: let us not think to be in rest toward the worldward, but to have many troubles and encumbrances continually. And he that determines not upon that must needs shrink away from our Lord Jesus Christ: for he can never be any of his disciples, according as he himself declares with his own mouth, that such a man is not worthy to be of his school, and so he shuts them all out of the doors.

Wherefore let us learn that when we be once called to our Lord Jesus Christ, we must be partakers of his cross so long as he lists, according as it is said, that if we suffer with him we shall also be glorified with him, and be made partakers of the power that is showed in his Resurrection. But yet notwithstanding the sufferings which he endured must first be accomplished in us that are his members. True it is that he suffered as much as was requisite for our salvation: but yet must we be fashioned like to his Image, as it is said in the 8th to the Romans. Now whereas God spares us, so as we be not among Tyrants that might torment us: or if the wicked be not able to bite us, but only bark at us: or if he lets us be in peace: let us know that it is because he pities our feebleness, and that he spares us because he sees how weak we are. But yet for all this let us not flatter ourselves, but pray God to strengthen us so by his holy spirit, that whenever he shall call us into the array to fight, we may not be like freshwater

soldiers, but that we may have minded it a long time beforehand, that we must be made partakers of Jesus Christ's sufferings, to come to the glory of his Resurrection.

Now Saint Paul, having spoken after that manner, adds for a larger confirmation of his matter, that they who are circumcised, and who preach circumcision, keep not the Law: but only seek to glory in the flesh of those whom they bring to that Jewish fashion. In this Text Saint Paul does again accuse his adversaries of double dealing and utter hypocrisy. Why so? Circumcision was the mark of the same thing before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereof Baptism is the mark unto us at this day. For the Jews had record [thereby] that they were sanctified by God as his heritage. But yet for all that, they that mingled Circumcision with the Gospel, were utterly of opinion that the Law of Moses was to be observed, forasmuch as it was given of God, & that it was not at any time to be abolished. Here then you see that the covert which they took, was that Circumcision served for a sign of the keeping of the whole Law. But now Saint Paul lays to their charge that they keep not the Law: and therefore they do but mock God & men in making a countenance by an outward sign, to do the thing which they do not: for it is clean contrary. Now then we see Saint Paul's meaning. And as touching this speech of keeping the Law, it is sometimes taken for the doing or performing of all that is contained in the Law. But no man can keep the Law, that is to say, no man can discharge himself thoroughly of all things that the law commands. For it is not for nought that it is called an intolerable burden. Also we see our own infirmity, and there God shows us an angelic righteousness. How then is it possible for us to attain unto it? So then, if we take the word Law for a perfect and faultless obedience, no man keeps it in effect. Nevertheless the faithful being guided and governed by God's spirit, do keep the Law, that is to say, they walk according to the rule that is given them there.

Not that they run so swiftly as they should do, nor that they attain to the mark at the first brunt: but yet they go on still towards it, and God beareth with them, and layeth not their faults to their charge. The faithful then do keep the Law. But here Saint Paul speaketh of the Ceremonial Law, howbeit that by occasion he had showed heretofore, that all God's commandments could bring nought else but condemnation, except we had refuge to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: but (as I said) here he speaketh of the ceremonies and shadows. Now let us see what he meaneth by it. They (saith he) which are circumcised keep not the Law: that is to say, they have indeed that sign as a standard to make men believe that they be Jews, to the intent that they might not be hated nor persecuted: but yet for all that, they keep not the whole Law: for they take leave to despise all that should be matched with Circumcision. For he that is circumcised ought also to do sacrifice, to abstain from the meats that are forbidden by the law, to keep the days and feasts appointed there, to use the enjoined washings and purifyings, and to do diverse other things. But these men make none account of them. When they are in corners and no man sees them, they pass not what they do, neither make they any conscience at all to despise all the Ceremonies of the Law. Thus it appeareth that they do it not for any zeal, but only in respect of men.

Now it behooveth us to mark that Saint Paul speaketh here of such as stood upon the said point, that men ought of necessity to be circumcised. For at some times Saint Paul had a special regard to fashion himself like to the Jews, and abstained from the liberty which was permitted him, for eschewing of offences: but did he always maintain that there was no bond of necessity in the matter. So then, when Saint Paul submitted himself of his own accord, he meant not to bring other men in bondage, according as he protests that he intends not to bind anybody. True it is that the case is altered when

he speaks of marriage: but yet he says generally, that he will not lay any yoke of bondage upon the souls that are redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ: And thus you see how Saint Paul behaved himself in that behalf. Now he says here, "They that constrain you to be circumcised," that is to say, they that load you with the law, and say you must keep that Ceremony under pain of deadly sin: seek nothing else but to bring you in bondage without cause why. To be short, we see here whereof they be blamed which would subdue Christian folk to the keeping of the Ceremonies and shadows of Moses Law: that is to wit, that they were double fellows, and passed not upon the truth of the matter, whether God required such things or not, but had a mind to please and pleasure the world, and by that means to eschew persecution. And we nowadays have need to be warned thereof, as well as the Galatians needed then. And if we look upon the state and disposition of our time, we shall easily perceive that this doctrine is not needless, and that the Holy Ghost intended to provide for the thing which he knew to be for our behoof.

For what a number are to be found nowadays, which do strongly and stoutly maintain the Ceremonies of the Law, and yet notwithstanding make none account of them? But (which is worse) they maintain the follies and traditions that are invented by men, yea and even such abuses, errors, and deceits as are so gross and fond as may be. All these things shall be maintained with extreme rigour, by such as will needs have men to obey them. Like as nowadays, if a man charge these Hypocrites that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the brightness of his Gospel are darkened by the great number of their observations, and that we be become as good as Jews: (for in very deed the Papists have borrowed so many things of the Law, that a man shall hardly discern the difference between the Jews, & them that call themselves Christians:) I say if a man do charge them with these things: yet will they maintain to the uttermost, that men must

do so still, because they have been kept time out of mind. If a man go further with them, and say, how so? You have so many dotages, that the very heathen men were never so gross and fond in their superstitions as you be: O tush (say they) yet must we keep still the traditions of our mother holy Church. And therewithal they cry, to the fire with him. But now what do these Hypocrites, which move the hearts of Princes and Judges against those that preach God's word faithfully? So long as they are among themselves, they make but a mock at their own traditions.

And when they dispute of them, they will say clean contrary to their preaching, and talking in the Pulpit. Whereby it appeareth that there is no zeal of God, nor no soundness in them: but that their whole seeking is to be fed and pampered fat, and to live in rest, and to have their ease and commodities.

Seeing then that nowadays there are so many men that have not one whit of the fear of God, nor of the reverence of his word in them, who notwithstanding pretend to be very zealous, and yet in very deed do but allure poor souls with baits or rather (as you would say) choke them: it standeth us so much the more on hand to mark well the thing that Saint Paul telleth us here: which is, that forasmuch as we see that they which cry out and storm at others: do nothing at all of that which they speak of, we must stand upon our guard, and consider whereat they aim who teach us.

True it is that although the party do clean contrary to that which he sayeth, yet must not God's word therefore be of the less authority towards us: For it is no reason that because the man is wicked, therefore God should be dispossessed of his sovereign prerogative. And though a man lead a loose life, or do some shrewd turn, yet

ought not that to deface the heavenly doctrine, so he preach faithfully.

Although a man be mutable, fleeting and variable, or though he be an hypocrite, and his life be not answerable to the things that he speaketh with his mouth: the truth of God's word must not therefore be imbased towards us. Nevertheless, I say now that whenever we see men pretend great zeal, and yet let themselves loose, and take leave to do contrary to their preaching: we must consider of it, and have the discretion not to be led by their Pipe nor drawn by the nose, but to look into their doctrine, and to make a good and lively trial of it. And when we go so to work, we shall see that the doctrine of the Papists is but a covert which they take to live quiet toward the worldward, and as for to Godward they care not how things go.

For they would not abide any changes, but that they be loath to put themselves in danger of any displeasure: for they be always afraid to be vexed or grieved in any wise. Sith hence this: it is an infallible mark to make us beware of all Satan's ambushes, so as it shall not be possible for us to be deceived, except we list ourselves, as I have declared before.

Furthermore, Saint Paul addeth, that such men desire to glory in the flesh of the simple. It is very certain that here he hath an eye to the sign of Circumcision, as if he should say, they intend to print their mark upon you, to the end they may vaunt, We have won them. Yea, but their winning of men after that sort, is to make them so much the more detestable for so abusing the sign which God hath given them, to warrant the adoption which he had made with Abraham's offspring, and for corrupting the true and lawful use thereof.

For God had commanded the Jews to be circumcised. And why? To the end they might see that all mankind is accursed, and that there is

nothing but uncleanness in us, and that we must be fain to renounce all that is of our own nature, or else we shall never cease to be filthy and damnable before God. Lo what the Jews ought to have learned by their circumcision.

Nevertheless, therewithal they had also a record, that by man's seed they should recover their salvation, according as we know that we be blessed of God for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake. And therefore Circumcision served to humble the Jews, and to make them mislike of themselves, and to be ashamed, when they saw there was nothing but cursedness in their nature. That say I was the true and lawful use of circumcision.

Now what do they against whom Saint Paul speaketh? They know that Circumcision is no longer in use: that is to wit, that Baptism suffices ever since the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: but because the Jews called all them Apostates or backsliders, which were not circumcised: therefore these rascals will needs hold still the sign without the truth [or substance].

We see then that they were very falsaries, and wrested the doctrine clean contrary to God's meaning when he ordained that spiritual Sacrament, because their desire was nothing else but to please the world. As much is done at this day. And they that labor to overthrow God's truth, are much worse than Saint Paul's adversaries. For they had yet some cloak of honesty maintain Circumcision and the figures of the Law, because they were all ordained and established by God.

But as for these hypocrites which cry out upon us nowadays with full throat, [saying] you must keep the old custom without changing of anything: whereon are they grounded? They cannot say that God is Author of any of their stuff. Men have contrived them after their own fancy, or rather Satan hath blown them into their ears: so that (at a

word) all that is termed God's service in Popery, is nothing else but a confused maze: all is but dreams of men's setting forth, and the devil is ever the chief Author of them. And yet these naughtipacks say that nothing must be taken from them. And whereunto have they respect?

Truly they will allege that men must purchase God's grace by them, and that they stir folk up to greater devotion. Again, they give the title of Sacrament to all the foolish devices of their own heads, saying: such a thing must be kept, for it is a Sacrament. But when all is justly reckoned, a man shall see that their intent is to please the world, and to maintain themselves still. For they are enforced spite of their teeth to confess, that it makes neither here nor there as in respect of God, and that he passes not for their kind of service, but utterly dislikes it, because he will be served with obedience.

But what? There will be horrible confusion (say they) if men cut off all after that fashion, and speak plainly of things. See I pray you, how they would fain disguise themselves, and in such wise corrupt and falsify religion, as there should be made a mingled confusion of all: or else that there should no more be taken away but the grossest and fondest things, and in the meantime such Ceremonies be let alone as may be any whit sufferable.

It is certain (say I) that all they which speak so, desire nothing else but to have fair wind and weather to the worldward. Seeing it is so: let us take warning at the holy Ghost's hand to flee such plagues: And although we cannot triumph in this world, although we be nothing set by, although men rail upon us with open mouth: yet let us not cease to hold our own for God's truth, and let it suffice us to be allowed of the heavenly judge, though all the world abhor us.

Although then that we see all these things: yet let us be patient, and tarry till our Lord Jesus Christ show himself to be our warrant, and

therewithal give us victory in the behalf of his truth, so that all his enemies may be put to shame and have their mouths stopped up.

Now let us fall down before the majesty of our good God, with acknowledgement of our faults, praying him to touch us with such true repentance by his holy spirit, that being utterly cast down in ourselves, and quite and clean rid of all presumption, we may be heartily sorry for them: and that moreover it may please him so to increase the gifts of his holy spirit in us, as we may no more be given to our flesh, and the world to be hindered and held down by them, but that we may go forward to serve him, and endeavor that his name may be glorified more and more, and we bear such a mark of his adoption, as we may be so confirmed with it in ourselves, that other men may have occasion to glorify the name of this our good God for working so in us. That it may please him to grant this grace, not only to us, but also to all people and nations of the earth. &c.

The Forty-Third Sermon,

which is the sixth and last upon the sixth and last Chapter.

14 God forbid that ever I should glory in anything saving in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15 For in Jesus Christ neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision availeth anything: but the new creature.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, and upon Israel that pertains to God.

17 From henceforth let no man put me to pain, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

WE have seen heretofore how Saint Paul condemned such as sought altogether to row between two streams, thereby to please the world, and in the meantime to eschew persecution. And that made them disguise the Gospel, whereof we see too many examples yet still at this day. For such as see that the pure doctrine and truth of God cannot be brooked of the world, but that the wicked sort do rage against it: they (I say) would fain find some mean way, that they might not be hated nor incur any displeasure. And that it is so: if nowadays you ask it of such as have but some little understanding: you shall scarcely find one of them among a hundred, which will not grant that there are many abuses in Popery: but yet [they will say] that all must not be cut off by the quick, but that it is enough if some of the over-grosse and excessive superstitions be taken away, and so they would fain still nourish a great sort of infections. And why? For (as I have said) they would fain be in credit and estimation, and it is no matter at all with them to betray the pureness of the Gospel, so they may save themselves from persecution: yea, and even among us a man shall find enough that would have both. And what moves them, but that they would advance themselves, and get some reputation? For as much then as we see that the Devil which raised those broils in the time of Saint Paul, continues [the same] unto this day, we ought to be armed with this doctrine. And the very remedy is

that which Saint Paul sets down here: namely to reject all glory, save that which we have in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now for the better understanding hereof, first of all we must call to mind how it is said in Jeremiah, and alleged also by Saint Paul, that all the glory of man must be cast down, to the end that God may be exalted as he deserves. And in very deed it is truly said, that all the wisdom which men ween themselves to have is nothing, but must come to account and be quite dashed, and they must resort to God, as to him that has the fullness of all good things in himself. Let us confess (I say) that all wisdom proceeds of his free goodness, inasmuch as we are enlightened by his Holy Spirit, and that because we are weak of ourselves, we must be strengthened by his power, and whereas we are full of all filth and iniquity, we must recover righteousness by his gift. But now we must come to the means. For it is not enough for us to know that God is our light, our righteousness, our wisdom, our strength, and finally that the whole perfection [and fullness] of our life, joy, and happiness is in him: that is not enough, for there is a very far distance between him and us, and therefore it stands us in hand to know how and by what means we may be partakers of all the graces which we have to seek in God. However, we know that the whole is communicated to us in Jesus Christ, verily for that he came down here below, and abased himself, and was contented to be crucified for us. Seeing then that our Lord Jesus Christ is he out of whom we must draw all things that we have need of: now we see why Saint Paul says he will not seek any glory but in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And why? For inasmuch as he suffered so painful and bitter a death, yea, and was set against God's justice for us, and took all our cursedness upon him: therefore was he given unto us to be our wisdom, righteousness, holiness, strength, and all that ever we want.

But first of all we must learn what we be, to the intent to beat down all our own glorying, and to settle ourselves upon our Lord Jesus Christ. For we see many men burst with pride, and they know not why. There is nothing but wind and smoke in all the things which they surmise of themselves. However, the very cause why they seek not Jesus Christ, is for want of due examination of themselves: and such are the Hypocrites, and the Counterfeiters, and those that are puffed up with overweening of their own works. Therefore (as I have touched already) it behooves us to look to our own state, and to see how wretched we be till our Lord Jesus Christ pities us. That is the way to prepare us to come unto him. And that shall serve for one point. However, that is not yet all. For there are that can grant themselves to be sinners, and that there is nothing in them but vanity: and yet notwithstanding they welter nevertheless in their own filthy dung. And why? For they conceive not God's justice, but are (as you would say) doted in this world.

None of all these unthrifts who give themselves over to drunkenness, or to whoredom, or to such other lewdness, can excuse their villainies, but that they are fain to be ashamed of them: and yet nevertheless they delight in them, and continue still in them as if they were hardened. And why? Because they are made drunken with this world, and the devil has so closed up their eyes, that they see not how they must one day come to account. They play the amazed men, and bear themselves in hand that they shall always stand at a stay, and so they go forward with their naughtiness, and never sigh nor be sorry for the matter, but are always laughing at it, as though they meant to spite God willfully.

We see then that one sort is letted, yea or rather utterly turned back from coming to Jesus Christ, because they presume upon their own wisdom, and are possessed with an imagination that Satan has put

into their head, so that to their own seeming they be wise enough without Jesus Christ, and therefore they hold scorn of him. The other sort (which are infinite in number) notwithstanding that they acknowledge themselves to be wretched sinners: do nevertheless not seek the remedy. And why? For this present world possesses them, and they are so wrapped in it, as they cannot lift up their eyes, nor their minds, to seek the remedy that is ready for them in Jesus Christ. So much the more need therefore have we to mind the thing that I have touched already: that is to wit, that we must rid ourselves of all self-trust and overweening, and be so grieved as we may never be in rest till we have found succor in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And let us not only open our eyes to see our own foulness, and to be ashamed of it: but also let us consider that this life is nothing, and that God has set us here as in a wayfaring, wherein he intends to try whether we will come to him or no. Therefore let every of us summon himself evening and morning, and as often as we look upon our sins, let them be as spurs to prick us and provoke us to repair unto God, so as we may not be brute beasts, nor be held back in this world, but that our necessity may always drive us to resort to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus you see how we may glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And Saint Paul has purposely spoken here of the cross, because the matter that he dealt with, was the pulling down, and as it were the treading underfoot, of all loftiness which men aspire unto. For we will needs be always somewhat of ourselves, and hold still some worthiness. To the end therefore that we might be discharged of that wicked affection: Saint Paul tells us that Jesus Christ the Son of God cannot be our glory, but only in respect that he was crucified for us. And hereupon ensues that which he adds, namely that we shall be crucified to the world, and the world to us, when we shall have

learned to glory in the only mere grace that is brought us by our Lord Jesus Christ. As how? Surely they that are not crucified to the world, that is to say, they that covet to be in some authority, and to set out themselves, they that desire to be honored and exalted, and (to be short) they that are drawn hither and thither of their lusts, do not yet know what it is to glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: for they should have begun at the foresaid point, that is to wit, of being confounded in themselves. Therefore not without cause does Saint Paul say, that for as much as he had settled his glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, he had quite forsaken and given over the world.

Now by the world he means all that is delightsome to the flesh, as when men think neither upon God, nor upon the life of heaven, so as one is given to covetousness, another to ambition, and every man is driven by his own natural sway, and there is not any that passes further than this world. When men follow their own swing, and God has not yet touched them with his Holy Spirit to draw them to him: surely although they do all fling over the fields, and run astray: yet is there great diversity in their affections, so that if the matter come to trial, one draws one way, and another another way clean and clear contrary: and to be short, men seem to differ quite and clean one from another. But yet they be all alike in one thing, that is to wit, that they would advance themselves to the worldward, that they be given to their own private profit or pleasures. At a word, they be so entangled here, that they could find in their hearts to be separated from God. But Saint Paul says that when we shall have set all our glory in our Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that by the means of his Cross he has dedicated us unto his Father, and purchased us the kingdom of heaven: then it will be easy for us to withdraw ourselves from the world, and to be as it were cut off from it. And why? For it is certain that whosoever has been touched and wounded to the quick

with the feeling of his sins, will so pursue the grace that has been given him in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the world shall be nothing with him.

And in good sooth we show that all the spiritual benefits which God offers us, and unto which he calls us, are as things of nothing unto us, in that we esteem them not in comparison of the trumpery and enticements of Satan. What is this world if a man view it in itself? There is no man but sees how frail our life is, and how it is but as a smoke that passes and vanishes away: and yet we see men fry still in their affections, and how they are utterly carried away and ravished with them. God, on his side, cries out, "Ye wretched folk, ye be more destitute of wit than little children. For ye busy your heads about moonshine in the water, and about pelting trifles wherein there is nothing but foolishness, and ye be wholly wedded unto them: and yet in the meantime when I offer you perfect happiness, ye make none account of it, all is one to you." You see then that the cause why we be so cold and negligent nowadays in receiving the benefits which God offers us by his Gospel: is for that the world has gotten the possession of us beforehand: and on the other part we also do set too much store by the world. And why do we so? Because we know not the inestimable benefits that God offers us. Therefore let us join these two together, that is to wit, that we be crucified to the world, and the world to us, because we have our glory in our Lord Jesus Christ crucified.

But this is easier to be said than to be done: and therefore every man must strain himself in his own behalf, and when he understands this lesson, he must put it in practice. For if we covet to be taken and avowed for Christians before God and his Angels: we must be conformable to the Holy Ghost in the thing that he sets down here. And in very deed if we were not too far overseen, we have occasion of

it enough, as has been said before. For they that do but only enter into themselves to consider what they be, and what their state is so long as they be separated from Jesus Christ, must needs be scared with the feeling of God's wrath which they have deserved, when they perceive themselves to be plunged in such cursedness, that it were much better for them if the earth had swallowed them up a hundred times, than to have lived in that plight but one day, being in the meantime enemies to their God, from whose hands they cannot escape. Therefore let us learn to look to ourselves. Such as intend to deck themselves to the worldward, and especially women, will look in a glass, and that shall be done with as much curiosity and wariness as may be. But in the meantime, we look not upon ourselves to spy our own wants and filthiness, to the end we might humble ourselves truly before God, and seek our glory where it is to be had. Now, it is certain that he who knows his own reproach and shame, will seek to come to the remedy of it, at leastwise if God's spirit works lively in us, and that we be not besotted by Satan, as I have said before. Let us learn, let us learn to look upon ourselves, both without feigning, and without flattery. And when we shall have known our own wants and miseries, let us resort to our Lord Jesus Christ.

And for as much as all loftiness, stateliness, and vaunting must be beaten down by means of the Cross: Let us be truly crucified to the world, and let the world also be nothing unto us. Now whereas Saint Paul says, that the world was crucified to him, and he to the world: it is true that he means another thing [than plain crucifying]. For thereby he intended to show yet more strongly, how we may renounce the world, and be separated from it, namely by being crucified to ourselves as in respect of the world, that is to say, by mortifying all the lusts that fight one against another within us, and have too much force, and inflame us all wholly like a burning fire, and cast us here and there, because we see that the Son of God was

fain to suffer so reproachful a death for us. Who would now make his triumphs and braveries in the world, when he sees that he who is the head of the Angels, and unto whom belong all majesty, glory, and dominion, was hanged upon a tree, and made accursed and abominable for us? Thus ye see by what means all our lusts may be mortified, and the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ work so in our hearts, as our lusts may be no more so ticklish as they have been.

And that is for one point. Again, the world must be crucified unto us. As how? By esteeming all worldly things as chaff and corruption (according as in very deed there is not anything in them which is not corruptible) in comparison of the spiritual benefits which Jesus Christ has brought us, and which we enjoy by this means. For in very deed all worldly things are corruptible. And moreover, what else are all the things which men covet so sore and so vehemently that they be utterly entangled in them, but snares that Satan has laid to catch them withal? Are they not all of them illusions and trumperies? Yes, surely, be they. Seeing it is so then, let us learn to set nothing by the world, and to be fully persuaded and resolved in ourselves, that God is our friend, that he acknowledges us for his children and heirs, and that he blesses us, and that without those things we be miserable. By this means then you see we may pass lightly through the world, and not be stayed nor pulled back by anything, for we will always look still to that mark. We know we ought to make haste to come to the place that God calls us to: and if the affections of this world entangle us, we shall be estranged from our God by that means.

Thus you see in effect what we have to remember upon this strain. Now hereupon Saint Paul adds that in Jesus Christ neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision avails anything at all: but the new creature. As if he should say, that they which did then trouble the

Church, had nothing to move them thereto but their own vaingloriousness. For to stir up great troubles when the Church is not furthered nor fares the better by them, surely it shows that men seek nothing else, but to set up themselves in the room of our Lord Jesus Christ. For what should be all our drift, but that the Son of God might reign among us, and we be ruled by the word of his Gospel, and that his power might be known, to the end that both great and small might put their whole trust in him?

And therefore according hereunto, let us be resolved in our whole life to obey God, and to submit ourselves to his word. For like as God's spiritual temple consists in faith and newness of life: so faith imports that we should do homage unto God for all his benefits, that we should have our recourse unto him, that we should blaze abroad his praises, and that his holy name should be called upon among us. That is the way for us to be advanced to be God's temple. Again on the other side, we must also be renewed in our life, and by patience learn to renounce ourselves, and to dedicate ourselves unto God. Lo what all teachers and preachers ought to procure. They then which shoot not at that mark, do show well enough that their intent is not to serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

So then Saint Paul declares that nothing avails in Jesus Christ, but the new creature: that is to say, that we must come to that point, according as we have seen how he said heretofore in the second to the Corinthians, that whosoever will be esteemed in Jesus Christ, must become a new creature. For if one man boast of his eloquence, another of his wit, another of his great learning, and another of his trim behavior or goodly personage all this is but vanity. Therefore let us learn to forsake ourselves quite, and to forsake the world, and to give ourselves to him that has bought us, to the end that we be no more loose. For it is good reason that Jesus Christ having bought us

so dearly, should possess us and fully enjoy us. But that cannot be done, except every of us renounce himself, and all things else that may hold us among men. Lo what we have to mark.

Now Saint Paul speaks of Circumcision and Uncircumcision, because that (as you have seen before) the disputation and controversy which he had was about the Ceremonies of the Law, which he comprehends here under the particular term of Circumcision. For the Jews would needs have men to retain still all the shadows and figures which served but for a time. And therefore Saint Paul scorning all those things, says that our Lord Jesus Christ is not come to hold us still in the old forworn figures, but that for as much as the veil of the temple is rent asunder, and he has in himself the body and substance of all the shadows that were in the Law: men must hold themselves contented with him, and therefore Circumcision was no more anything worth.

We shall profit ourselves the more by this text, if we apply it to that which we saw yesterday. For in popery they have many pelting trifles wherein they put all the trust of holiness. And if a man ask the Papists how they can deserve favor at God's hand and purchase remission of their sins, as they make their boast: They will clap you in the mouth with their holy water, their Tapers, their Sensings, their Organ plays, their chantings, their Pilgrimages and with a number of other things. Again they have their foolish devotions of trotting from altar to altar and from chapel to chapel.

Moreover, they must buy good store of Masses. To be short, all God's service which is so termed in the papacy, is but a maze and gulf of superstitions invented of their own heads. But let us consider what those things may avail. God has not made mention of any of them, but men have devised them of themselves, yea or rather Satan has

whispered them into their ears, to trouble God's service withal. And yet notwithstanding, the Papists imagine that there is neither Religion, nor faith, nor service of God, nor zeal, except a man be ravished with their fool's baubles. But Saint Paul, speaking even of the ceremonies that God had ordained in his law, says that they be henceforth as nothing. And why? For God thinks it enough that we serve him with a pure conscience, and that having put our trust in him, we call upon him, knowing that we hold all things of him, and therewithal that we live uprightly and faithfully, one with another, knowing that charity is the fulfilling of the law and the end of the law: and finally that we be so dedicated to our God, as we may live chastly and in all holiness, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as it is said in the epistle to Titus. That then is the first point of the holiness and perfection which God shows us by his word.

But the Papists will on the contrary part say, how so? What shall become of so many goodly devotions? Shall they all be abolished? Nay, it were better that God should be plucked out of Heaven. Lo what the doltishness of the Papists is. But we see how Saint Paul tells us, that if men be so sore drowned in their own fancies, as to surmise that they can work wonders with God, and be held down to their own pelting trash: all of it is nothing worth. Who has pronounced it? God by the mouth of Saint Paul. What avails then? The new creature. And what is meant by the new creature? That we should fall to examining of our lives after such a sort, as we might be utterly abased in ourselves: and thereupon offer unto God the spiritual sacrifices which we owe unto him, even offering ourselves to him to the end he may have pity and mercy upon our miseries, and provide remedy for them: and finally be ready to follow him whithersoever he calls us, and not have any other wisdom than his only word, knowing that he cannot be served with pomp and gay shows of great glittering to the

world, but he is contented that we should simply offer up unto him our thoughts and affections.

And therefore it is long of none but of ourselves, that we know not what Saint Paul means, nor whereunto this lesson may serve us. For it is certain, that all they which flatter not themselves in their own vices, but look up unto God, knowing that they must come before his judgment seat will rid their hands of all glory. And furthermore they will consider what God commands them by his word, how he will be served of us, and what he allows, so as they shall no more be in danger to be deceived, by those trifling toys wherein the hypocrites are plunged over head and ears.

For it is certain that whereas the Papists torment themselves (as we see) to serve God: it is to none other end, but that he should hold them acquit, and they escape his hands, and not be constrained to serve him as he commands: for they despise the whole law, and yet in the meanwhile have a number of things to put into their account, which they would have God to allow of. But (as I said) the end of all their doings, is to imagine themselves discharged to Godward, and that he should not press them too sore, and yet notwithstanding, that they might follow their own swinge, and take leave to absolve themselves of all their sins, and that God having I wote not what, (that is to say, some fair countenance of their own bringing) should have his mouth shut and not be so hardy as to speak a word.

Now then we see whereat Saint Paul aimed. And he adds in the winding up, Peace and mercy be upon all those that submit themselves to that rule, and upon Israel that pertains to God. In speaking of the Rule, he shows that men may well make themselves believe this or that rule, yet in the meanwhile God will not bow, for he is not mutable that he should suffer himself to be led by our

follies, or be made to swerve aside: that is impossible says Saint Paul, and whatsoever befall, the Law that God has established must abide unchangeable as he himself is.

No doubt but we will admit this at the first sight. For who will not willingly abide that God should be our superior? Yea, and we perceive full well, that to say the contrary were blasphemy. You see then that at a glance the whole world can well grant that God should be our sovereign, and his law our rule, but therewithal let us see what liberty men take to themselves. Every man devises one thing or another, and when he has so done, he would have all other men to observe the same: every man then would have his own rule alone by himself.

True it is that in the papacy all are not of the rule of Saint Francis or of Saint Dominic: but yet for all that there is not so doting an old fool, nor so superstitious a hypocrite in the papacy but he has his rule. Again, there is not so young a calf but he has his rule too. For all of them will say, that is my devotion. And their using of the word Devotion, is as much to say with them, as, God is put back, and I must have my liberty to do what I list, and God must hold himself contented with it. Thus we see how the devilish pride of men in fleeting to and fro, and in wandering out at rovers, gadding now on the one side and now on the other, is all one as if they made crooked and overthwart paths, and that God should therefore be fain to bow his rule, and become pliable to bend according to their fancies.

So much the more therefore behooves it us to mark well how it is said here, that men may well torment themselves, but yet God's rule shall continue still, and hold on his course and keep his pace. And what is this rule? It is that it should suffice us to have perfection in such wise, as our Lord Jesus Christ shows it us in his Gospel. Not

that it can be fully in us: but that we must not swerve one way nor other, neither to the right hand nor to the left, but keep on still to the mark that God shows us. You see then that it behooves us to become new creatures: that is to say, we must renounce ourselves and yield wholly unto God. And since it is so: let us bethink us to submit ourselves to the said rule, and to frame ourselves thereafter. For every man will soon set forth his legs and feet: but that shall be but to fisk here and there. And therefore to the end we stray not, let us learn to stick fast to the things that God shows and teaches us by his word.

Now whereas Saint Paul says that peace and mercy shall be upon them: it is to show us, that we may defy the whole world, and that although we be condemned by the folly of men, yet we need not to pass for it, but may keep on our race still: so God allows of us, it is sufficient. For surely we show that we yield him not the honor which is due to him, when we be so shaken down by the foolish judgment of the world, and with the opinions that men sow abroad of us. If it be said of us, these fellows behave not themselves well, and we be grieved at it, and thereupon would frame ourselves to every man's liking: it is certain that in the meanwhile we shall swerve aside from God. So then let us mark well how Saint Paul has told us here, that although men condemn us and find fault in our doings: (as certainly the world will never agree with God:) yet notwithstanding we must esteem it as nothing, and hold ourselves contented that God blesses us, and offers us here all happiness under the word peace, certifying us that he will have compassion upon us, how miserable soever we be.

Although men should spit in our faces, and although there appear no such virtues in us as were requisite: yet notwithstanding, if we keep on our way still unto God, we shall ever find him pitiful to bear with

our infirmities, and to relieve all our miseries. When we be once at the point, it ought to suffice us. But on the contrary part, let us understand also that in blessing such as frame themselves to the rule of God, the Holy Ghost curses and detests, yea and utterly shakes off such as run at rovers after that sort, and set more by their own fancies than by all laws, and will needs have leave to do what they list, and harden themselves in such wise against God's word.

Although then that they be had in reputation to the worldward, and be in a manner drunken in their own pride and presumption, and set more by themselves than reason would they should: yet we see that God does always hold them as accursed. So then the thing that we have to remember in effect, is that we have but one only rule, which is contained in the Gospel. And whither does that rule lead us? Even to this, that we bring not to God what we ourselves think good, or what we have devised of our own head: but that we submit ourselves wholly unto him & to his word, and consider also that seeing we have all perfection in our Lord Jesus Christ, we must be contented with him alone, especially forasmuch as we see God to be pitiful in having mercy upon us, and that our life shall be happy and blessed of him, so we go on forth whithersoever he calls us: Like as on the contrary part, whatever opinion the world have of us, and how much so ever it favor us, we must needs be accursed if we have not the rule that Saint Paul speaks of here.

And he adds Israel that belongs to God: to show that they who serve God after that spiritual manner, shall always be acknowledged of him for his people. For Saint Paul's enemies against whom he disputed in all this Epistle, would needes have all the Ceremonies kept, and that they should be the marks of the Church, as they surmised. Likewise in these days the Papists would have men to keep Oil and Cream and divers other things. But Saint Paul's enemies had much more color

than the Papists have, and their case was much better in comparison. Nevertheless Saint Paul rejects all those things, and says that God muses not upon any of those small toys.

True it is that he had ordained the figures of the Law for a time, and they had also some profit in them, because they served to lead the people to our Lord Jesus Christ. But now that we have the substance and pith of them in him: we must give them quit over. Then of much more likelihood they are not the Israel of God, that set forth themselves with great pomp before men: but they that have the true mark of God. For when the Papists speak to us of the Church, the Pope must needs be there with his triple Crown, the Bishops must be disguised to play their interlude, there must be a sort of horned beasts, all must glisten, the Priests and Monks must be present, and the eyes of the simple souls must be dazzled. You see then wherein the Church of God consists after the opinion of the Papists: that is to wit, in pomp and in trifling and unprofitable gewgaws.

And what say they to the Sacraments? They must have this and that: and to be short, they have their masks which they take to be good stuff. But in the meanwhile let us come to the Gospel. What shall a man find there? Nothing but plain simplicity. God will not have the preachers of his word and the ministers of his sacraments to be disguised, nor to make so many mummerys: neither is it his will that his sacraments should be defiled with men's inventions, for all that is nothing before God.

Therefore let us bear well in mind the definition of the true Church which Saint Paul sets down here, to the end we be not shaken when men say to us, "How now? See I pray you how goodly things they be." They be so indeed according to our natural understanding. For after as a man is fleshly and earthly: so will he be always inclined to follow

the thing that carries a fair show to his senses. But it is not for us to judge of God's service: we must stick to that which he has determined, for his sentence cannot be repealed: which is that we must seek all our whole wisdom in Jesus Christ, which thing we then do when we obey him, and not else.

Furthermore, let us understand that he will not have us any longer tied to the outward things which he ordained in the time of the Law: but he will have us to be contented with Jesus Christ alone, and with the perfection that is in him. And thereupon we have also to mark how he wishes the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to be with their spirit. For it shows that the world by reason of his unthankfulness is not worthy to see the benefits that are offered it in Jesus Christ. The Gospel shall perhaps be preached enough, but yet in the meanwhile we see how every man shrinks back and writhes aside, as though we had conspired to forsake the good way of salvation, to cast ourselves into ruin and destruction. And what is the cause thereof? It is for that we have our minds empty, and the Devil finds always entrance into us, and thereupon tempts and provokes us to flitter in the air. To be short, until the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirit, it is certain that we shall always be as wavering reeds, so as there shall be neither hold nor stay in us.

You see then that the point whereunto we must come, is not only that God should pour out his grace upon us, but that we also should so receive it in heart and mind, as it may take root, not to hold us down here beneath, but to lift up our affections and all our senses unto God. And because this doctrine can never pass unspoken against, Saint Paul does here defy all such as lift up themselves against it, and says: "Hereafter let no man trouble me, for I bear the marks of our Lord Jesus Christ in my body." When he speaks of the marks of our Lord Jesus Christ, he sets them against all the coats armors of

Princes, against all their Crowns and scepters, and against all the cognizances or badges, which they have to honor themselves withal, or to purchase themselves any majesty or reverence to the worldward.

When a Prince intends to keep his estate, he will furnish and apparel himself in such sort, as men shall not be able to look upon him without dazzling of their eyes. And they do it, oftentimes because they have not in themselves wherewith to win estimation, but are fain to borrow it elsewhere: and so you see it is the fashion of worldlings to set out themselves with pomp and bravery, and to use many things to get themselves reputation. To be short, the world does always borrow of others, because it has nothing but vanity in itself. But Saint Paul tells us that the marks of our Lord Jesus Christ are much better, preciouser, and of far greater Majesty, than all the things wherewith the world is so ravished as we see.

But by the way, we must see what he meant by these marks. He has showed it [in another Epistle] heretofore, where he says that he had been often whipped, that he had been once stoned, that he had been cast in prison, that he had suffered hunger and thirst, and finally that he had been as an outcast and forlorn person. True it is that such reproachful things would be shunned to the worldward. But Saint Paul says that they are much better than all the honor and pomp that could be devised to be done unto him, and that he carries those marks, to the end that men should not stop him of his course, nor hinder him of discharging his duty. Now then we see how Saint Paul's meaning is, first that if we be Christians and the true Church of God, we must keep this order, namely that we be united together, or that we be all as one. And how is that? Not every man after his own fancy, as we see some do, who being of a froward mind cannot possibly frame themselves to others, but will need to keep alone by

themselves, like shrewd horses, and it were to be wished that there were Hermitages and Cloisters for such manner of people, when they will not by any means join with the order of the Church.

Therefore when they do so separate themselves from the company of the faithful through their own pride, they must be made the Devil's Hermits and Cloisterers. But however the world go, men see why they be so hidden: namely because the Devil holds and possesses them, and their desire is nothing else but to have I wote not what a separation, to turn quite and clean away from God. But Saint Paul tells us, that the rule which we must go by is this, namely that we make Jesus Christ our shootanker, laboring to fashion ourselves like unto him, so that whenever he speaks, we may yield ourselves to his saying, and every of us keep his order: and afterward that we help one another. For we may well brag of perfection and of this and that: but if we endeavor not to further the building up of the spiritual temple, surely we shall still serve Satan, and be as slaves under his tyranny. Therefore let us learn to have one conformity among us, tending all together to our Lord Jesus Christ.

And furthermore let such as have stoutness and constancy to walk in God's Law, defy all these Cockerels that mount up in pride after that fashion, to bring in this or that. For Jesus Christ will always know his own marks. That is to say, although we be despised to the worldward, yet shall we always be avowed to be God's children. And therefore let us go on forward still, and let such as would stop us, be sure that God will beat them down, as we have seen heretofore. Yea and it is good reason that they should be scattered and confounded, since they break the unity of the Church: and forasmuch as they will not employ their service (according to their ability) to the furtherance of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, God must needs overthrow them how glorious or prideful soever they be. Thus you see what we have

to gather upon this text, if we mind to continue in the enjoying and possession of the benefits that have been purchased for us so dearly, by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are still daily offered us by the Gospel.

And now let us fall down before the Majesty of our good God with acknowledgment of our faults, praying him that we may be so wounded with them, as they may make us to bewail them and to crave forgiveness of them, and also to reform them in such wise by true repentance, as we may fight manfully against all the vices and corruptions of our flesh, till he have rid us quite and clean of them all, to clothe us again with his own righteousness. And so let us all say, Almighty God heavenly father, etc.

Thus end the Sermons of Master John Calvin upon the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians. All praise, glory, honor, and thanks be only unto God through his Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Prayer which M. John Calvin

made ordinarily before the beginning of his Sermons.

Let us call upon our good God and father, praying him to vouchsafe to turn away his face from the great number of faults and offences, whereby we cease not to provoke his wrath against us: and forasmuch as we be too unworthy to appear before his majesty, it may please him to look upon us in the countenance of his well-beloved son our Lord Jesus Christ, accepting the desert of his death

and passion, for a full recompense of all our sins, that by means thereof he may like well of us, and vouchsafe to enlighten us by his spirit, in the understanding of his word,

and grant us the grace to receive the same in true fear and humility, so as we may be taught thereby to put our trust in him, to serve and honour him by glorifying his holy name in all our life, and to yield him the love and obedience which faithful servants owe to their masters, and children to their fathers, seeing it has pleased him to call us to the number of his servants and children.

And let us pray unto him as our good master has taught us to pray, saying. Our father which art, etc.

The blessing of the people after the Sermon.

The grace of God the father, and the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ through the fellowship of the holy Ghost dwell with us for ever. Amen.

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